"A MOST REMARKABLE ROOM THAT DID NOT EXIST BEFORE:" THE PRODUCTION OF SCREEN SPACE AND FORDIST MODERNITY

by

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VOLUME I

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

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Abstract

"A MOST REMARKABLE ROOM THAT DID NOT EXIST BEFORE:"
THE PRODUCTION OF SCREEN SPACE AND FORDIST MODERNITY

by

Iván Zatz-Díaz

Advisor: Professor Stanley Aronowitz

Taking Henri Lefebvre's contention that "every mode of production produces its own space," this dissertation attempts to show the connection between the movie screen and the Taylorist-Fordist mode of socioeconomic regulation. Social relations are not produced by a purely economic base, but by material conditions of everyday practice, where the economic and the cultural are not separate. One of these practices of Late Capitalism is the cinema. The screen itself is a production of space, where meaning is "geographically" arranged upon its surface and contours. Additionally, it is linked to the associated spaces of the movie audience – the theater, the neighborhood, etcetera.

A modernist subjectivity responsive to Fordist social regulation

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thus arises from the material conditions involved in these practices of space, rather than from a mystical "apparatus" or "gaze." This spatial production of subjectivity is linked to relations of power inscribed in those productions of space, and negotiated through everyday practices. But productions of space also entail history, and their analysis must account for moments of transition – differential space – and moments of regulatory stabilization – hegemonic space: the "cinema of attractions" and the Nickelodeons are differential spaces under transitional Taylorism; the formalized grid (screen space) of the Classic Hollywood Model and the movie palaces become hegemonic spaces under Fordism. With the Great Depression, cinema had to anchor its modernist discourse within a recodified nationalism, while a counterelite produced contesting practices of space of the avant-garde screen.

A final chapter details plans for future research on the productions of small screen space – television and computers – tied to decaying Hard-Fordism and a new global stabilization under Flexible Accumulation; where Postmodern and Postnational forms of cinema

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coexist with television, only to be displaced by computers. This transformation of screen space is evidence enough that history has not come to an end with Globalization, and that the analysis of such an increasingly dominant production of everyday space serves to illuminate the manner in which contemporary social relations are produced.

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Preface

The present manuscript is an analysis of the cinema screen as a production of space. The idea is to understand cinema not as an object of aesthetic contemplation or as a dreamlike psychological event, but as a generative force, an agent, in the production of social relations. As such, film is understood not as a leisure activity but as a process of social construction anchored in material practices of space. Thus, the projection of film upon the screen is not sufficient to understand the necessity of this art, to paraphrase Ernst Fischer. Film, then, has to be understood as a sequence of associated spaces which links, in a back and forth flow, the space of the screen to the space of the viewing auditorium, themselves linked to the space of the rest of the theater which is linked to the space of the city, and so on. These linkages are not made up by mysterious mental "effects," but by these very practices of space which, by their own materiality, induce and conduct humans towards that linkage between a seemingly pure visual realm and the rest of the everyday world.

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This particular work, then, is best understood as part of a larger project. In effect, the subject is not really cinema, but the screen. What needs to be understood is not the particular agency or aesthetic process of cinema, but the systematization of contemporary society around and through the material practices of screen space. As we mover further along into the 21st Century, we find ourselves acting around and interacting with an increasing number of screens, we have truly evolved into a culture of the screen. The cinema can no longer be understood as an "autarchic" form, but rather as a particular moment in the history of late capitalist spaces of representation.

This means that the cinematic screen needs to be viewed in the context of the socio-historic moment in which it acted as a *central* form of cultural organization of everyday life, a moment which now has ceded its centrality to the smaller screen spaces of film and television. In this approach, the film screen can be understood as the quintessential production of representational spaces of Taylorism-Fordism, while the television and computer screens become the quintessential screen spaces of Flexible Accumulation and Globalization.

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Given the bulk of this project, the present dissertation concentrated on only one fragment of the connection between cinematic spaces (i.e., screens, theaters, cities, etc.) and the Taylorist-Fordist juncture up to the beginning of the Second World War. The idea behind this narrower focus, beside the obvious time and scope constraints of a manageable dissertation, was to allow for a full explanation of the function of subjectivation operating out of these spaces of Fordist representation. That is to say, a mere description of what spaces are produced and how the arise is not sufficient, an account has to be provided for the manner in which society is constructed by the material practices conducted through these spaces. To our judgement, the main function to be accounted for is the creation of new subjectivities, new understandings of one's position vis a vis the emerging social order. This subjectivity is understood as *both* positional and relational, it is produced in space but also in relation to active and latent symbols of power embedded in the space which actively produces subjectivation at that moment. In that respect, the production of screen space is not only generative of social relations of

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reproduction, it is also generative of social relations of production through an activation of relations of power (that is, class politics).

Accordingly, Chapter One serves as a brief summary of Henri Lefebvre's concept of the production of space and presents a brief critique of his consignment of spaces of representation exclusively to the cycle of social reproduction. Chapter Two is a brief discussion of some ideas of cinematic subjectivation – such as "the gaze," the "ontology of the photographic image," and "the ideological apparatus" – which rely, in our opinion, largely on metaphysical constructs; these ideas are compared to the more materially-based notions of Raymond Williams, Kracauer, and Benjamin. Chapter Three is a discussion of Taylorism as a production of space and as a source of socioeconomic transition, which connects to the emerging cinematic screen and the initial forms of representation known as the "Cinema of Attractions;" given the fundamental importance of the emerging space of the technological city, there is also a strong linkage between "text" and "context," implicit in the notion of film as another form of fairground attraction. Additionally, the exhibition based on projectionist-narrators

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working in store front theaters, Nickelodeons, allows for the Cinema of Attractions to be seen as part of what Lefebvre called "differential space" (i.e., the still evolving space of an emerging social form). Chapter Four presents the connection between the initial regulation of Taylorism within the production systems developed by Henry Ford and the appearance of a "mature film language" created by the equally "Fordist" Hollywood System; theatrical exhibition becomes fully encoded as well, the lavish movie palaces emerge as part of a more stable mass society of conspicuous consumption, a tell-tale Fordist necessity. City, industry (both automotive and cinematic) and mass culture can be seen as inordinately coordinated during this period, a period which also begins to put in full evidence the neo-imperialist tendencies of industrial Fordism – particularly beneficial to the Unites States, which begins to capture much of the European market do to the destructive ravages of the Great War; with film playing a leading role in this process. Chapter Five explores some of the reasons for the Crash of 1929 and the Great Depression as a basis for the implantation of Fordism as a socially regulatory system (involving economic as well

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as social factors, such as Prohibition), with film serving as an emissary for this new regulatory approach culturally advanced in the form of a recodified nationalism. The tension between the globalizing tendencies of Fordism and the localizing tendencies of nationalism become an object of symbolic negotiation in much of the film produced during the 1930s, and this tension becomes emblematic of the re-imagined community Fordist neo-nationalism – that is to say, the space of the nation state needs to be turned into a modernist myth, and the American Musicals and Gangster films serve as an initial recodification of urban space and industrially conducive behavioral regulation, while the Westerns serve as exemplars of the coupling of nationalist folk myth and industrial imperatives in the eve of World War II. Chapter Six recapitulates the entire discussion and offers a very condensed version of what the rest of our project on the production of screen space would handle.

A project of this magnitude has taken many years and many evolutionary cycles. It is impossible to mention and point out the large

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number of people who lent a helping hand along the way, my gratitude is always there. There are those whose help cannot go unmentioned:

I would like to personally thank the members of my Dissertation Committee – Stanley Aronowitz, Chair of the Committee, along with Jonathan Buchsbaum, Bill Kornblum and Richard Peña – for all their help and, especially, their infinite patience. Bill Kornblum, in particular, spent many years helping me work out some of the concepts as well as the writing strategies necessary for this project. However, the most important advisor and mentor not only for this dissertation but for my entire career has been Stanley Aronowitz; he has been a collaborator more than a teacher, and his advise and support have been a true inspiration for me. The scope, depth and complexity of this project I owe to many years of learning from him.

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Chapter One
The Production of Space: Materiality and Social Change

I

Henri Lefebvre introduced his concept of the production of space (published in English in 1991) as part of a lengthy critique on the reconstruction of European society after World War II. Bracketed by the Marshall Plan on one end and the events of May 1968 on the other, the European experience of the first two decades that came after the war would seem to be a paragon of stability and prosperity when compared to the first half of the century, marked by two Russian Revolutions, two World Wars, fascism, Stalinism and, so far, the most spectacular financial market crash and economic crisis in the history of industrialized capitalism. At the same time, a sharp observer like Lefebvre could not fail to notice the social and cultural ravages of the "Pax Americana" being imposed on an "old Europe" that had finally lost its mantle of global hegemony. The conformism and social

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quietude of the mainstream[1] in the 1950s and early-to-mid 1960s might have masked the enormous political and economic transformations that were gradually imposed as another "long century" (Arrighi 1994) was coming to a close.

This only started to become clear between 1972, when Richard Nixon took the dollar off the gold standard, and 1982, when Mexico defaulted on its external loan payments for the first time leading the Breton Woods institutions to become stabilization and adjustment regulators instead of fulfilling their old function as lenders of last resort. The first French edition of *La Production de l'Espace* came out in 1974, right at the outset of this "turn" towards globalization; which may explain why it took fifteen years for Lefebvre's ideas to gain acceptance, but could also explains why these same ideas have almost become a central tenet within the theoretical imagination of

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[1]This is not to deny the that those years also marked the next wave of women's rights, civil rights, and a colonial liberation movement in Africa and parts of Asia. In contrast to the late 1960s, however, this was not happening at the core of the social framework but in the fringes, even Simone de Beauvoir was known at that time for her relationship to Sartre rather than for her landmark work of feminism.

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"postmodern geographers" (Soja, Neil Smith and David Harvey),[2] "post-Marxist sociologists" (Giddens), and post-Fordist political economists (Lash and Urry).

Lefebvre holds that all space is socially produced (1991b:76), a proposition which counters what he feels has been an ideologically tendentious reification of space in both the scientific and the poststructuralist schools of thought. Lefebvre's project, thus, proceeds in a typically two-pronged dialectical fashion: in a positive direction, his project "does not aim to produce a (or *the*) discourse on space, but rather to expose the actual production of space by bringing various kinds of space and the modalities fo their genesis together within a single theory" (*ibid.*, 16); the negative direction comes from within Marx's own critique of capitalist abstraction (e.g., abstract labor) and

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[2]Neither Harvey nor Smith label themselves as "postmodern," and their work is clearly in the Modernist mold of classic Marxism. "Postmodern Geography" is offered simply as a label to encompass a geographic approach that studies social productions of space (landscape studies, urban topographies, suburban and exurban expansions, etc) rather than the physical or political configuration of terrain on Planet Earth. By treating the screen as a space with its own configuration and concatenations of associated spaces, this manuscript could also be included within the "postmodern geography" approach.

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goes on to reject the neopositivist and the poststructuralist attempts to turn space into a homogeneously quantifiable and autonomous (i.e., self-contained and self-generating) entity.

Lefebvre, further, holds that any natural space (the only kind of space that could serve as the grounding of a self-contained and self-generating space independent of human production) is disappearing; it follows, then, that

> every society — and hence every mode of production with its subvariants (i.e., all those societies which exemplify the general concept) — produces a space, its own space. [...]
> Social space contains — and assigns (more or less) appropriate places to — (1) *the social relations of production*, i.e., the bio-physiological relations between the sexes and between age groups, along with the specific organization of the family; and (2) the *relations of production*, i.e., the division of labour and its organization in the form of hierarchical social functions. [...]
> The advent of capitalism, and more particularly 'modern' neocapitalism, has rendered this state of affairs considerably more complex. Hence, *three* interrelated levels must be taken into account: (1) *biological reproduction* (the family); (2) the *reproduction of labor power* (the working class *per se*); and (3) the *reproduction of the social relations of production* — that is, of those relations which are constitutive capitalism and which are increasingly (and increasingly effectively) sought and imposed as such. [...]
> A conceptual triad has now emerged from our discussion [...]
> 1.*Spatial practice*, which embraces production and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each

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> social formation. Spatial practice ensures continuity and some degree of cohesion. In terms of social space, and of each member of a given society's relationship to that space, this cohesion implies a guaranteed level of *competence* and a specific level of *performance*.
> 2.*Representations of space*, which are tied to the relations of production and to the 'order' which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to 'frontal' relations.
> 3.*Representational spaces*, embodying complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not, linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life, as also to art (which may come eventually to be defined less as a code of space than as a code of representational spaces) [Lefebvre 1991b:31-33].

Space, for Lefebvre, is a material process of social production in which certain living and working conditions are arranged according to a human disposition (i.e., relations of power, as opposed to a "natural geography"). The very shape of the ensuing spaces or territories takes on meanings that serve to advance or maintain the social operations that take place in their midst — spaces themselves become *symbols*. As the symbolic qualities of space become active, these qualities take on a "life of their own" by actually occupying their own kinds of spaces (representational space); so that, in effect, spatial practices impact upon each other the same way that they impact upon other social practices

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> If space is a product, our knowledge of it must be expected to reproduce or expound the process of production. The "object" of interest must be expected to shift from *things in space* to the actual *production of space*... Both partial products located *in space* – that is, things – and discourse *on space* can henceforth do no more than supply clues to, and testimony about, this productive process – a process which subsumes signifying processes without being reducible to them. It is no longer a matter of the space of this or the space of that: rather, it is space in its totality or global aspect that needs not only to be subjected to analytic scrutiny (a procedure which is liable to furnish merely and infinite series of fragments and cross-sections subordinate to the analytic project), but also to be *engendered* by and within theoretical understanding. Theory *reproduces* the generative process... (Lefebvre 1991b:37, italics in the original).

Lefebvre places greater emphasis on this aspect of the social production of space, in fact appearing to focus "less on the production process, more on the reproduction process..." (Smith 1984:91).

As the first passage quoted above not only implies but also makes manifest by its very structure and manner of unfolding, the production of space is directly tied to the structuration of different modes of production or historic blocs (as Gramsci would characterize the various moments of articulation between a hegemonic class and an intellectual-ideologic set of ideas organically corresponding to the ruling needs and requirements of that hegemonic class). The implication is clearly that

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"if space is produced, if there is a productive process, then we are dealing with *history*..." (Lefebvre 1991b:47, italics in the original). It is critical not to misconstrue Lefebvre's project as positing the exclusivity (or even the primacy, for that matter) of the spatial dimension of socioeconomic development, even in our current period of "advanced" or "late" capitalism.

It should also be emphasized that the apparent turning of attention that Lefebvre takes towards the "cycle of reproduction" is clearly explained by the manner in which he folds theoretical elaborations into the very process of production of space. In other words, Lefebvre takes for granted the "productive base" laid out by Marx's own critical analysis of capitalist production, and instead turns his attention to the "superstructural level of theory," theory itself serving as a reproductive engine of the socioeconomic process.

But Lefebvre's move is not a Hegelian attempt to capture the self-reflective phenomenology of an unfurling Mind (hence the inadequacy of the terms "base and superstructure"). Lefebvre is, in fact, attempting to break down any distinction between a first moment

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of production and a second, and by necessity reflective, moment of ideal-theoretical reconstruction and mental refinement of the productive level. He does this not by challenging the labels "production and reproduction," but by pointing out the *generative* (i.e., productive) qualities of both cycles. In other words, the social framework does not cease to be produced during the so-called cycle of reproduction; reproduction does not mean the mere rumination of an already established social order but a continuation of that very process of social construction within spaces of domestic, leisure, and sumptuary consumption. Therefore, production becomes a sort of *res extensa* which permeates and defines moments of everyday life that are seen only as separate within theoretical discourse (whether it be due to the necessities of analytic explication, or the vagaries of ideology).

Lefebvre's work on space – though self-contained and self-standing in its own right – is actually more coherent when considered in connection to his larger project on everyday life, which became the core of his entire critique of the "neocapitalist" order imposed on Europe and the rest of the world since the end of World War II. It is

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beyond the scope of the present work to offer a description of the many dimensions and implications of Lefebvre's critique of everyday life – an effort which spanned almost the entire second half of the 20th century.[3] The entire interplay between thought and practical reality, and the consideration of the generative-productive capacity of both in the terrain of linguistics, of ordinary activities and "cultural reflection," and so on is already present in the first volume of the *Critique de la Vie Quotidienne*, first published in 1947 and reissued in 1958 with a lengthy introduction which serves precisely as the blueprint for this approach (Lefebvre 1991a).

The initial text of the first *Critique* was mostly a philosophical attempt to find within the work of Marx a grounding for a critical knowledge of the everyday in the contemporary world; but it is the introduction from 1958 that serves to situate Lefebvre's own reflections within the framework of the everyday urban experience that was to become typical of his later thought

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[3]There is also no need to duplicate Gardiner's solid summary and exegesis of Lefebvre's work on everyday life (2000:71-101).

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> Why should I say anything against these people who – like me – come home form work every day? They seem to be decent folk who live with their families who love their children. Can we blame them for not wanting the "world" in which they feel reasonably at home to be transformed?
> Platitude. There are still contrasts here which give it a certain charm. A few more little developments, and even that will disappear. Mediocrity will have swamped this Parisian suburb just as it has swamped villages as much as ten kilometers away from the city. One has to go back to the office buildings in the center of Paris to rediscover something of the beauty or charm of times gone by.
> Will there ever be anything great which is not dehumanized – or a form of happiness which is not tinged with mediocrity?
> The picturesque is disappearing with a rapidity which provides the reactionaries with an ample supply of ammunition for their proclamations and jeremiads. What used to be its spark of beauty – the primitive diversity of everyday man, the generosity of his nature, the many faceted local eccentricities, the brutal, swarming tumult – that beauty has disappeared. It has become congealed into so many museum pieces floating on the muddy ocean of destitution (1991a:43-44).

The echoes of Benjamin, hovering especially in the last sentence, serve to emphasize Lefebvre's own notion of a receding reality that is being paved over with a reactionary simulacrum of industrial-urban planning (mediocrity, poverty). In *The Production of Space*, that receding reality becomes nature itself. This sense of a locally eccentric Parisian neighborhood being overtaken by the flatness of the International Style

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turned into glass skyscrapers (shown with such authentic pathos in Tati's two masterworks, *Mon Oncle* and *Playtime*), becomes even more pointed in 1968 when Lefebvre published *Everyday Life in the Modern World*; where he decries the institutionalized erosion of everyday experience as a form of terrorism (1971:143-193), a position which would also mark the career of Michel Foucault.

The salient point is that Lefebvre locates the making of contemporary society not in the rarified stratospheres of remote state apparatuses (Althusser) or of mysteriously immanent structures and functions of sociation (i.e., Talcott Parsons) but in the quotidian reality of the lifeworld. And Marxism, too, has been blind to the emancipatory possibilities which must be opened up in this terrain of the everyday

> In essence, Lefebvre suggests that Marxism has been burdened with a "metaphysics of labor," which renders it blind to the importance of culture, ideology and other superstructural factors, as well as the vast range of human experiences external to the productive process *per se*. Put differently, praxis is not restricted to the utilitarian transformation of external nature through repetitive, instrumental action. It also involves love, sensuality, the body – a plethora of creative, emotive and imaginative practices Lefebvre calls *poesis* in his as yet untranslated 1965

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> work *Métaphilosophie*. These passions and needs are bound up with the individual's status as a "being of nature;" that is, with the human self-formative process through the appropriation of nature. This is a process of "becoming" which, as both Hegel and Marx believed, must be brought to fulfillment (Gardiner 2000:80).

This will be the precise importance of the spaces of representation as Lefebvre understands them; but before we go into a full discussion on such spaces, we must take a closer look at the connection between the production of space and social change (history).

II

One of the most problematic conceptual issues in social thought is to account for "structural transformation." With the exception of Marx's concepts of class struggle linked to socioeconomic crises, and perhaps Durkheim's concept of anomie as motor for a move from mechanical to organic solidarity, there is very little on structural transformations in social theory up to the 1950s or 60s – including the work of Talcott Parsons and his followers, which is concerned with the mechanisms of a stable social system in the abstract (i.e., in the form of general rules). Only Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology* (1970)

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and Ferdinand Tönnies in *Community and Society* (1957) show some connection between space and social change: the former posit a quasi evolutionary progression of historical stages in the division of labor which has as its highest point the division between town and country;[4] while the latter sees the transformation from the rule-by-immediacy of small-space community to the rule-by-abstraction of the juridically extended territory of a society, this would form a "progressive social geography" of human life – from the single household, to the neighborhood, then the village, and finally the large city and its transregional influence (i.e., cosmopolitan life).

Suddenly, there is a burst of literature on social change that seems to coincide with the Viet-Nam conflict and the many faceted revolts of the late 1960s, when the Third World Revolution of Che Guevara and Mao Tse-tung was echoed in the industrialized West by a whole host of books decrying the stultified lifestyles of late capitalism

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[4]This position was largely accepted by Max Weber in *Economy and Society* (1978), where the development of the occidental city — from the patrician and plebeian cities of antiquity to the democratic city-states of the Middle Ages — is seen as the embodied evolution of *political power* as "Non-Legitimate Domination."

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and the need of imminent change – ranging from Paul Goodman's *Growing Up Absurd* and Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectics of Sex* to Herbert Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man*, not to mention a whole generation of French philosophers (Althusser, Foucault, Debord, and Lefebvre himself) who experienced, in May of 1968, one of those rare moments of real possibility for radical change.

Less than ten years later, Anthony Giddens publishes *Central Problems in Social Theory* (1979), a sort of inventory of the state of the discipline, ostensibly meant as an argument against functionalist analyses; and which, in fact, is just as concerned with categories of social stability (institution, reproduction, socialization) as it is with categories of social change (contradiction, ideology and consciousness), including an entire chapter on "Time, Space, and Social Change." This chapter is concerned with Erving Goffman's notion of front and back spaces in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), which is of extremely limited use for our analysis.[5]

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[5]It could be argued, for example, that Giddens links his ideas on neighborhood segregation and class formation to Goffman's front and back rooms as a helpful explaination of some of the spatial representations in films about poverty: De

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Nevertheless, Giddens does offer one of the first texts that understands social change as involving "spatial and temporal movement" (1979:206), and he also neatly sums up the current position on social change within the post-Marxist left: 1) Marx was wrong to think of historic change as evolutionary, it should rather be conceived as *episodic*, a position which is found in Marx's own section on precapitalist societies in *Grundrisse* (Giddens 1981:69-89); 2) social change does not occur any longer due to exogenous pressure upon

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Sica's *Miracle in Milan*; Scola's *Down and Dirty*; Buñuel's *Los Olvidados* and *Nazarín*; Babenco's *Pixote;* and Nair's *Salaam Bombay*. To our view, this analysis is limited by the functionally specific purpose of those spaces in Goffman – formalized settings for dealing with the public in a business setting as compared to the more informal but ensconced work areas in the same business establishment. Such analysis can only be extended in the form of simile or metaphor to social relations of power existing over an extended space like a city or a nation (e.g., wealth + residential neighborhood=front room, while poverty + slum=back room). It is true that in some cities of Latin America, the shanty towns and favelas are hidden from the ordinary hustle and bustle of the tourists and the more affluent classes; but it hardly relates to the functional need for Goffman's backrooms – to hide the work process from the consumer, while allowing at least some of these workers to move between front and back room The shanties are hidden from plain view precisely to keep a population from being integrated to the working processes and mechanisms of the city – they are marginal spaces and therefore not an indispensable component of spatial tandem. In Lefebvre, the slum would be understood as a specifically historic production of space responding to a structural need in that particular phase of capitalist development; it is this socially structuring aspect of Lefebvre's position that gives the notion of production of space an explanatory power lacking in Giddens' position.

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closed societies bound by tradition, capitalism "operates through chronic economic mutation and technological innovation" (Giddens 1979:223); and 3) several notions on contemporary social change need to be observed, a) relations of autonomy and dependence among various nation states, b) uneven development of different sectors of a social system, c) phases of radical change which carry institutional realignment though not necessarily a full revolutionary change, and d) situations in which a formerly advanced stage becomes an obstacle to change under conditions of further advancement (*ibid.*, 225-230).

Leaving aside the curious fact that the language of sub-item "d" somehow recuperates an unfolding or evolutionary notion of history, it is clear that Giddens sees a rupture between pre-capitalist and capitalist sociohistoric development. Only within capitalism can we see social transformation stemming from such a development of forces and relations of production that go beyond what that present system allows (as Marx contends in his Introduction to *The Critique of Political Economy*).

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Giddens' constellation of "episodic notions of historic change" and their application to the entirety of social history is well beyond our scope; however, his notion of radical change without revolution serves to introduce the type of social change that we focus on in this work. Giddens saw this form of radical change as intermediate ("medium term") episodes occurring due to rapid industrialization or political transformation in those extended pre- or post-revolutionary periods, or due to institutional decay resulting from war or from the pressure exerted on traditional societies by imperialist penetration. These qualifiers to non-revolutionary transformation end up by short-changing the nature of capitalist change that Giddens himself posited above: if capitalism is internally dynamic and self transforming through "economic mutation and technological innovation," then it follows that non-revolutionary change is *normative* within this system and must be accounted for as part of the "normal" course of events, and not merely as an effect of war, imperialism or pre/post-revolution.

In the final analysis, capitalism remains a largely static and stable Parsonian social system in Giddens, and a different path has to be

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found in order to explain change within capitalism as a mode of production. In our view, the approach that most easily lends itself to this task is that of the Regulation School, better known in the English language through the work of Alain Lipietz and Michel Aglietta.

According to Lipietz

> A *regime of accumulation* describes the fairly long-term stabilization of the allocation of social production between consumption and accumulation. This implies a certain correspondence between the transformation of the conditions of production and the transformation of the conditions of reproduction of wage-labor, between certain of the modalities in which capitalism is articulated with other modes of production within *a national economic and social formation*, and between the social and economic formation under consideration and its "outside world."
>
> In mathematical terms, a regime of accumulation can be described as a schema of reproduction. Regimes of accumulation exist because their schemas of reproduction are stable; therefore, not all regimes of accumulation are possible...
>
> The set of internalized rules and social procedures which incorporate social elements into individual behavior (and one might be able to mobilize Bordieu's concept of habitus here) is referred out as a *mode of regulation.* Thus, the dominant regime of accumulation in the OECD countries during the postwar period – an intensive regime centered upon mass consumption – has a very different mode of regulation to that operating in nineteenth-century capitalism. In a gesture of homage to Gramsci, we now refer to it as *Fordism* (Lipietz 1987:15; italics in the original).

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> To argue that world capitalism has from the outset been a single regime of accumulation with forms of global regulation is tantamount to saying that some sovereign power established regular trade flows, codified and guaranteed universally applicable social norms and procedures, and then, when the need arose, delegated its powers to local states that were simultaneously established throughout the world (*ibid.*, 19).

This passage establishes a modulation of the internal dynamic of capitalism (i.e., social change out of economic mutation and technological innovation), namely, that "internal revolutions" of capitalism – in economic terms – are made up by a process that interlinks a regime of accumulation and a specific mode of regulation. Moreover, although these modalities are taken under consideration within the national framework, giving their development spatial specificity (territory, borders, etc), they also have to be considered in terms of their "outside," which further qualifies that spatial specificity. This "outside world" gains greater weight when the mode of regulation is coupled tightly to the regime of accumulation – in the example of Fordism, the spatial basis for regulatory stabilization is a whole set of countries (the OECD block), rather than one single nation. At the same time, Lipietz cautions against the all-encompassing space of something

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like the world-system approach, which is overdetermined by a counterfactual meta-government. Lipietz's framework clearly allows for a correspondence between spatial development and socioeconomic transformation. In a nutshell, a regime of accumulation within a national space is (or at least can be) followed by one or more modes of regulation that basically extend a given regime over several national territories; hence, for instance, the emergence of Fordist Regions: the OECD or the "Industrialized West" *vis a vis* the Third World, which created a divide between a mass producing industrial region and a mass consuming extractive region.[6]

Aglietta, for his part introduces the same episodic notion as Giddens by speaking of historic time as discontinuous and marked by ruptures (i.e., crises) in the reproduction of social relations. These ruptures are to be interpreted as moments of social creation which bring

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[6]These notions are used under Lipietz and Aglietta's caution against the use of labels like "the international division of labor" or "imperialism;" since these terms require an impossible analysis of a system of states, thus obscuring both the specificities of each set of relations between different states at different times, *and* also obscuring the fact that these terms simply express a different vantage point of the same process of capitalist hegemony that allocates labor resources and wage relations even within a given country (Lipietz 1987:20-28; Aglietta 1979:26-33).

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about a transformation of the mode of production (Aglietta 1979:19).

Thus, Aglietta explains the shift in mode of regulation through rupture in the following manner

> A social system constitutes a *morphology*, in other words a space structured by relationships subject to the principles of qualitative difference and unequal influence. Such systems develop in a way that reproduces a basic invariant element in each of their component parts, that is, a determinant whose presence is what assures the system its integrity and cohesion. So long as the reproduction of the fundamental invariant is not put into question... the system can develop continuously. But there exist weak points or zones where corrective mechanisms can break down. In that event a direct threat is posed to the reproduction of the invariant element, and hence to the existence of the system itself. When this happens, the system acts as a totality to plug the gap by modifying the form of regulation. A change of regime takes place, in a morphological transformation that may be more or less considerable. Ruptures are one such transformation (*ibid.*, 20; italics in the original).
>
> It is essential, therefore, to accord major importance qualitative changes, for the interest of a theory of regulation is not so much that it tells us that a structure is perpetuating itself as that it furnishes the analytical elements for assessing the significance of that which is new to it...
>
> Any scientific study of capitalist development must necessarily start from the production of the material conditions of social life. The lessons of history, the practices of mass organizations and *the most everyday experiences all combine to demonstrate that the manner in which material wealth is produced stamps quite irrevocably the lives of individuals, social differences, and opportunities for self-development.* But there are snares in the analysis of production which lead the majority of

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> economic schools to abandon this task. For it involves an analysis that deals with the meaning of labor in its most fundamental aspects. *Labor is a human activity, and therefore a temporal process through which human beings form definite relationships among themselves in the course of transforming their material conditions. Production is always the production of social relations as well as of material objects...* (*ibid.*, 23-24; italics ours).

The present study is an analysis of two of these ruptures, the transformation from artisanal industrialization or "first industrial revolution" to Taylorist/Fordist mass production[7] or "second industrial

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[7]It is imperative to bear in mind that this is a periodization of shifts in modes of regulation under the same regime of accumulation: capitalism. Given the permanence of this regime "underneath" the shifting modes of regulation, it is useless to try to match corresponding symbolic regimes, as if there was an obligation to find an "epistemological break" every time a mode of regulation shifts internally. Moreover, our terminology is intended to indicate that there is no significant break between Taylorism and Fordism; the latter, in fact, being really an intensified form of the former. In Chapter Three, we will see a shift in cinema's narrative strategies of representation from the "Mode of Attractions" to the "Hollywood Model or Institutional Mode." This shift loosely corresponds to the shift from Taylorism to the beginnings of Fordism as it developed in Detroit. There is a subsequent shift within Fordism from a local or regional mode of regulation to a national-international framework of state-driven regulatory policies and strategies meant to rescue the economy from the ravages of the Great Depression. We have used our own term, "Regulatory Fordism," to distinguish between phase 1 and phase 2 of essentially a homogeneous regulatory process, which explains why there is no new narrative strategy of the cinema arising once the Hollywood Model is fully implemented around 1915-17. There is a shift in the "ideological-aesthetic" strategy, however, when cinema ceases to be a pure discourse of modernity and becomes encoded in nationalism – this leads to such movements as French Poetic Realism, or genre utilization as the Japanese Jidai geki or the American Musicals and Westerns (see Chapter Five). It is only as

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revolution," and the current period of transition from Fordism to so-called Globalization or flexible accumulation (Harvey 1990). Whether Aglietta intended to understand the space of the social system as metaphoric or not, in the present work we will use a literal understanding of space; in consequence, the morphological transformations that are proposed in Aglietta will be understood as specific productions of space – labor, too, will be understood as a spatial process and not as merely temporal. It is important to note that Aglietta, who was well aware of Lefebvre's work, also introduces the everyday lifeworld and the production of extended social relations in its midst as part of the morphological analysis he proposes; social production and reproduction (i.e., labor/leisure, practice/ideology,

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Fordism *in toto* begins to break down, that we find a next epistemological break: the shift from the large screen space of the cinema to the small screen space of television and computers, which loosely corresponds to the shift from Taylorism/Fordism to Globalization. The fact that these new productions of space are also screens seems to indicate that the difference between Fordism and Globalization is more of a recoding of existing social relations than a true transformation in modes of production. This final aspect of the analysis, however, goes well beyond the scope of the present work.

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production/consumption) are thus inseparable and largely undifferentiated in everyday experience.

Bearing all this in mind, our study intends to analyze the screen as a production of space which acts as a central element in the morphological transformation of the two regimes of accumulation that characterize the development of late capitalism (i.e., Taylorism/Fordism and Flexible Accumulation/Globalization). We intend to show how this production of space brought about specific transformations at the level of everyday life and at the structural level of state-driven social and economic policies; but we also intend to show the connection between the specific production of space of the screen and other spaces that become associated or ancillary to the screen (viewing rooms, neighborhoods, urban centers, the exporting nation-state, and so on). Moreover, we intend to account for the further transformation from large to small screen and from theatrical viewing to home viewing as productions of space related to the transformation from Fordist nationalism to Flexible Globalization.

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The aim will always be to offer not a causal explanation of these changes as mysterious emanations from sundry productions of space, but rather to present a morphological account of these changes through the specific practices of representational space. Before we begin our analysis, therefore, it is imperative that we return to Lefebvre for an account of spatial practice, especially as it relates to differential spaces, spaces of representation and representations of space (representational spaces), as well as to the relationship between history and space.

III

Lefebvre offers a spatial account of history (understood as a succession of social transformations) which actually harkens back to one of the fundamental questions in Marx and which underscores the originality of his own project

> There is one question which has remained open in the past because it has never been asked: what exactly is the mode of existence of social relationships? Are they substantial? natural? or formally abstract? The study of space offers an answer according to which the social relations of production have a social existence to the extent that they have a spatial existence; they project themselves into space, becoming inscribed there, and in the process producing that space itself. Failing this, these relations would remain in the realm of "pure" abstraction – that is

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> to say, in the realm of representations and hence of ideology: the realm of verbalism, verbiage and empty words.
>
> Space itself, at once a product of the capitalist mode of production and an economico-political instrument of the bourgeoisie, will now be seen to embody its own contradictions. The dialectic thus emerges from time and actualizes itself, operating now, in an unforseen manner, in space. The contradictions of space, without abolishing the contradictions which arise from historical time, leave history behind and transport those old contradictions, in a worldwide simultaneity, onto a higher level; there some of them are blunted, others exacerbated, as this contradictory whole takes on a new meaning and comes to designate "something else" – another mode of production (Lefebvre 1991b:129).

This passage accomplishes with admirable conceptual economy the dual task of establishing the fact that: a) space is the material basis for the social relations of any given social moment or historic bloc within an existing mode of production (otherwise, social relations would be mere words with an ethereal referent of ineffable substance); and b) space has its own specificity and, therefore, has its own mode of intervention in the historic bloc, making it possible for the internal contradictions of space to serve as a distinct engine of social transformation (i.e., allowing for that episodic lurching forward of historic time that Giddens observes).

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This prompts Lefebvre to ask questions about possible elements of signification embedded in space. In fact, Lefebvre will extend his dialectic duality to this linguistic-semiotic aspect of space by admitting that these spaces indeed have meaning (symbolic communication), and by also reminding the reader that semiosis occurs in space, thereby presenting space as both structuring agent and structure itself (*ibid.*, 130-147). Since the spatial practice of language and the practice of space are one and the same, there is no need to account for a hermeneutic transcendence of the human mind (this point will be developed further in relation to the specific practice of screen spaces in Chapter Two).

In fact, Lefebvre imbues his own analytic approach with a capacity to generate a discontinuous and uneven signification fossilized in space in a manner that agrees both with Benjamin (whose point of contact with Lefebvre is through Surrealism) and with the historicity of the Regulation School

> The approach taken here might be described as "regressive-progressive." It takes as its starting-point the realities of the present: the forward leap of productive forces, and the new

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> technical and scientific capacity to transform natural space so radically that it threatens nature itself. The effect of this destructive and constructive power are to be felt on all sides; they enter into combinations, often in alarming ways, with the pressures of the world market. Within this global framework, as might be expected, the Leninist principle of uneven development applies in full force: some countries are still in the earliest stages of the production of things (goods) in space, and only the most industrialized and urbanized ones can exploit to the full the new possibilities opened up by technology and knowledge. The production of space, having attained the conceptual and linguistic level, acts retroactively upon the past, disclosing aspects and moments of it hitherto uncomprehended. The past appears in a different light, and hence the process whereby that past becomes the present also takes on another aspect (Lefebvre 1991b:65).

All production of space is thereby understood as not only having the capacity to push history forward, but as having the capacity to produce symbolic representations of these processes of historical change. Thus, the representational space is not only an aide to the understanding of that transformation from past to present, but also the locus in which each mode of production invents its present by reinventing its past. For instance, the meaning that Ancient Greece has today is the result of the work of Romantics like Hegel, Schiller and Goethe, who saw Hellenic Greece as the point of origin for the unencumbered heights reached by the European (and later Western Hemispheric) Spirit – a distinct spatio-

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spiritual construct that only makes sense under conditions of bourgeois hegemony at the outset of industrialist expansionism (taking place, first, within Europe in the form of a "conquest" of the rural areas and the dispossession of the peasantry, which is then displaced as "free labor" to urban industrial centers; and, soon afterwards, taking the better known path of external expansionism in the form of neocolonialism, imperialism, neoimperialism without formal territorial control, and, finally, globalization).

The conceptual consequence of the connection between history, production of space and representation is best expressed by Lefebvre himself

> What we are concerned with, then, is the long *history of space*, even though space is neither a "subject" nor an "object" but rather a social reality – that is to say, a set of relations and forms. This history is to be distinguished from an inventory of things *in space* (or what has recently been called material culture or civilization), as also from ideas and discourse *about space*. It must account for both representational spaces and representations of space, but above all for their interrelationships and their links with social practice. The history of space thus has its place between anthropology and political economy. The nomenclature, description and classification of objects certainly has a contribution to make to traditional history, especially when the historian is concerned with the ordinary objects of daily life, with

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> types of food, kitchen utensils and the preparation and presentation of meals, with clothing or with the building of houses and the materials and *matériel* it calls for. But everyday life also figures in representational spaces – or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that it forms such spaces. As for representations of space (and of time), they are part of the history of ideologies, provided that the concept of ideology is not restricted, as it too often is, to the ideologies of the philosophers and of the ruling classes – or, in other words, to the "noble" ideas of philosophy, religion, and ethics. A history of space would explain the development, and hence the temporal conditions, of those realities which some geographers call "networks" and which are subordinated to the frameworks of politics.
>
> The history of space does not have to choose between "processes" and "structures," change and invariability, events and institutions. Its periodization, moreover, will differ from generally accepted ones. Naturally, the history of space should not be distanced in any way from the history of time (a history clearly distinct from all philosophical theories in general). The departure point for this history of space is not to be found in geographical descriptions of natural space, but rather in the study of natural rhythms, and of the modification of those rhythms and their inscription in space by means of human actions, especially work-related actions. It begins, then, with the spatio-temporal rhythms of nature as transformed by a social practice (Lefebvre 1991b:116-117; italics in the original).

The starting point that Lefebvre focuses on is, obviously, too distant in time to the point of origin of our present work (about 1860, at the earliest). By the end of the 19th Century, Nature had already been superceded by society and, therefore, our study must look instead at

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the transformation of the spaces and everyday rhythms of social life (including work spaces, leisure spaces, urban spaces, etc). Since the principal focus of this work is the screen and its associated spaces, emphasis will be placed on the representation of space *upon* the screen as well as on the symbolic representation *within* the space of the screen and within the associated spaces of the viewing room, neighborhood, city, etc.

To understand the specific transformative agency of representational screen spaces, it is crucial to also bear in mind Lefebvre's own category of "differential space"

> ... it can be shown that abstract space [i.e., the homogeneous space of scientific calculation and capitalist instrumental rationality, IZ-D] harbors specific contradictions. Such spatial contradictions derive in part from the old contradictions thrown up by historical time. These have undergone modification, however: some are aggravated, others blunted. Amongst them, too, completely fresh contradictions have come into being which are liable eventually to precipitate the downfall of abstract space. The reproduction of social relations of productions within this space inevitably obeys two tendencies: the dissolution of old relations on the one hand and the generation of new relations on the other. Thus, despite – or rather because of – its negativity, abstract space carries within itself the seeds of a new kind of space. I shall call that new space "differential space," becasue, inasmuch as abstract space tends towards homogeneity, towards

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> the elimination of existing difference and peculiarities, a new space cannot be born (produced) unless it accentuates differences (Lefebvre 1991b:52).

It is our position (to be fully detailed in Chapters Three and Four) that this is exactly the history and the social agency of the modern screen.

IV

The double status of space in Lefebvre's project becomes apparent in discussing his concept of history as embedded in and yet also carried out by space ("space is at once product of the capitalist mode of production and instrument of an economico political instrument of the bourgeoisie"). Much like Bordieu's *habitus* (1977:31 ff; 1990:53), space has a double status as structuring agent and also structure (i.e., effect of its own agency); unlike Bordieu's category, space has its own materiality and avoids the Neo-Kantian transcendentalism of the *habitus*, which seems to be located somewhere within the human mind. In a sense, the dialectic duality encompassed by a single category – space – remains consistent throughout Lefebvre's work; in another sense, however, there is a perplexing "passivity" of space in Lefebvre, which tends to privilege the structure

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over the agent, the "function" of space in reproduction to the detriment of production

> *Representational spaces*: space as directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of "inhabitants" and "users," but also of some artists and perhaps of those, such as a few writers and philosophers, who *describe* and aspire to do no more than describe. This is the dominated – and hence passively experienced – space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. It overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects. Thus representational spaces may be said, though again with certain exceptions, to tend towards more or less coherent systems of non-verbal symbols and signs (Lefebvre 1991b:39; italics in the original).

Taken as such, representational spaces in many cases are given a similar role to that of Marx and Engels' "German Ideology," at least in the sense that they are supposed to perpetuate a given order (Lefebvre offers numerous examples in his book, from the Roman Circus to the Gothic Cathedral and so on).

By contrast, it is our position that space, even representational space, is always active, always productive; that is to say, along with whatever reproductive functions space may rightly have, any form of spatial analysis has to take into a bottom line account the fact that said space arose, even if in embryonic form, as a particular social moment –

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what Gramsci might have called a historic bloc – was itself arising from the ashes of the previous social moment. In fact, even at their most incipient, the extended social relations of production necessary to form the new social moment were already being produced within the confines of specific forms of differential space.

Jonathan Crary offers a particularly interesting account of the socially productive agency of a differential space of representation (the same camera obscura that Marx and Engels used for their famous model of ideology as upside-down reflection)

> the camera obscura performs an operation of individuation; that is, it necessarily defines an observer as isolated, enclosed, and autonomous *within its dark confines*. It impels a kind of *akesis*, or withdrawal from the world, in order to regulate and purify one's relation to the manifold contents of the now "exterior" world. Thus the camera obscura is inseparable form a certain *metaphysic of interiority*: it is a figure for both the observer who is nominally a free sovereign *individual and privatized subject confined in a quasi-domestic space*, cut off from the *public exterior world.* (Jacques Lacan has noted that Bishop Berkeley and others wrote about visual representations as if they were private property). At the same time, another related and equally decisive function of the camera was to sunder the act of seeing from the physical body, to *decorporealize* vision. (1990:38-9, our italics)

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The production of space is crucial to an understanding of the observer as *situated in space*, "within the dark confines of the camera" that make possible a "metaphysic of interiority." It is precisely because humans can construct these spaces and imbue them with social function (i.e., "private quasi-domestic" and "public exterior") that, in turn, a political order can be constructed (i.e., social relations of power at any level). Even a seemingly abstract move like the decorporealization of vision is situated within the functional operation of the camera/room/chamber, the final consequence of which will be the construction of a logico-juridic mode of regulation to accompany the socio-political order imposed by this spatial scheme

> The image of the room in Locke takes on a special significance, referring to what it meant in the seventeenth century to be *in camera*, that is, within the chambers of a judge or person of title. Thus he adds onto the observer's passive role a more authoritative and juridical function to guarantee and to police the correspondence between exterior world and interior representation and to exclude anything disorderly or unruly. (1995[1988]:25)

Crary's claim is that the period between 1820-40 marked a complete rupture with the paradigm of vision furnished by the camera obscura

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since the Renaissance. On the one hand, vision becomes recorporealized, but the body becomes a productive body capable of viewing without looking – as in Muller's theory of electrical or chemical stimuli that produce visual effects in the subject without the agency of light (1995[1988]:30-31; 1990:88-93). Needless to say, it also offers a historical basis to the ideological explanation for theories of decorporealized vision and indeed for the entire notion of subjectivity itself, which can scarcely be said to exist prior to the Romanticism.

A powerful new form of social discourse would emerge from this collapse of a visual paradigm, science as the managerial guide for the workplace

> On the other hand, the early 1800's marks a new route for science research of the eye in terms of reaction time and thresholds of fatigue and stimulation [that were] not unrelated to increasing demand for knowledge about the adaptation of a human subject to productive tasks in which optimum attention span was indispensable for the rationalization of human labor. The economic need for rapid coordination of hand and eye in performing repetitive actions required accurate knowledge of human optical and sensory capacities. In the context of new industrial models of factory production the problem of visual inattention was a serious one. (1995[1998]:29)

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If this was already a condition of the early 1800's, then it is easy to see how the intensification of industrial relations of production in its Taylorist phase would, by necessity, involve an equally intensified visual culture. Moreover, these studies carried an assumption of a correspondence between stimulus and calculated neurological receptivity, this allowed a researcher by the name of Helmholz to compare nerve cells to telegraph wires which can receive stimuli and similarly can be connected to bells or explosive mines which can be activated with stimuli sent through this very wire or nerve

> Far from the specialization of the senses, Helmholz is explicit about the body's indifference to the sources of its experience and of its capacity for multiple connections with other agencies and machines. The perceiver here becomes a neutral conduit, one kind of relay among others to allow optimum conditions of circulation and exchangeability, whether it be commodities, energy, capital, images, or information (1995[1988]:33).

Aside from the foreshadowing of latter twentieth century life, the modern conception of a quantifiable vision is not only related to the management of processes of industrial production but is also intrinsically connected to the social process of abstract labor (and of

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Lefebvre's abstract space), which makes possible the undifferentiated exchangeability characteristic of the contemporary money economy. Crary, thus, notes that this "standardization and regulation of the observer" leads "towards forms of power that depended on the abstraction and formalization of vision" (1990:150). This serves to explain the author's commentary on the contemporary observer as mediated by new technological forms of visual expression

> photography had already abolished the inseparability of observer and camera obscura, bound together by a single point of view, and made the new camera an apparatus fundamentally independent of the spectator, yet which masqueraded as a transparent and incorporeal intermediary between observer and world. The prehistory of the spectacle *and* the "pure perception" of modernism are lodged in the newly discovered territory of a fully embodied viewer, but the eventual triumph of both depends on the denial of the body, its pulsings and phantasms, as the ground of vision. (1990:136)

This complements Kaja Silverman's attempts to specify the historic function of "the gaze," that disembodied, camera-like external source of vision that serves as a force of "pure perception" to guide our look at "the screen" (to be fully discussed in Chapter Two). Given the historic specificity of Crary's argument, "the gaze" can only be taken as a

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"perceptive quality" of the time we are living, which needs to be situated in space so as to explain its origin and function

> Inseparable from the technologies of domination and of the spectacle in the later nineteenth and twentieth century were of course film and photography. Paradoxically, the increasing hegemony of these two techniques helped re-create the myths that vision was incorporeal, veridical and 'realistic.' But if cinema and photography seemed to reincarnate the camera obscura, it was only as a mirage of a transparent set of relations that modernity had already overthrown (1995[1988]:34).

The enigmatic ending of this passage leaves open to speculation what exactly those transparent relations might have been and what were they substituted with under Modernism. This, of course, leaves the function of film and photography under a cloud — there must be more to those new visual forms than a mere act of fake resuscitation for the camera obscura. In fact, the contention that these two visual media are increasingly hegemonic would seem to point to an organic function in relation to the current juridical, political, and economic order.

V

The specific practice of screen spaces – by situated observers – must now be addressed. In the following chapter, the analysis of this

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practice of representational space will also help to give a new grounding to some of the issues of the contemporary critique and analysis of ideology (the superstructure in Marxist analysis) and of the analysis of "the gaze" in screen theory.

This understanding of a practice of specific representational spaces will serve as a cornerstone to build an explanation of the role played by the screen and its associated spaces in the transition from one regime of accumulation to another (screen as differential space), as well as the subsequent hegemony of screen spaces once a mode of regulation emerges and creates a historic bloc (i.e., an organic conjuncture between structural activity and intellectual labor in the Gramscian sense). The transition from the literary (aural and written) culture of the past to the visual culture of contemporaneity lies outside of the scope of the present work; however, it is with this understanding that our analysis proceeds – precisely from the fact that the modern screen arose and gained cultural centrality at the same time that the epochal transformations of the Taylorist/Fordist regime of accumulation were also emerging: a transformation that truly turned

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the 20th Century away from the Gutenberg Galaxy and towards the "visual turn" of Modernist and Postmodernist capitalist culture. The fact that, despite a change in regime from Fordism to Flexible Accumulation, we continue to live in an "era of the screen" serves to indicate that this production of space is a key element in the structural composition of the social order in late capitalism.

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Chapter Two
Cinema and Screen: Spatial Practice and Modern Subjectivity

I

The screen is, for all intents and purposes, the most basic production of space of the cinema.[1] All of cinema is, in effect, a large and complex production of space involving the auditorium or viewing room, the theatrical lobby, and larger geopolitical spaces connected to that theater (the neighborhood or town, the regional area, the nation, and even international aggregates, such as "films of the English-speaking world" or "Western European cinema"). The screen, however, as the center of visual attention, ends up dominating and obscuring all other cinematic spaces. If the screen has primacy, it is

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[1]In reality, the film frame is the most basic production of space, but its significance is lost to general audiences. As a patch of film emulsion to be exposed to light, the film frame is scarcely a production of space beyond the fact that it is a manufactured surface. The film frame does become a social production of space when status is associated with it, such as when 35 mm is thought to be the "big" professional format; or when commercial interests push consumers to convert from the 8mm format to Super 8mm – a conversion which failed for Super 16mm, a format aimed at small professional producers who were not about to incur the expense of buying new equipment for a negligible extra sliver of frame. In any case, it is evident that even the space on the film stock is open to manipulation and transformation to impose and support social conventions that go beyond the mere engineering processes of the medium.

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nevertheless important to bear in mind that this in no way confers full autonomy to such space. The screen can only be understood in full as a space connected to other spaces, acting upon them as they act upon it, as well.

As a "produced space," the screen is not just a space among spaces. Part of the function of space is to produce specific meanings. A socioeconomic formation, a specific relation of power, a crucial historical turn in the social division of labor, all of these come about through the production of space and are further stabilized and maintained (regulated, reproduced) by and through those given spaces. The screen is one of such spaces and we must establish its connections to the social, political, and economic aspects of the late 1800's and all of the 20th century. But, before doing that, it is essential to give an account of the practice of space connected to representation within *all* the interconnected spaces of the cinema. By necessity, this will be a partial and abstract way to convey how the space of the screen is already both a production and a producer of meanings, and how its spatial relationship to the audience goes on to further produce a

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seemingly individualized subjectivity. In other words, the screen is an element of the ideological apparatus because it is a space, and a full account of the complex of details involved in this ideological effect are beyond the scope of the present work. Nevertheless, as the "cell-form" of a historically-specific production of space, we must consider the screen as a space onto itself; this, of course, never happens at the socially immanent level of everyday life.

By its very physical nature, the screen is already laden with ambiguity. In the cinema, the screen is a white reflective expanse, usually bordered by some form of black trim. However, what matters about it, what really constitutes the screen for the viewer, is the portion of that surface that is occupied by the projected frame of a filmstrip. This space, made entire of projected light (what we might now call an early form of "virtual space"), is defined actually by its sheer expanse or extent upon a surface without picture frames or border markers, unlike a painting

> The screen is not a support, not like a canvas; there is nothing to support in that way. It holds a projection, as light as light. A screen is a barrier. What does the silver screen screen? It screens

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> me from the world it holds – that is, makes me invisible. And it screens that world from me – that is, it screens its existence from me. That the projected world does not exist (now) is its only difference from reality. (There is no feature, or set of features, in which it differs. Existence is not a predicate.) Because it is the field of a photograph, the screen has no frame; that is to say, no border. Its limits are not so much the edges of a given shape as they are the limitations, or capacity, of a container. The screen is a frame; the frame is the whole field of the screen – as a frame of film is the whole field of the photograph, like the frame of a loom or a house. In this sense, the screen-frame is a mold, or form (Cavell 1971:24-5).

In describing the screen this way, Cavell latches on to Bazin's notion of the "ontological nature of the photographic image" (1967:9-16), whereby the mechanical elimination of the artist's touch elevates the quality of the image to its status as a faithful copy of reality (pp. 13-15). For this reason, film can be said to have an ontological quality; that is to say, the specific depiction of reality "contained" in film behaves as if it existed *as such*, as if it is no less real than the physically tangible world of everyday life, available to us through common sense.[2]

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[2]See Wollen (1982:189-207), for a detailed account of rivaling notions of film ontology (Bazin *vis a vis* "Brechtian" and avant-garde approaches to the material of the film strip), bringing to bear difficulties of assigning signification to a profilmic event constituted by the film strip taken as the literal signifier. Those issues are related to films and exhibition spaces dealt in Chapter Five of this work.

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Moreover, because there is no physical line of demarcation (no ornate wooden frame to separate *its* world from the rest of the physical world), the screen is the only presence that holds together the image shown; which becomes a conduit of an always provisional amount of information which can change as the camera pans, tilts, zooms or dolly-in or out, etc (Cavell, *op. cit.*). But the screen is also a barrier, a sort of clear membrane that creates a separation between the real world of our existence and the fictional but no less existent world of the film.

Noël Burch qualifies further the spatial aspects of film

> To understand cinematic space, it may prove useful to consider it as in fact consisting of *two different kinds of space*: that included within the frame and that outside the frame. For our purposes, screen space can be defined very simply as including everything perceived on the screen by the eye. Off-screen space is more complex, however. It is divided into six "segments": The immediate confines of the first four of these areas are determined by the four borders of the frame, and correspond to the four faces of an imaginary truncated pyramid projected into the surrounding space, a description that is obviously a simplification. A fifth segment cannot be defined with the same seeming geometric precision, yet no one will deny that there is an off-screen space "behind the camera" that is quite distinct from the four segments of space bordering the frame lines, although the characters in the film generally reach this space by passing just to the right or left of the camera. There is a sixth segment, finally, encompassing the space existing behind the set or some object in it: A

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> characters reaches it by going out a door, going around a street corner, disappearing behind a pillar or behind another person, or performing some similar act. The outer limit of this sixth segment of space is just beyond the horizon (1973:17, italics in the original).

This passage makes a useful distinction between the viewed space "inside" the screen – Cavell's container – and the space "outside" the screen, and it also makes an even more important point in stating that there is more than one kind of space in film. However, there is also a conflation of spaces which needs to be qualified and sorted out.

The passage begins by talking about represented space as if it were physically available to the viewer beyond the optical illusion of the cinema, and then continues by talking about physical space as if it "contained" the representation. The fact is that the "inside/outside" of the screen is dictated, as Cavell observed, by something intangible – by a demarcation without "frame," by a demarcation dictated by convention. *We*, the spectators in tacit agreement with the filmmakers, hold the "limits" of the "inside" to be identical to the end-limit *and* "termination" of the represented space; which in actuality is made up by the projection of light shone through photograms, creating an

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illusion of a three-dimensional area that obviously has no physicality beyond the photons waving and bouncing their way to and from a reflecting surface. In addition, that space "inside" the screen appears to be continuous, as if it was of the same nature as any outdoor space seen through a window which "interrupts" the angle of vision for the viewer but in no way eliminates the continuity of the landscape beyond. In other words, we "agree" to suspend disbelief and behave towards that represented space in the cinema (the space "inside the screen") as if it were real, as if it truly existed just beyond the window-like membrane of the revealing screen.

Several elements come together at this most basic level of production of the screen space. Not only are dimensions and demarcations of space produced where, physically, there are none; but there are also forms of meaning attached to this production. These forms of meaning become standardized and codified so that their rules for making sense of what is seen can be applied to subsequent situations in which the same visual arrangement is put into play. So, not only do we agree through convention to such physically non-

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existent things as the "inside and outside" of the screen (or more properly, on- and off-screen), but we also agree to the reality and continuity of the represented space to such a degree that it appears to us as a completely natural and, therefore, non-convened way of viewing the screen. This is what leads Burch to present six divisions to "the space that surrounds the screens," when in effect he is giving six division of an entirely imaginary space that does not tangibly exist, let alone surround anything.

The specifically cinematographic interplay between the produced but seemingly natural onscreen space and the equally produced but non-representational offscreen space, given that we have precisely agreed to believe that the screen is a container, allows for the notion that the only valid signification is held by whatever we can see, by whatever is contained within the "edges" of the screen frame. These edges, of course, are just as much of a representation as the rest of the frame; so that, in effect, we are letting one type of representation be delimited by another representation. Thus we end with a paradox: we have to make a theoretical link between the seen but "unreal" (i.e., not

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empirical) space of the frame (including its "edges"), and the empirical but "unseen" (i.e., non-representational) space that surrounds the screen — which we further construct as not *being* there. This de-ontologizing effect of screen convention (which amounts to one form of practice of representational space) is seldom accounted for in theory, especially since "film ontology" leaves out the viewing space altogether.

II

There is, in fact, more to the interplay of screen spaces than what Burch and Cavell have already touched upon. The space "inside" the screen can itself be subdivided, thus allowing for differentiation within the screen itself.

In the early silent era, the screen would usually be divided in half, showing perhaps someone sleeping at the bottom of the screen and his or her dream playing above, on the upper half of the screen; or there could be a rescue by the fire department in which the firefighters would arrive at a two story house (usually a painted theatrical set), lean their ladders on the wall and climb in and out of the second story windows while others would go in and out the door on the ground floor

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(this, of course, would be shown in one single shot, from a single camera position). Some of the early narrative films had a sense of mise en scene taken from the stage theater, that would divide the visual field into two side-by-side halves – so, for example, Meliés' *Voyage to the Moon* (1905) has one scene which shows the scientists climbing up to a balcony on the upper right part of the screen, while a giant painted set shows molten metal being poured down some chutes unto a giant mold to create their bullet-like rocket. This film also uses horizontal divisions, like a scene where the scientists go to sleep on the rocky ground of the moon and a series of astral bodies combined with deities and imaginary figures appear on the sky above them, eventually dumping snow down onto the unsuspecting sleepers as a revenge for invading one of their places.

The modern screen is more complex in its subdivision. This is partially due to technical improvements,[3] and partially due to changes in narrative strategies. In any case, it is possible to divide the modern

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[3]In the optics of lenses, which render a greater number of lines of resolution at the corners of the frame; as well as optical and digital special effects with more complex split frames and superimpositions.

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screen into as many as nine different areas, as if one were playing a giant game of tic-tac-toe.[4] The center of the visual frame remains as the main area, as it had also been during the silent era and through centuries of Western painting and, more recently, photography. Next in importance are the central portions of each of the four sides of the screen, beginning with the top and moving down. The corners remain the least important areas, although the top left corner would be more important than the other corners, given our Western tradition for scanning written text in that manner; while the bottom right corner would be the weakest area of the screen.

This is illustrated in a movie like Ford's *The Informer* (1935). There is a crucial moment where the protagonist, a simple minded thug who hangs around the fringes of a clandestine cell of an Irish nationalist organization, goes into the command center of the British

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[4]This subdivision could be seen as similar to the grid-like areas used for the stage (Dean and Carra 1980), which are, by necessity, activated by the movement of the actors since sets, props and the visual angle of the spectator tend to be static (unless the stage itself moves around on a turntable). In the cinema these areas are activated by the director or cinematographer's choice in arranging objects, action and camera angle plus any camera movement, which changes the spectator's visual angle. In this respect, film is more closely related to painting than to the stage.

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Army to betray the whereabouts of the cell's leader in order to collect a reward. After the commander in chief is satisfied that the stoolpigeon has given him the right information, he contemptibly throws the money on a wooden table and his assistant pushes the handle of his whip making the pile of reward money slide across the surface towards where the informer stands – the money slides from the far end of the table, which more or less coincides with the center of the frame, towards the lower right-hand corner of the screen. This movement of the pile of money is indicative of the main character's descent into (moral) inferiority precisely because of its spatial trajectory from the strong position of the center of the frame to the weakest possible position at the last corner of the screen that we tend to see. Since the property of depth of field allows for the illusion of a haptic space (see Chapter Three, Section IV), the "realistic" illusion of money sliding forward towards the viewer serves to occlude the psychologic-ideological effect of displacement from center to margin.

As technology improved and socioeconomic circumstances changed, a far more complex visual style began to emerge the world

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over, leading to some of the most visually stunning examples of spatial construction in the cinema through the interplay between the "grid" of the screen that we have proposed and the illusion of spatial depth (i.e., photographic depth of field). This was particularly prevalent in the 1950s and 1960s in the work of master directors like Ozu, Mizoguchi, and Antonioni. From a formal standpoint, their work probed the intricate relation between composition (i.e., disposition of objects and characters within the frame), mise en scene (i.e., movement of actors within the shot) and camera placement. Antonioni probed further the complexity of cinematic meaning by adding specific spatial relations to the movement of actors from shot to shot within a sequence, pushing this even further by exploring the relationship between onscreen and offscreen (presence/absence, Derridian[5] *difference*) in conjunction with

[5] *Writing and Difference* (1978). From a Bakhtinian sense of linguistic difference, Stam makes a case for deconstruction by looking at power relations within the situatedness of the utterance (1989:57-84).

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repeated gestures or moments occurring at key points of the narrative development.[6]

III

A question arises now with respect to the communicative capacity of the medium, as it did for film criticism in the middle of the 20th Century.[7] It should be understood that this question is not

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[6]These moments, from a narrative standpoint, are more adjectival than verbal in the sense that they serve to further qualify and illuminate, say, the state of mind of a given character than to advance the plot in any significant way. The most remarkable example of these procedures in Antonioni's filmography is *The Red Desert* (1964), which offers a veritable catalog of haptic space construction in film – e.g., the illusion of a space "beyond" the visually depicted photogram produced by an offscreen sound which may or may not have been heard by a couple of characters during a party and which may or may not be associated to a ship that arrives moments later with an injured sailor; or the scene where the main character walks along a meadow only to suddenly have a ship move through the background of this meadow (i.e., an unseen canal), so startling is the de-realizing effect of this mise en scene, that Moretti actually copies it in one of the soccer field sequences of the middle episode in Moretti's *Caro Diario* (1992).

[7]Early on, this concern initially took either an aesthetic (Arnheim, Balzs) or a psychological (Munsterberg) perspective; later on, structuralism would be added to the psychological approach (Mulvey and Silverman, discussed below); there was also a whole range of research in behavioral social psychology, stemming from worries about potentially negative "effects" of film (and tv) on children and teens (much of this was published in a series by The New York Times and Arno Press). There are also sociologically-oriented inquiries, like Montagu (1964) and Kracauer's return to the "physical reality" of the photogram (tinged with some psychologism, as well) in *Theory of Film* (1965), and straight sociological or anthropological explorations (Jarvie 1970; Powdermaker 1950). One of the last attempts to explains how films signify was the semiological approach aiming at a "textually intrinsic" basis to film-texts (Metz 1970; 1974).

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necessarily part and parcel of the particular approach in our own work, which is concerned neither with "psychological causalities" (i.e., how does the medium make itself *understood* in the *brain* of the spectator) nor with "social effects" (i.e., what behaviors or mental deficiencies can be associated with the activity of watching images on a screen). Nevertheless, given that issues of "communication and ideological penetration" are so fundamental to screen studies, we must entertain some concepts arising from this question. For purposes of our study, which is not concerned with psychological effects or mechanisms,[8] we

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[8]It should be added that since their inception, the studies in the social psychology of visual effects have failed to establish any correlation between the activity of viewing film and any type of behavior. Jowett cites a number of well established studies in the 1920's and 1930's that examined children (by Dr. Phyllis Mitchell), juvenile delinquents (by Alice Miller Mitchell), and mixed children and teenager populations (Dr. Charter's team for the Motion Picture Research Council and the Payne Fund); this latter study in fact corroborated the notion that family and educational institutions are more influential than films in shaping beliefs and behavior (1976:217-229). Jowett also points out that even studies in adult populations found that previous beliefs and notions were responsible for shaping attitudes after viewing films, a study by Ruths and Trager on the effects of *Gentlemen's Agreement* and *Crossfire* found that people who expressed greater sympathy for Jews after viewing the film had already scored higher on the indicators for minority group tolerance, Hulett found out that propaganda films like *Sister Kenny* (about a controversial treatment for polio victims) were rejected by general audiences since they already had a built in suspicion about the messages presented by commercially released films, and Haley found that audiences went in increased number to the movies during the Great Depression or during wartime to escape anxiety and that the reliance of youngsters on the media for guidance was

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shall concern ourselves exclusively with the question of the base-superstructure analysis of ideology.

In the "Introduction to the *Critique of Political Ideology*," Marx himself provides the metaphor of a superstructure made up of ideological functions and activities (art, politics, etc) standing like a building over a base or foundation provided by economic functions and activities. A notion which served as the basis for the economicism of the Second and Third Internationals, whereby every form of human activity was tied to an economic category or function. In this view, superstructural activities such as political ideology, intellectual analysis, and artistic creation were all seen as determined – hence, explained – in form and content by the various economic factors present at the moment of authorship or elaboration. This lead figures like Lenin (in Solomon 1979:169-77); Sánchez Vázquez (1973:14-16), and Bukharin (in Lang and Williams 1972:100-107) to understand the function of art as that of being the reflection of reality, like a mirror

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related to the collapse of family as an institution for guidance (pp. 370-375).

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that by necessity of its two-dimensionality must distort the nature of reality but also facilitates its understanding – especially self-understanding, which is where we most need a reflected image. Thus, it is through art – especially, though not exclusively, realistic art – that a society can gain greater self-knowledge.

One of the most basic problems with this approach is that it leaves the articulation between base and superstructure largely undetermined. Marx never specified the conduits of determinants issued from the base towards the superstructure, and Lenin never made clear how art or any other superstructural activity had the capacity to correctly reflect the base. Which leaves open the question as to whether this happens automatically, negating any agency to the artist him or herself. The work of Lukács (1967), Goldmann (1976:76-88; 1975:221-240), and Macherey (1978) attempts to solve some of this through the study of presumed homologies between the structure of the text and a kind of ideological ethos of the moment in which the work was produced. Much of this approach failed, and even successful examples (Leenhardt 1975; Perus 1976) are limited to singular works

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and have only a very generalized application (i.e., they simply establish a general connection between overall narrative features – say, excessive reliance on symbolism connected to exotic references – as an indication of the increased alienation of artistic work).[9]

Gramsci retains the distinction between base and superstructure but he reduces the "gap" between one and the other by positing a tacit materiality to "intellectual functions" (1971:5-14, 60-61). Gramsci's intellectuals are simply non-manual workers engaged in planning and directing productive activities – when a manual worker involves his mind in redesigning or planning his or her own tasks, this worker is also functioning as an intellectual. In the general social plain, therefore, the intent is to find an articulation between the intellectual work of the superstructure (politics *and* art *and* so on) and the functioning of a base that never fully exists "by itself." A historic bloc would actually imply a nearly perfect articulation between the intellectual-political "superstructure" and the economic "base" (*ibid.*, p.

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[9]Poggioli issues the exact same analysis with relation to the avant-garde of the 1920's (see Chapter Five).

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137; see also Portelli 1973 and Sassoon 1987:119-125), a view that connects to the Regulation School's notions of regime of accumulation and modes of regulation.

Althusser follows the same path but in the opposite direction in order to formulate a closure to the gap between base and superstucture in Marxist analysis (1976:67-125). After observing the metaphorical, rather than descriptive, nature of Marx's contention that the economic base is the foundation and determinant, in the final instance, upon which rest the diverse levels (*étages*) of the superstructural-ideological edifice; Althusser goes on to also observe that there is a relative autonomy to the ideological, and that these ideological superstructures have their effect "in return" upon the economic base. Moreover, ideology is eternal, it has no history in the same manner that Freud claims that the unconscious is eternal. Althusser also goes on to observe that in fact it is actually only at the level of the ideological that the social actors and subjects conduct their affairs and relations with each other, and that, therefore, the ideological has its own materiality. Rather than bridging a gap, Althusser simply collapses the terms of this

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opposition into a singularity: the apparatus. The distinction between base and superstructure will remain tacitly formal in the rest of his article as a way to specify the radius of action of ideology (as opposed to a theoretically necessarily but empirically unreal "non-ideology").

As Althusser sees it, the superstructural has two levels, the juridico-political and the representational, which are actualized in the social world as the Repressive Apparatus of the State (or the political State proper), and the Ideological Apparatus of the State (the schools, the judicial system, the religious institutions, etc). Everything collapses within and through the State, establishing thus a series of institutions and activities that have a socially structuring effect at the service of a dominant ideology; this implies not only the empirical reality of the superstructural, but also its social agency in creating the subject through interpellation. It is when confronted by ideology (through any of the apparatus) that the individual realizes that he or she is a social subject; and, in fact, this process, very much as with Schutz (1973), begins at least at birth, since the newborn is inducted into an

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already constiituted series of institutionalized rituals of birth, naming, registering (birth certificate), etc.

Coming from a slightly different Marxist tradition, Raymond Williams also discounts the base-superstructure conceptualization, preferring instead to initiate his analysis with the related notion that "social being determines consciousness" (R.Williams 1980:31). Largely, the base-superstructure model is for Williams simply too narrow to capture the variety of productive forms (forces) and the qualitative aspects of the social process included in what is deemed to be the cultural or superstructural realm. Even when considering the totality of social practices from Lukács, the analysis becomes top heavy with ideological domination in the same manner as Althusser (*ibid.*, 36-37).[10] Williams prefers to use Gramsci's concept of hegemony, which

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[10]Noël Carroll sees the same difficulty with an Althusserian analysis of film, choosing instead to call for an analysis of rhetorical rather than ideological devices. According to him, not all films are ideological (understood as false ideas used assertively for purposes of domination), there are elements in the text that are simply indexes of commonplaces held in the cultural-experiential reservoir of the audience (1996:275-289). Following this line of argumentation, David Bordwell (1989) attempts to classify and explain the mechanisms of rhetorical inference and construction on the part of the viewing critic. Bordwell is not really attempting to solve the problem of a gap between viewer and viewed or base and superstructure,

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establishes a central and dominant ideology, but which also calls for a process of incorporation which is dynamic and permanent. That is to say, hegemony does not simply subsume social subjects and keep them "there," it requires constant adjustments and renovation, thus, carrying with it a dynamic which includes a permeable, if not downright porous, dominant ideology.

It is in this context that most of the analyses of film ideology attempt to broach the connection between image and spectator. Bill Nichols (1981) is perhaps the most emblematic author in that he attempts to incorporate a largely semiotic approach of visual perception to the Marxist analysis of ideology. In a nutshell, along with semiotics, this approach understands film as a text and attempts to elaborate an inventory of procedures that structure the codification of a series of

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he is more concerned here with systematizing an understanding of how critics and other discerning viewers construct meaningful arguments about a given film. In fact, the one point he makes about the connection between viewer and screen is "psychological" (we make films personal because we can mentally identify with the characters and their surroundings, or we can construct the filmmaker as dialoguing with us; pp. 152-161). Ultimately, this is the old cathectic-mimetic theory of art – applied to film by, say, Balázs (1952, especially "We are in the picture" and "Identification," pp. 47-8) – which is the basis for reflection theory.

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signifying elements contained in the visual field; this field is the screen, which resembles "normal perception," but its distinct qualities create a "bracketed perception" that in fact allows for the visual sign of the cinema to be considered iconic rather than literal (i.e., just like we have to learn to read the word "chair," we must learn to read the image of a chair on the screen *despite* rather than *because* of its nearly identical visual appearance to a chair in the world of normal perceptual experience). The visual text thus encoded becomes an ideological arena in which signification and viewer contestation are enacted, although often "this contestation never transcends the arena informing it" (*ibid.*, p. 64). Any critic imbued with Marx's *dictum* that the point is not to interpret the world but to change it must then follow Brecht's concern to advance "an informing judgment where art is measured against the real conditons of existence within which it is produced" (*ibid.*, p. 67). To that effect, Nichols presents the possibility of a political text that advances change as a human possibility and not as the Modernist interplay of textual codes, as some analysts of the self-

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reflective text contend (*ibid.*, p. 68). Nichols offers the following quote from Dana Polan

> Like the Lacanian theories of the subject. Brecht's theory depends upon a notion of positioning. The attitudinal position of the viewing subject springs from an attitudinal position in the work – the artwork embodies a distance between the way things are and the way they can be (*ibid*).

In a later version of the same text (Nichols 1985 vol. 2:669-670), Polan explains that the position of the spectator is a position within the circuit of communication, and the text further adds that, unlike bourgeois Modernism, Brecht's texts show humans (including the audience) as alterable and capable of being altered. To which Stam adds

> ... a solution is seen as desirable and is concretely anticipated, but it must emerge from the collective collaboration of the audience. Brecht's goal was to demystify, to alert the public to the invisible codes not only of dramaturgy but also of political and economic power. His reflexivity is not not innocuous or co-optable becaue he is less interested in denouncing the fact that art lies than in denouncing the fact that society lies, and that human beings can do something about it (1992:212).

Stuart Hall's political understanding of the televison audience as an active participant in the communicative circuit that calls for the

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encoding and decoding of a visual text is also part of this kind of analysis (in During 1999:507-17).

Although these texts go a long way in closing the distance between a superstructurally rarefied "symbolic activity" and the causal level of real social agency, namely the economic base; the fact remains that the separation between audience and the agents of communication (whether by having an author, more or less, directly addressing the audience, or through the signifying elements on the screen) is still intact; and so is the relation between a viewer positioned in the circuit of communication and a social reality that remains *ex post facto* in terms of the act of viewing (i.e., it still is taken as external and distinct from the act of viewing, despite the fact that producing, exhibiting, and viewing visual images is part and parcel of what makes that very reality).

In that vein, film analysts like Baudry have attempted to bridge the gap by suggesting an "apparatus" of the subconscious which is operated by cinema in a manner similar to dreams (in Mast *et al.*

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1992:690-707, also 302-312).[11] Taking an Althusserian position, Commolli and Narboni (*ibid.*, pp. 682-689) simply posit ideology as an *a priori* condition to film making, the viewed film is by nature ideological (and the labor of the critic is to unmask this ideology given certain pre-established categories of film); of course, these critics only vaguely establish the fact that their critique of ideology escapes *all* ideology by relying exclusively on a factual scientificism (the circumstances of production, ideology, and meanings; p. 688), without ever considering whether the privileging and centering of a presumably transparent facticity (i.e., Comtian positivism) is not in itself also already ideological. Zavarzadeh proposes a politicized "misreading" of films in which the alternative and oppositional tales are purposevely forgrounded with the understanding that the connection between visual perception and reality is always mediated (1991:22-29). Deleuze (1986 and 1989), less concerned with ideology than with perception in general, returns to the Bergsonian notion of the flow of reality through

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[11]The logical inconsistencies and insufficiencies of Baudry's argument have been thoroughly analyzed by Carroll (Mast *et al.*:708-724). See footnote 14 below.

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the mind to show the connection between mental and filmic realities in both time and space.[12]

It is not our attempt here to produce a whole inventory of cinematic analysis of signification and ideology, we simply wanted to point out the importance that this question has had in these types of studies. It should be clear, however, that if we are going to understand the notion of "spectatorial positioning" in a "communicative circuit" of "visual language or text," then we have to account for the spatial nature of the signifying act.[13] This is a major problem in the theory of the gaze, as we see below.

IV

There is, as we have just seen, inherent meaning in the disposition of the screen in relation to its surrounding space, as there is

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[12]Noël Carroll, looking at the mind-film analogies of Hugo Munsterberg (1996:293-304), points out that this approach has tends to become a general analogy that fails to explain much – "do we really learn anything by being told that the closeup is an analog to the psychological process of attention ?" (p. 302).

[13]As always, we are talking about the actual space of the screen, the theater, and so on. Film theory has always consigned film space to "representation of space" as a formal (extradiegetic) device (e.g., Stephenson and Debrix 1965, Burch 1973, and the recent approaches of Bowman 1992 and Hedges 1991).

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also meaning in the interplay between various subdivisions of the space of the screen. If there is a linguistic component to the cinema and other screen-based forms of visual communication, then we must be forced to take into account the gestural nature of language as a key, if not *the* key, to understanding this type of "message-relay." Linguistics and semiotics very seldom take into account the spatial existence of language, but in our everyday communicative practices we are always "reading" into any sign its spatial disposition in relation to us, qualified further by our own physical placement with respect to the source of the utterance. For example, an utterance like "You'll pay for this!" does not mean the same if the speaker is lying on the ground face down with our foot over his or her back, than it would mean if the speaker is sitting on a highly ornate throne atop a platform five feet above our heads, nor will it mean the same if it is being relayed through a politely firm intermediary. Signification, that is, does not depend exclusively on characteristics inherent to the linguistic sign; in fact, movement and relative positioning in space can and often do change the signifying characteristics that make up any utterance.

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This, in turn, has serious implication in our understanding of subjectivity as a necessary given in our schemes of communicative cognition. That is to say, if we are going to posit the necessity of a "sender of the message" and a corresponding "receiving subject" – both already capable of some form of mutually held understanding prior to the communicative act – then we have to allow for that subjectivity to be conditioned (that is, formed *and* transformed) by its own disposition or displacement in and along the physical space where the communicative act is set. Film theory and analysis has slowly but steadily shifted from the universalist project of the semiotic system of systems to a more particularist understanding of screen communication as a specific act fraught with meaning arising from the diachronic trajectory of the subject (i.e., the lived past, the biography), as well as also arising from the synchronic moment when the viewing subject is positioned before the visual.[14]

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[14]One of these gradual attempts was the work of Jean Louis Baudry on "the apparatus" (*op. cit.*), especially the notion of subjectivity taken from Lacan and the mirror phase. Baudry attempts to set up a common experience between dreaming and filmgoing, inserting the subconscious as the part of the subject that is truly active while watching the film. The filmgoer, then, is situated before the projected

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One of the first examples of this analytic turn in the history of film theory is Laura Mulvey's landmark essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1989), originally published in 1975. The most famous aspect of this essay is its introduction and treatment of "the gaze," that libidinal fixation of the male-dominated look upon the *image* of the beautiful woman. The gaze could be distinguished from a general scopophilia ("pleasure in looking") by the fact that it is meant as an assertion of power

> the voyeuristic-scopophilic look that is a crucial part of traditional filmic pleasure can itself be broken down. There are three different looks associated with cinema: that of the camera as it records the pro-filmic event, that of the audience as it watches the final product, and that of the characters at each other *within the screen illusion*. The conventions of narrative film deny the first two and subordinate them to the third, the conscious aim being always to eliminate *intrusive camera presence* and prevent a *distancing awareness in the audience* (p. 25, our italics).

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images the same way that the cave dwellers are situated before the reflected shadows on the cave wall in Plato's allegory. There are many logical inconsistencies to this argument, exposed by Noel Carroll in a lengthy article (*op. cit.*); additionally, for our purposes this approach becomes too internalized and devoid of any real, physically tangible experience beyond the mere mention of the "closed space of the darkened room and the projector;" which is meant to evoke Plato's cave, but it is never clear how (as Carroll points out). For those reasons, this approach is bypassed in favor of the theories discussed below.

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It is Mulvey's contention that the diegetic subjugation (i.e., inferior positioning within the narrative representation) of the main female character to the interested look of a male protagonist is meant to serve a male-dominated, heterosexual politics of the cinema; since it supports the notion of a superior and more powerful active male looking at a passive female object of the gaze, while at the same time relieving any castration fears that a central female presence could bring to the male spectator.

It is revealing how this passage assumes an underlying construction of space in this process of visual imposition of gendered power. In a certain way, this passage reiterates Cavell's contention that the screen screens the space of the spectator from the space of the representation (or pro-filmic event); although, Mulvey has political reasons to reject this screen illusion, while Cavell has ontological reasons to celebrate it. Firmly established, nevertheless, are two spatial aspects of the screening process: 1) it consists of a concatenation of spaces, each necessary but not sufficient to explain visual signification;

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and 2) visual elements are manipulated to create the illusion that this connection does not exist, thereby equating one space with the other (so that, for instance, the camera-angle/screen-surface becomes equated with the spectator's visual field). Mulvey sees this as part of a specific political strategy, which can be disrupted if one begins to manipulate the medium in such a way as to effectively[15] create a distancing effect on the audience by calling attention to the existence of this process. Indeed, space – especially, the screen and its "edges" – became the battleground between the hegemonic ideology of the Classic Hollywood Model and the subversive strategies (differential space) of some avant-garde movements and independent filmmakers.

Kaja Silverman offers a contrasting position on the gaze and the screen

> the theorists of suture articulate a more disjunctive and even antipathetic relation between camera and eye. Spectatorial pleasure, they maintain, depends on the occlusion of the enunciatory point of view, and the seeming boundlessness of the

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[15]As Dana Polan points out, there can be politically ineffective (i.e., non-subversive and non-distancing) effects that call attention to the means of their own manufacture as images, thus disrupting the spatial identity necessary to the bourgeois illusion of realism in the cinema but only for fun (*op. cit.*).

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> image. But the enunciatory activities of the cinematic text cannot be entirely concealed. Even so simple a device as the implied frame around a given shot can serve as a reminder of those activities (1996:126).

According to suture theory, the visual pleasure of the shot is short-lived because almost immediately the viewing subject wants to know who controls what is being viewed. In the classic narrative model, the first shot shows something or someone and the next shot will usually show Character X looking straight ahead, leading the viewer to believe that the first shot depicted what this character "is seeing" during the second shot. The camera gets associated with the character and, in this manner, hidden from the viewer's awareness. This procedure also sets up a chain of signification in which Shot 1 is always already a signifier for Shot 2, or at least for an absence or lack always experienced when the viewing and/or narrating subject ascends to the level of discourse (Silverman in Mast *et al.* 1992:199-209).

Silverman is aware that this theoretical position has the drawback of being socially and historically indeterminate, open itself to the criticism of ahistoricism (Rothman in Mast *et al.* 1992:192-198) or of

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Eurocentric bourgeois universalism (Clough 2000:54); it also leaves the subject in a very tenuous, almost passive situation. To render a more active and resistant viewing subject, Silverman proposes an interlocking relation between "the gaze," "the look," and "the screen." The gaze could be defined as that absent force that controls and directs the subject's viewing impulse, the look as the act and condition of seeing at any given moment, and the screen as a matrix of cultural references and cognitive mechanisms that condition and limit the viewing subject's capacity to infer and derive meaning from the visual field before him or her.[16]

The gaze now acquires agency at the service of gendered ideology, but it does so at the expense of Husserl's physiologically-based concept. In Husserl, the gaze is the result of the act of looking, in Mulvey and Silverman the act of looking in already conditioned by an *a priori* gaze that guides not only the act but the predisposition to the ideological content of the gendered screen. Thus, the gaze becomes

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[16]Deleuze (*op. cit.*) sets out to trace that matrix in terms of how film actualizes the manner in which time and space are experienced by the mind (see also, Waxman 2000).

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noumenal, since it not only is now essentialized but it also seems to hover in a extra-mental metaphysical realm of its own (all humans are "prey" to its action, thus requiring transcendence not only to know its features and elements, but also to create some intercommunication between the gaze and the look it somehow "guides"). Thus, the gaze is no longer a physiological act that allows the mind to hold the visual impression of phenomena, it is now a force that acts and holds down the mind itself. Regrettably, this school of "gaze analysis" never explains exactly how this takes place, the gaze is simply postulated and given a life of its own (i.e., in Lukácsian terms, this is a reification of what can best be explained as a process).

According to Patricia Clough, Silverman takes Lacan as a basis to locate the gaze nearer "the feminized spectacle [of] the 'lit-up' screen" (2000:56), rather than locating it at a transcendental space behind the viewer The screen, furthermore, shapes and gives various individual positions to the subject, keeping in mind that it also has an "ideological status" which serves to impart on the subject all sorts of social differences of race, class, sexuality, etc

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> In shifting the location of the gaze nearer to the screen, Silverman also has made it possible to think about the way the screen looks back at the viewer not only with ideologically specific images, but with its own eye or its own definition of visuality. It is as if the machined screen has its own way of seeing, upon which the human eye is dependent and inseparably connected (*ibid.*).

The problem of transcendence, nevertheless, remains at some level in this theoretical scheme. It stems from the radical separation of the subject from a visual object. Undergirding all talk of gaze and suture is Lacan's theory of the mirror stage. If the subject needs to objectify himself or herself (and even in pre-Oedipal psychology it is mainly a "him") through the mirror image in order to gain access to the symbolic order, then the only suturing mechanism possible is linguistic (otherwise, the subject would presumably remain "whole," albeit "undeveloped towards the other"). This forces Silverman to state that the screen is not only "on" the visual bodies or objects, but also "in" the viewer, and to "suggest that the screen or cultural-image repertoire *inhabits each of us, much as language does*" (Silverman 1996:221, italics are ours). This begs both the question of why the subject, then, has to go through all the agony of suturing through what seems to be

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immanent to both subject and object, and why we need "the gaze" when we already have the screen inhabiting us.

Clough, conversely, seems to be talking of the physical film screen. As a physical space, the "machined screen" is indeed inseparably linked to the human eye occupying the space of the auditorium to which the screen connects. And precisely because of its machined technological nature, the screen is inscribed as a generative space producing a way of seeing particular to a given society during a given period of time. In fact, the concatenation of gaze, look, and screen can be seen to correspond to the linked spaces of film-screen, cinema-auditorium, and town/country. These spaces and their interrelated features mutate during the course of the Twentieth Century, but the chaining of interrelated spaces remains the backbone of the screen's social productivity.

Space provides the material basis for the connection between viewing subject and visual object. The great insight of the theorists of the gaze and of suture rests in offering a way to explain how and why these produced spaces take on the function of engendering meaning.

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The fact remains that the viewing subject is a subject already situated in space, he or she is part of what the production of space is all about. Even human subjectivity depends on that relative positioning of the subject in relation to his/her own mirror image and his/her own others. So, it follows that the screen will have the power to "look back" at the viewer, because its space serves to situate said viewer in relation to the viewed object, thus engendering meaning.

This is precisely what Silverman herself touches upon when she discusses Lacan's concept of anamorphosis with respect to Holbein's *The Ambassadors*. The painting shows two men in high court regalia standing at either side of a table upon which several objects are placed; there is also a smaller table in front of the table that supports the ambassadors, and upon this table (very much in the center of the painting) lies a nearly indistinguishable object. Only when the viewer walks to the right of the painting, can he or she see that this object is a human skull. There are two vantage points, a perspectival one in which success and worldly goods are celebrated, and an anamorphic one that

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serves to question and disparage that previous point of view (Silverman 1996:176-177).

Silverman does not make anything out of the fact that the skull is exactly in the center of the picture. We would like to propose that the meaning of the painting might be different, at least to a degree, if the skull had been placed elsewhere within the visual frame. Had it been off the bottom left hand corner, behind the feet of the one ambassador standing there, the skull might have ended up being a symbol of those obliterated and victimized by this man's irresistible ascent to power and glory. It might have also been a sly, but secondary comment on the central meaning of the painting. Given its literal centrality, though, the skull does offer itself as that semantic hinge that allows for two meanings to coexist on an equal basis.

Visual meaning will always depend on the distribution of visual objects upon the representational surface; which, in turn, is inextricably tied to the way in which the viewing subject is distributed within the viewing space (and sometimes, as it is clear in the case of the cave paintings of Lascaux or Altamira, precisely by the fact that the general

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viewer is left out of the viewing space). The viewing subject, therefore, will always have to be understood as a subject situated in, therefore produced by, space.[17]

V

If the screen is the main source of meaning and subjectivity in contemporary culture and society, that is still not a sufficient element to explain the creation and maintenance of frameworks for a collective interpretation and utilization of meaning. The screen works precisely in connection to spaces that surround it, and it is the action of those spaces joined to the screen that allows for the possibility of commonly held views and interpretations that permit social coherence. Assuming the screen, thus, to be a source or site for the production of subjectivity, it is only logical that we now turn our attention to the production of space for that viewing subject (or subjects). This space is, of course, the movie theater, at least in the case of the film screen (in the final

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[17]Insofar as we are subjects in space and spatial meanings are intelligible to us through the practice of everyday life, then it follows that meaning from the production of visual spaces will be readily accessible without recourse to metaphysics (cf., Merleau-Ponty 1962:3-12).

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chapter, we will explain how as screens change so do the spaces of the viewing subject).

Writing about the great picture palaces of Berlin in 1928, Siegfried Kracauer commented that their "surface splendor" has been matched with sufficient taste and ornamental craftsmanship to make them a "worthy abode" for the modern "community of worshipers" (1995:323). Like their American counterparts, these movie houses had stopped showing continuous film programs, opting instead for the revue spectacle

> This total artwork of effects assaults all the senses using every possible means. Spotlights shower their beams into the auditorium sprinkling across festive drapes or rippling through colorful, organic-looking glass fixtures. The orchestra asserts itself as an independent power, its acoustic production buttressed by the responsory of the lighting. Every emotion is accorded its own acoustic expression and its color value in the spectrum — a visual and acoustic kaleidoscope that provides the setting for the physical activity on stage: pantomime and ballet. Until finally the white surface descends and the events of the three-dimensional stage blend imperceptibly into two-dimensional illusions.
> Alongside the legitimate revues, such shows are the leading attraction in Berlin today. They raise distraction to the level of culture; they are aimed at the *masses* (p. 324, italics in the original).

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The movie theater itself is a production of space and, as such, it meets the needs of a specific period in history – the advent of mass society (itself an umbrella term to describe social, political, economic and cultural activities aimed at involving "the masses"). Cinema (screen plus theater) becomes the first great production of cultural space of mass capitalism (i.e., Fordist assembly-line mass production, with its consequent requirement of mass consumption)

> Barney Balaban and Sam Katz argued: "We cannot afford to build up patronage depending entirely upon the drawing power of our feature films as we display them. We must build in the minds of our audience the feeling that we represent an institution taking a vital part in the formation of the character of the community." Balaban & Katz carefully formed this institution by taking advantage of certain factors where it did hold advantage over the competition. By differentiating its corporate product through five important factors — location, the theater building, service, stage shows, and air conditioning — Balaban & Katz was able to transform itself, and the film industry as a whole, form a small-time operation into a part of the growing chain store revolution (Gomery 1992:42).

It is important to note that four of the five differentiating factors for Balaban and Katz cinemas were directly related to space. In our next chapters, we will detail further how the cinema was linked directly to the economies of scale of Fordist mass production and to the

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demographic redistribution that this society required. Suffice it to say, for the time being, that this passage illustrates quite clearly the socioeconomic context of this spatial production of subjectivity.

It is well known, at any rate, that the lifestyle surrounding these masses was a dizzying and seemingly instantaneous swirl of rapid urban spread, with its showcases for technology-driven "advancements" in the home, the street, the workplace. For that reason,

> The interior design of movie theaters serves one sole purpose: to rivet the viewers attention to the peripheral, so that they will not sink into the abyss. The stimulation of the senses succeed one another with such rapidity that there is no room left between them for even the slightest contemplation. Like *life buoys*, the refraction of the spotlights and the musical accompaniment keep the spectator above water. The penchant for distraction demands and finds an answer in the display of pure externality....
> This externality has the advantage of being *sincere*. It is not externality that poses a threat to the truth. Truth is threatened only by the naive affirmation of cultural values that have become unreal and by the careless misuse of concepts such as personality, inwardness, tragedy, and so on — terms that in themselves certainly refer to lofty ideas but have lost much of their scope along with their supporting foundations, due to social changes (Kracauer 1995:325-6, italics in the original).

Kracauer, like Simmel and Benjamin, is writing about a period of transition when a new social order is on the brink of obliterating the

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last traces of a previously existing state of affairs, which, nevertheless, is still part of the living memory of that massified blue and white collar working class being displaced from their sleepy little rural towns to the increasingly larger urban centers of the industrial world. The city, itself a production of space, was bound together with the cinema by the same political economy that gave rise to the assembly line and the working masses, the skyscraper and the boulevard, the department store and the cinema. Like Kracauer, Walter Benjamin fully understood the connection between place and culture that gave rise to the modern cult of distraction

> Buildings are appropriated in a twofold manner: by use and by perception — or rather, by touch and sight. Such appropriation cannot be understood in terms of the attentive concentration of a tourist before a famous building. On the tactile side there is no counterpart to contemplation on the optical side. Tactile appropriation is accomplished not so much by attention as by habit. As regards architecture, habit determines to a large extent even optical reception. The latter, too, occurs much less through rapt attention than by noticing the object in incidental fashion. This mode of appropriation, developed with reference to architecture, in certain circumstances acquires canonical value. For the tasks which face the human apparatus of perception at the turning points of history cannot be solved by optical means, that is, by contemplation, alone. They are mastered gradually by habit, under the guidance of tactile appropriation.

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> The distracted person, too, can form habits. More, the ability to master certain tasks in a state of distraction proves that their solution has become a matter of habit. Distraction as provided by art presents a covert control of the extent to which new tasks have become soluble by apperception. Since, moreover, individuals are tempted to avoid such tasks, art will tackle the most difficult and most important ones where it is able to mobilize the masses. Today it does so in the film. Reception in a state of distraction, which is increasing noticeably in all fields of art and is symptomatic of profound changes in apperception, finds in the film its true means and exercise. The film with its shock effect meets this mode of reception halfway. The film makes the cult value recede into the background not only by putting the public in the position of the critic, but also by the fact that at the movies this position requires no attention. The public is an examiner, but an absent-minded one (Benjamin 1969:240-41).

It can be said that the two original contributions of mass industrialism to the history of socially produced space are the cinema and the skyscraper. It is no coincidence that Benjamin would compare the kind of cultural habituation centered on architectural perception to the emerging habituation based on the cinema and the other mass ornaments of modern popular culture. Nor is it a small matter for Benjamin to claim that art would take on those tasks from which the modern individual would rather hide, conferring upon it the specific function of mobilizing the masses. Writing at the rise of fascism,

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Benjamin was far less optimistic than Kracauer about the sincerity and truthfulness of film or any other type of mass ornament; and his analysis of mass mobilizations carried a cautionary note, eventually validated by the capacity of German and Italian fascists to deploy mass spectacles as part of their cultural war for the hearts and minds of the master race.

What Benjamin feels "in his bones," and Kracauer does too, is the permanence of a fundamental social and cultural transformation that had already been radiating from the urban centers of Europe and North America for well over a quarter of a century by the time of their writings. Its forms and contours were made up by the new architectural and engineering features of the modern metropolis, the new mechanically-based forms of entertainment, and the new politics of pageantry and propaganda to sway that new social and economic force, the masses. Benjamin and Kracauer, along with some of their contemporaries (like the Čapek Brothers and Aldous Huxley), both knew that the brave new world of technology, urbanism and mass consumption required a radically different type of cultural order which

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would help instill in its citizens a needed obeisance to the new order of things and a willingness, however grudging, to properly fit into this mechanically dehumanized way of life. This structural transformation of the "economic sphere" could only be carried out, as it had always been the case, by an accompanying transformation of the "cultural sphere" — in real life, we insist, these two are never really separate "spheres." Since this transformation, by necessity, operated at the material level and merely in an internal spiritual or psychological plain, these writers could not help but notice the transformation of the material conditions of cultural production and reception.

Space, as part of those material conditions, became one of the elements that Kracauer and Benjamin wrote about directly and indirectly. Prior to the theorists of the gaze and of suture, these two writers had already presented a viewer whose subjectivity is situated in and conditioned by space. However, unlike the former, who atomize the viewer's perceptual faculty by turning it into a mentally-localized individual response directed from above by a hovering, quasi-metaphysical "gaze," the latter seem to allow for that mental function

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to be always connected to a social context which serves as the basis for the total life of the subject. As such, the perceiving subject finds himself or herself situated in both time (at a given historical moment) and space-within-space (a given place connected to another place related to yet a third place, each one with its particular socioeconomic function).

Consequently, Kracauer is able to show how the "viewing subject" is positioned in relation to "the visual frame" not just by something called "the gaze," but because there are also particular visual arrangements to space of the theater (including the lobby, the viewing hall or auditorium, etc). Signification, then, is not located exclusively at a juncture between the "site of the screen" and its "representational content," it is also to be found in the actual, physical environment where the viewing subject dwells. Moreover, the viewing subject and the theater that encases him or her is itself situated within a larger space which is ruled, at least at the "cultural level," by the cult of distraction. Kracauer fully employs the rhetorical device of naming this process a *cult* of distraction, in order to unmask a social discourse aimed at

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dictating and regimenting the lives of that working mass which needed to be mobilized for one purpose or another (i.e., initially to integrate it as a cohesive workforce, then to carry out market expansionism under the ideologies of nationalism, colonialism, etc). But, unlike "the gaze," this rhetorical device does not come out of a disembodied and ahistorical universalism, it belongs to a specific era and a specific place. It finds its origin in the large "dream factories" — UFA in Germany, Cinecitá in Italy, and, of course, Hollywood which is a total production of space in every respect (even as a geographic location) — and its source of mystical emission and social religion at the *temples* of distraction that Kracauer talks about.

Benjamin goes even further in his understanding that distraction is not merely some sort of vehicle that could allow the true consciousness of a new social class to emerge. He sees what Simmel felt about those blasé individuals of the new technological metropolis, and applies it to movie-goers who have been and are continuously being taught to have a different mental life from their contemporaries in small towns still ruled by a rural ethos. The strength of the subject-

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forming process of distraction is that it gathers the mass in one space, transforming its mentality by inculcating different habits from the small town or the early industrial burgs. It is not that moviegoers emerge "brainwashed" from the theater, they have merely learnt the new skill of the absent-minded examiner: "Distraction as provided by art presents a covert control of the extent to which new tasks have become soluble by apperception." This absent minded examiner will be thus ready for training in the most refined and specific technical tasks or in negotiating an increasingly complex and interdependent social world; and, at the same time, will be willing to dispense with any inclination in the evening to be a critical critic of this way of life. If alienation is writ large in this cult of distraction, so too is the social cohesion and survival skill necessary to negotiate the new social conditions of mass existence.

Benjamin and Kracauer would retort by saying that the cinema is indeed the camera obscura of the modernist world, and not merely a false cognate. While Crary seems to retain the Platonic idea of a direct relationship between "real object" and "projected shadow" which

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occurs in the cavelike setting of camera obscura (see Chapter One), Kracauer and Benjamin are aware that the modernist world is now entirely devoid of any connection to the Natural world of the "real object" – or better yet, that the real connection between natural object and human perception is now entirely mediated, therefore obscured, by socioeconomic processes of urban-industrial estrangement and commodity fetishism (possibly more via Simmel's *Philosophy of Money* than of Marx's *Capital*). They understand the world to have now become a spectacle of mass ornaments, of carefully planned cities and technologically-dictated relations of labor (both technical and social): they are both fully aware that a moviegoer is no longer interested in the relationship between a "real Southern belle" and Scarlett O'Hara. The fictional character of Scarlett O'Hara is for all intents and purposes "real," she is now constitutive of the everyday experience of the average modern citizen, adding a problematic twist to John Dewey's sense of art as a reflection of experience (1934); art in fact produces experience.

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To put it in a slightly different way, we live in a world where the natural process of production and consumption is exquisitely subdivided and separated into distinct and unrelated specializations that seem to be put together by a supernatural force. There is no need for the public to worry about what is natural anymore, the fetishes and illusions of the mass economy are real, regardless of whether their content (e.g.., *the* Scarlett O'Hara) actually exists or not. This is precisely what distractedness entails, and this is precisely how the cinema can operate as a structuring structure (like Bordieu's *habitus*) and, at the same time, allow for the High Modernist ethos in which artistic self-awareness and self-referentiality substitute for that overthrown transparency of relations between the natural object and its figurative representation.

Crary seems to have a causal notion of space as a structuring structure, so his sense of structuration flows only in one direction: from structuring space to structured observer. Neither space, nor culture at large flow exclusively on a top down direction, because they are inscribed within social practices which, by definition, are dialogic (i.e.,

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they "use" as much as they are "used"). Space is capable of helping construct the subject because it is also capble of absorbing, containing and presenting those modifications that the subjects themselves exert upon its own structure. (We will note, in our final chapter, how this process was carried out, at least for the cinema, at that moment when those viewing subjects – initially formed by a certain moviegoing practice – became filmmakers themselves and attempted to carry out their own modifications on the spatial practices of the moviegoing tradition that helped form their cinematic orientation. This inevitably turned into some sort of political act.)

Finally, it also bears keeping in mind that there is a chaining of spaces in the cinema, as we have indicated before: the screen connects to the theater or auditorium, which connects to the neighborhood or town, which connects to the rest of the nation. At the same time, cinema emerges at the beginning of a process of radical socioeconomic transformation, all the way to our present era of globalization (i.e., transnationalization and homogenization of capital and its associated cultural hegemony), leading to an inevitable tension between the

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nationalist orientation of film and the transnationalist interests of financial capital (including capital invested in film). This eventually leads to social, political and economic change, which both requires and leads to changes in the various forms of culture, including the screen. As we will see, the social and cultural history of the 20th Century truly makes this the age of the screen, which changes its size and associated spaces as time moves along, altering in this manner the various cultural functions of the screen (i.e., signification, ideology, aesthetics, etc). Like the layers of an onion or like those Russian dolls that fit into each other, the screen and its encasing spaces come together as a giant link of telescoping geographic elements that help create and support, as a totality, the social makings of our contemporary world.

VI

Our focus in the present work is, therefore, on the forces that have agency in the construction of our contemporary social relations of production. Given this focus, the work will set aside considerations of specific psychology attached to reception (tastes, identity and self-identity positions, emotional dispositions towards stars or genres, etc)

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or aesthetic features attached to particular examples (the "difference" between an American and a German film, or a film and a television program, etc). Our position is no different from that of, for example, a semiotician who looks at the transindividual "functional grammar" of the system of fashion, while setting aside the affective relationship or the aesthetic joy that each subject would derive from "their sense" of wearing clothes.

If we take a very brief look at the history of aesthetic considerations applied to the cinema, we find a common problem: it is impossible to locate any aesthetic specificity to the "object." In fact, it is nearly impossible to attach what Benjamin (1968) called "auratic" qualities to the object, not only because of its mechanical reproducibility, but also because the object *per se* is not readily available to the public – what the public confronts is a visual process better understood through the discoursive practices of the *assemblage* (Deleuze and Guattari 1987), than out of any traditional aesthetic considerations.

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The clearest example of this traditional aesthetic of the art object is found in Hegel's classification of the various stages of *aufhebung* in the unfolding of *Geist* as manifested by the different *forms* of art (1970; 1993). The aesthetic primacy in the object, for Hegel, was in the relationship between natural reality and form: architecture being the most basic form since it still retained use, while sculpture, which would be next, would have already removed itself from use and into a more abstract realm of pure contemplation (yet its form would retain the three dimensional similarity to lived reality); sculpture, in turn, would be superated by the two-dimensional form of painting, and so on.

It is from Hegel that we find a full emphasis on the formal analysis of the aesthetic object independent of the content (i.e., representation and its referent, along with its ideological "message.") Given this tradition, it is no surprise that the first film analysts would attempt to locate its aesthetic value in its formal elements. For example, Béla Balázs (1952), as one of the earliest critics to publish a weekly column, helped pioneer such ideas on the particular aesthetic form of film as the identification between spectator and action

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produced by the camera, or the human self-reflection upon the object facilitated by the microphysiognomics provided by the close-up; in this latter instance, Balázs found his most fertile ground in the representation of the human face provided upon the film screen. Rudolph Arnheim looked at particularities like the depthlessness of the projected image to produce an account of the specificity of filmic representation (in Mast, Cohen, Braudy 1992:268-77); and Kracauer (1965) further complemented this by positing the establishment of physical reality as the major goal of film.

We could call this the realistic tendency, which tries to establish a sort of filmic essence that occurs in the filmic object, if not a pre-existing essence which is best fulfilled by the precise operations of cinema. Of course, this type of approach can be critiqued on its own terms, as Carroll (in Mast, Cohen, Braudy 1992:278-85) does when he dismisses the "specificity thesis" as unnecessary to the explanation of the radius of action of given art forms, and as counterfactual to the presence of specific processes of one art form in another form deemed less suitable to render such representation (e.g., the transformation of a

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man into a wolf may be best rendered in the cinema, but it does not preclude stage forms from also attempting that visual trick).

The most active counter to the realist tendency, however, is the nominalist tendency that arose from both the theory as well as the practice of art. The most clear example is provided by Duchamp's urinals and bicycle wheels placed in the museum or gallery – in a nutshell, these experiments demonstrated that the aesthetic was not located in the object but in in a space that dictated, by social convention, that an otherwise mundane object could be seen as art. Like all nominalism, these maneuvers presented art not as objectivation but rather as an experience of subjectivation – i.e., viewer and object in a particular relation, given their particular placement relative to other objects of representation and other social spaces of all kinds. Thus, a critical strain, deeming the aesthetic object as "constructed," arose at the same time that film theorists were seeking the intrinsic qualities that could elevate film to the status of art. In fact, Balázs himself concedes that art is not about a "pre-existing reality," but about the craft of rearranging elements from reality into an aesthetic form (1952:259-63);

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and Panofsky furthers this with the idea that the relationship between formal arrangement and depicted reality in classic art forms flowed "from the top down," whereas film may very well be the first art form to flow in the opposite direction (in Mast, Cohen, Braudy 1992:247-48).

Of course, there is the famous point-counterpoint between Eisenstein (1967) and Bazin (1957), pitting montage against deep focus and long takes; rather than subscribing to a specifist position, this debate actually holds constructionist views anchored on method and authorship. Even more recent authors such as Stephenson and Debrix (1969), who locate the art of film within the formal elements of the medium, cannot but anchor their entire attempt on a process of communication – derived from Dewey's notions of art as experience and Croce's Neo-Kantian notions of artistic intuition (i.e., the artist's intuition is expressed in art form and recognized by a public which shares its own intuitions with the artist's).

In sum, it is impossible, at least for the time being, to establish any stable and localizable element of the aesthetics of film. Film

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appears to, in fact, embody at its very core the notions uncovered by Duchamp's Dada objects, which may indicate that the aesthetic is a process rather than an object. Thus, it seems to us that the function of cinema, both social and aesthetic, is better fixed through such processual notions as the material practices of space which we want to foreground in this work, rather than through an analysis of mental perception of specific filmic features.

In the final analysis, the production of space may actually show how the same movie – say, Hawks' *Bringing Up Baby* (1938) – can be seen as art in the space of Lincoln Center's Walter Reade Theater, as a form of popular entertainment during a summer's night at Bryant Park, and as a recuperation of some sort of generational patrimony and cultural heritage when shown on television by PBS or Turner Movie Classics. It should also be noted that, insofar as these forms of representation are screen-based, and therefore transferrable from one space to the other, they seem to have no particular specificity; in this respect, we make no difference in our work between the aforementioned *Bringing Up Baby* and the current television hit, *E.R.*

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Nevertheless, there are also clear differences that in other analytic contexts could be made between the cultural status of the one *vis a vis* the other, or the specific psychologies of reception that distinguish a movie audience from television spectators, etc; these concerns fall completely outside of the scope and focus of the present work.

A final word needs to be made about the relationship between spectators and a single screen form, the cinema in this case. Postmodern and Postcolonial analyses have presented a particularistic notion of both representation as well as spectatorship, usually associated with identity issues (either a film is presented as an example of a given identity, or a spectator views the film from the standpoint of a particular identity). This posture is avoided in the present work, because it seems to us to be doubly essentialist in dangerous ways. The first essentialism comes when identity is not only fixed but assigned to an individual or a group. Not only can this be seen as false (cf., Goffman, *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*), but it duplicates the schemata of racists and chauvinists. Nobody is intrinsically German, intrinsically *mestizo*, or intrinsically gay, for example. These are all

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social labels that not only vary in meaning from group to group and from one historical period to another, but they are also heavily marked by existing contexts of social negotiation. To follow our example, a German viewer in the 1930s may very well have related differently to Fritz Lang's *M* than an American spectator, but it would be impossible to ascertain whether this is due to some intrinsic German qualities to the film, or whether the context of rapid Nazification in Weimar Germany (still relatively unknown in the United States at the time) would have a differentiating effect. Similarly, a gay viewer may have different gradients to his or her "queer look" at a given film, depending on whether that film was shown in a movie theater open to general admission, a Gay and Lesbian Festival, or a social psychology course on modern views about deviance. To fix spectatorship as an invariant and pre-existing "identity," as if the spectator is not constructed, at least partially, by the very act of watching a film is simply an act of analytic reductionism. What remains as a constant is the fact that all these identities are forged by going to the same spaces and engaging in the same practices of space. It can be said, then, that our focus is on the

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function that productions of space have in constructing a shared process contemporaneity on a global scale (for which we give ample evidence in the next three chapters); that is not the same as saying that there is only a single identity across the globe, or even in a single region. Identities are varied and always in the process of being codified and recodified, and this can be a set of issues of great interest and importance; however, given the scope of our analysis, this can only be seen as epiphenomenal to a commonly shared process of late capitalist subjectivation, which is what makes that globally shared contemporaneity possible.

The second essentialism is even more dangerous. It consists in accepting the reification of sociocultural processes of negotiation and concensus as actually existing qualities of national, ethnic, or personal legitimators of discourse. Chapter 5 in its entirety will look at semiotic elements that are turned into aesthetic features of recodified nationalism at the moment when Fordism attempts to find a managerial route to implement its regulatory strategies. In other words, there is nothing aesthetically or culturally American *vis a vis* cultural or

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aesthetic German essences. Nor is there anything intrinsically or essentially ethnic, or gendered, etc. All of these identities are invented ("imagined," Anderson 1983). Returning to Lang's *M*, not only is the film very similar to other *noir* films made in other countries, but he was able to flee to the U.S. immediately after making it, and his very next film was a very "American sequel" to *M*. If the aesthetic elements and the core issues of representation in *M* are intrinsically German, as opposed to being part of a more global hegemonic discourse of modernity, then how can we explain their successful transplant to small town American for Lang's next film?

It is additionally dangerous to bring up spectatorial affect as a legitimation technique for this type of analysis. The principle behind this contention is that subaltern groups need to find positive forms of representation, and that by necessity these acts of representation and spectatorship are counterhegemonic (Anti-Eurocentric) and emancipatory. First of all, this is not an argument about aesthetics but about social constructionism – even Shohat and Stam (1994) fail to provide examples of a particular Brazilian way of cutting films, or an

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African cinematography, etc. What we have is, largely, the Hollywood Model being used as the formal vehicle to depict African customs, events in Brazilian history, or aspects of life in Black American communities. The result is that even the most radical pronouncements of Third Cinema – the "aesthetics of hunger" (Rocha), the "poor cinema" (García Espinosa) – are really about a lack of concern with production values and a focus on content, leaving aside almost all discussion of the formal elements of film aesthetics. This reinforces our contention – made more explicit in Chapter Five – that the group "essences" are all invented or "imagined" through social negotiation, and that identity films simply exhibit an inherent tension between the globalizing tendencies of late capitalism and the particularist tendencies of groups on which a certain form of late capitalism – Fordism – has to rely in order to carry out its modes of regulation. The close relatioship between Fordism and the cinematic screen would explain why recent identity politics are played out through film and not television or computers.

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Finally, it bears pointing out, that whatever feelings a group may have for its particular screen representations are either external or run politically counter to our analysis. First and without making the same claim to scientificity, the relationship of the love that Germans might have felt for *M* is as irrelevant to the analysis of social relations produced by cinematic space as the love that Mexicans might feel for jalapeño peppers is to the gatroenterologist studying dispeptic ulcers caused by the pepper's acid. Additionally, and more damagingly, the particularism of this analysis of spectatorial affect cannot be systematized without diluting its allegedly emancipatory and counterhegemonic claims. This arises from the fact that identity politics are always about who or what is excluded rather than about what is included. Thus, it would seem at first glance like a triumph of tolerance and multicularism to exclude general systematizations – such as our analysis of spatial production and modern subjectivation – as a dangerous reductionism of the many identity particularisms that empowers ethnic or neo-nationalist or gender-based or sexuality-based audiences. But this analysis fails to note that the most trenchant, if not

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successful, deployment of identity politics in our current world is presented by the so-called "settler movement" in "Greater" Israel, which would argue that it has a special love for the land that cannot be understood or assailed by anybody – not by the gentiles, because they do not understand the "chosen" attachment to the land and are themselves the source of centuries of Jewish suffering, nor by anti-Zionist Jews, who are in their very opposition demonstrating to be self-hating Jews. This line of argumentation is no different than the analytic line that would privilege a gendered look, or an ethnic look, or a national look or a queer look over any other (at least for a specific group of films).

These identities are never autarchically generated, and their essentialist claims lack all legitimacy. It is for this very reason, that we will continue arguing for a focus on the function rather than the "aesthetics" of the screen, and why we will choose a general systematization (whatever its reductionisms might be), eschewing all identity-based particularism as baseless.

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VII

To sum up, what we see, is that the capacity of the screen to "create" subjectivity does not come from a mysterious power of ideological penetration or an even more mysteriously hovering force of the gaze. It is created by specific practices of representational space in which humans are situated (both as individuals and as a collective audience for that given show) before the projected images. Space is simply the material basis, and its production the dynamic process of subjectivation, symbolization and social incorporation. It serves as the basis for a "language" with a particular "grammar;" since that language is itself a production of space, its semiosis is no more extraordinary than the units of signification in the other spatial "texts" that we are accustomed to "read" in our everyday lives since infancy.

Let us now proceed to detail the specific practices of representational space for the screen and the manner in which they connect to the production of a given social order.

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Chapter Three
Silent Cinema and the Technological City: Taylorism and Differential Space

I

On the evening of December 28, 1895 at the Salon Indien of the Grand Café on the Boulevard des Capucines in Paris the Lumière family presented its first films to some thirty-five spectators (Cook 1990:19; Jeanne and Ford 1974:17). We know, of course, that the films contained in that program were not the first strips of motion picture ever made; and we also know that this was not the first exhibition of moving photographs held before a group of viewers. Yet, we also know that something special took place on that occasion, and that the thirty-five members of that audience stepped into the Parisian night to tell the rest of the city about the wondrous thing they had just seen. In a matter of months, the Lumières had to find a larger place to run their show, and soon afterwards yet one more site to run concurrent shows, and then a third and so on. Modern culture was about to relocate its center to a brand new space, leaving the Gutenberg Galaxy behind.

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It certainly would be high exaggeration to place the birth of contemporary culture and society exclusively in the hands of film and the Lumière Family; just as it would be a great injustice to simply consign their first night to a mere episode of scientific and technological history blown out of all proportion.[1] In fact, the Lumières themselves saw their invention as pure science, and were just as shocked as anybody by the acclaim that their little machine garnered. But, from the very beginning, *le cinéma* was destined to become a spectacle, rather than a limited demonstration of lab research; an object of joy and recreation, rather than a tool for scientific work; and this is where the Lumière Brothers have a unique place in history.[2] By

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[1]The mechanical genealogy of the projected image is well known – from Kirchner's Magic Lantern to the series photography experiments of Muybridge and Marey which immediately predate both Edison and Lumière. We also know that the Lumières were industrialists who thought that their invention had limited scientific value and were shocked at the interest it garnered even from other industrialists and researchers (Jeanne and Ford 1948:17-18; Mast 1976:19).

[2]Although not entirely, of course. As we pointed out, the cinema was born in the midst of an era of drastic economic change and technological innovation, and the Lumière Brothers were merely one of many groups or individuals engaged in the "discovery" of projection. Èmile Reynaud pioneered the use of projection lenses and sprockets for his animated drawing strips at the Musée Grevin; Hannibal Goodwin began to experiment with celluloid base for the emulsions; Oskar Messter devised the Maltese-cross system that allowed for the intermittent motion

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perfecting a mechanism to do away with blurring and distortion during the rear projection of moving photographs, they took the decisive step in wedding the cinema to the screen; thus being responsible, however inadvertently, for one of the key productions of space in our contemporary world.

This produced a sort of cultural synthesis that opened up a new era, a fact not lost on the only news reporter at the Salon Indien

> a writer for *La Poste* commented on the Cinématographe projections of December 28, 1895: "The beauty of the invention resides in the novelty and ingenuity of the apparatus. When these apparatuses are made available to the public, everybody will be able to photograph those who are dear to them, no longer as static forms but with their movements, their actions, their familiar gestures, capturing the speech on their very lips. Then, death will no longer be absolute" (Cook 1990:13; also in Burch 1990:21 – original quote in Sadoul, *Louis Lumière*).

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of the film through the gate of the projector in order to match the exact rate at which the film moved through the camera; Lewis Latham, who came up with a projector just a few months after the Lumières, was responsible for the "loops" that allow for slack and reduce sprocket tear; and so on. Then, there is the notable case of Louis Agustin Le Prince, who in 1890 projected motion pictures at the Paris Opera for some functionaries of the French Government; however, he mysteriously disappeared from the train he took right after holding that demonstration, and his machine was never used again — adding further irony to the myth of the Lumières first public show (see, Cook 1990:4-14; also, Sadoul 1949; Jeanne and Ford 1948; Montagu 1964; Mast 1976).

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The triumph of science and technology over life as over death was part of the newly minted ethos of a "progressive" era in which innovation and industry would bring humanity to full mastery of Nature and the Universe – this is also, of course, the time of Jules Verne and H.G. Wells, and of the Frankenstenian ideology of Gothic Victorians, as Noël Burch points out (1990:6-21).

What the Lumières inaugurated was a differential space, a place for new practices of space related to the transformation of the social relations of production – i.e., Taylorism. In fact, very soon this became a sequence of produced spaces that connected the screen to the movie house, and these two to the town or city (where movie theaters were usually located), which in turn were connected to the nation-state. Like those Russian dolls that fit into an exact but larger replica of each other, or like the layers of an onion, one can move from one type of produced space to the next in order to reconstruct, at the level of analysis, a total assemblage[3] (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:3-4 and ff) of

[3]Assemblages are constitutive elements of a given whole that are characterized by their heterogeneous and heteronomous nature; being neither object nor subject, these assemblages confer upon that given whole a multiplicity of signification that

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produced spaces of everyday life, where modern society presents the most clear cultural manifestation of emerging relations of production.

Since the emerging nature of these relations of production involves instability and uncertainty, it corresponds to the nature of a differential space to offer a multiplicity of practices that seemingly obey no rules other than those of their own making. It is not until a hegemonic order to these relations is imposed, usually in the form of a mode of regulation, that the amorphous practices of differential space become centered around a particular regime of signification (the gradual emergence of this regime will be discussed below as well as in the next chapter).

II

Lumière's work is an example of this amorphous quality to an "emerging culture," which presents a difficulty for film theory insofar

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cannot be explained by or defined through an Efficient One (a God-like cause, a metanarrative). In the present work, and in accordance with Lefebvre's contention that "every society produces ... its own space," we will see later on that the same Russian doll-assemblage of spatial productions can be noted in the case of both television and computers; of course, by (historical) necessity, the internal characteristics of each space and the sequence of interconnected spaces differs.

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as these films already appear to offer a "prophetic" notion of a (forthcoming) "film language" (A. Williams 1992:28-30; Vaughan in Elsaesser 1990:63). Gaudreault, following Marshall Deutelbaum, looks at the progress of the event within the single-shot films of the Lumières; arguing that these films constitute a first level of narrativity, and that what we now consider to be narrative films constitutes a second level comprised of as many mini-narratives as the shots contained in one of those films (in Elsaesser 1990:68-75). Allan Williams concludes that Lumière was "the first great exponent of the strong French tradition of the *integrity of the shot*" (1992:30; italics in the original) – i.e., the action within the shot must be exhausted before the camera should be stopped or before another shot could be possible.

These analytical responses show that, from its very inception, the single cinematic shot already imposed some sort of rhetoric of the moving image. However, this rhetoric or narrative strategy was not dependent on a mysteriously acquired ontological status or on an equally mysterious concordance between a sender and a receiver suddenly thrust into a novel mode of communication. It was dependent

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on a specific production of space: the screen. The screen situates both the image as well as the viewer, placing the latter usually in a position of physical inferiority, given the screen's monumental size and its usual placement above the eye-level of a seated public. These seemingly trivial facts cannot be discounted – the filmic image is more than a mere recording of visual stimulus (or an articulation of an image-subject and a spatio-temporal sequencing of said subjects, as Gaudreault proposes), it is in fact a practice of space. When Allan Williams contends that "one of the favorite compositional techniques might be called the Lumière diagonal" (*op. cit.*, p. 28), it is tacitly understood that the diagonal runs from one side of the screen to the other and that the spectator is placed, by the framing strategy, in an oblique position to the *action* – and herein lies the difference between film and still photography, something moves along the diagonal (a train, a boat, people, and so on). It is the confluence of all these factors that led to the "urban myth" of the first spectators running away from the screen while *The Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat* was being shown.

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Maxim Gorky, in his famous account of the Lumière program shown at the Nizhni-Novgorod Fair on July of 1896, provides one of the very first documents of early film reception in which he demonstrates ample awareness of the spatial practice of the film show

> When the lights go out in the room in which Lumière's invention is shown, there suddenly appears on the screen a large grey picture, "A Street in Paris"– shadows of a bad engraving. As you gaze at it, you see carriages, buildings and people in various poses, all frozen into immobility. All this is in grey, and the sky above is also grey–you anticipate nothing new, for you have seen pictures of Paris streets more than once.
> But suddenly a strange flicker passes through the screen and the picture stirs to life. Carriages coming from somewhere in the perspective of the picture are moving straight at you, into the darkness where you sit; somewhere form afar people appear and loom larger as they come closer to you; in the foreground children are playing with a dog; bicyclists tear along, and pedestrians cross the street picking their way among the carriages. All this moves, teems with life and, upon approaching the edge of the screen, vanishes somewhere beyond it (in Platt 1992:3-4).

In effect, what Gorky – whose knowledge of narrative strategies is above suspicion – demonstrates is a readiness to "read" spatial maneuvers and to even imbue them with a certain relational intent (carriages move straight onto *you*, people loom larger as *they come closer to you*); he shows no attempt to ascertain a "grammatical" – let

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alone discursive – line to the cinema. For Gorky, cinema is a poor form of representation (it is colorless and soundless), but it clearly has a sort of presence in space. There is also the beginning of an implicit understanding of the identification between the viewer's eye and the camera angle ("contained" by the screen field), possibly aided by a habituation to specific forms of visual culture after three quarters of a century of photography. Nevertheless, Gorky still can freely talk about the "edge of the screen;" putting into question Cavell's notion that the screen has no frame or border (perhaps the result, in Cavell's writings, of a later process of naturalization and habituation to a specific modality of cinematic reception not necessarily traceable all the way back to the origins of the screen itself).

Burch makes it a point to stress Gorky's "neurotic attachment to naturalism" (1990:24) in order to specify a context of spectatorship with divergent aesthetic preferences and expectations. On the one hand, Gorky's discomfiture with the lack of color, sound, and permanence of the visual objects (i.e., they vanish past the edge of the screen) would be prompted by a naturalist imperative that served as

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impetus for the hegemonic run of a prior bourgeois Institutional Mode of Representation ("recovered" by the cinema with the Classic Hollywood Model); on the other hand, the first two decades of Primitive Cinema also would accommodate a "labile and ambivalent" form of representation

> The Lumière picture [...] even when not showing the features of a baby "as if under a microscope" or adumbrating narrative closure as in *Arroseur et arrosé*, does *live* in its own way. It is non-linear, non-centered, impossible to grasp on first viewing, true, but it provides, as it were, a sense of closeness to reality, precisely insofar as the latter itself is non-centered, unclosed, non-linear, ungraspable on first viewing. This is no longer (not yet) a question of the construction of the real in the manner of naturalism, but of a picture which, while not an analogue of reality, is nonetheless the singular result of an encounter between the cine camera and "raw reality" (*ibid.*, p. 33).

Burch contrasts this style to the kinetographs that Dickson's made for Edison (*ibid.*, pp. 28-32) – which are the first prototypes of the Instiutional Mode of Representation – e.g., *May Irving's Kiss*, which introduces the camera placement of the medium two-shot to accentuate the climactic action of the couple's embrace and kiss, the preference for single subjects in the middle of the frame (e.g., *Fred Ott's Sneeze*, *The*

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Amazing Sandlow and *Circular Dance*), or for carefully staged multiple subjects against a black background (e.g., *Barber Shop*).

There is a tendency here, which Burch touches on very delicately, to present a contrast between a proto-narrative ideology in Edison and a proto-documentary ideology in Lumière (*ibid.*, p. 34). Such differentiation hardly makes sense in this case, since the distinction between documentary fact and narrative fiction as an operative contrast (i.e., as a strategy to build up a discursive form in film) is inconsequential; both Dickson and Lumière seem to be imbued by the same imperative to simply "show."

In fact, the clearest example of the non-centeredness of raw reality for Lumière is arguably more evident in *L'arroseur Arrosé* (1896),[4] a narrative film, than in any of the "documentaries" he made.

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[4]According to Alan Williams, this is a remake of *Le Jardinier et la Petite Spiègle*, which is the version that most likely was shown in the first programs at the Grand Café (*op. cit.*, pp. 27-29). It is not clear to us if the details under discussion also pertain to this first version; the version under discussion is, nevertheless, the better known version, and was so even at the time. It should be noted that, according to Jeanne and Ford, the Lumière program did not have *L'arroseur Arrosé* until January, weeks after the first show. Burch, to the contrary, states a claim by Vincent Pinel that the film commonly known as *L'Arroseur arrosé* is not really the film catalogued by that name in the Lumière collection but the uncatalogued *Le*

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This is the famous first comic gag film, where a man is watering a flower bed with a hose, a kid creeps in from behind and mischievously steps on the hose causing the water flow to stop; when the man looks at the spout the boy releases his foot sprinkling the sprinkler, who then chases after the boy catching him and giving him a spanking. The staging of this film is unremarkable but for the fact that after the man chases and catches up to the boy, he brings him back for punishment almost to the original spot where he had stood hosing the flowers. This would seem to indicate a certain sense to the placement of subjects within the space of representation (i.e., mise en scene); that is to say, had the character not returned to the foreground, the punishment would not seem as exemplary. This "directorial" move may not in itself be

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Jardinier et la Petite Spiègle (Burch 1990:266). Cook (*op. cit.*), by contrast, writes that the film was shown during that first night. In any case, it is clear that the original "narrative" impulse of the Lumière cinema had little or nothing at all to do with story-telling. In fact, the remark made of Lumière films was that they showed "Life caught in the act" (sometimes also translated as "life caught unawares," based on the French original, "*la nature prise sur le fait*;" Sadoul 1948:291); which symptomatically places Lumière in the same camp as Vertov (who used this expression as a slogan for his own work) and other avant-garde artists. This is an ultimate irony, since the Lumières developed the *cinématographe*, as we said before, as part of the same institutionalized, scientific-industrial complex that the avant-garde aimed against.

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that extraordinary, as it is not only common practice in still photography to use this technique to frame subjects in order of importance, but it also is a routine aspect of theatrical stage direction (i.e., downstage is always stronger due to its closeness to the audience, a notion which can easily be transposed to an interplay between foreground and background in film).

As it happens, at least in one of the versions of this film, the actor playing the gardener stepped out of frame for several moments during his trajectory from background to foreground while bringing the truant boy back to the place of final denouement. Neither the actor nor the cameraman (Louis Lumière himself) had any sense to identify the edge of the frame by selecting visual markers along the path that the man and boy should follow; nor did it seem to induce them to "reshoot the take" – easy to do, since it was done in one camera placement with available light, the location was the garden of the Lumière mansion, and the actors were one of the many assistants and one of the many children of that large and prosperous provincial bourgeois family. The film, moreover, is also one of the first film adaptations (along with

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Dickson's *May Irving's Kiss*), in this case from a popular comic strip of the era (Sadoul 1972:18). The "visuals" for this film had already been in effect storyboarded in their original form; and thus, Lumière's "incapacity" to control the movement of his actors cannot be blamed on the carelessness of improvisation or of live performance.

For many years, these types of "errors" were ascribed to some defect of the infant medium, which were to be "corrected" by the genius of Griffith as the cinema reached its (linguistic) maturity. We have quarreled enough with the false ontology and teleology of this approach, suffice it to say that recent analyses have taken up the Primitive Mode in a non-pejorative manner in order to assess its own value, irrespective of the later history of film (e.g., Gunning and Gaudreault, Burch, Brownlow, etc.). This new approach has issued a call to think of early cinema as a different type of "screen practice" (Musser 1990:15). This puts into serious question the *a priori* notion of a screen space that must be treated as if it "contained itself" within the edges of the frame (or, for the spectator, the visual field *on* the screen), so that no significant and signifying action should be cropped

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or allowed to exit past the "sides" of the screen without any *motivation*. It is precisely because this notion of motivation had to be implemented through convention[5] that Burch can talk about an Institutional Mode of Representation.

This is not to say that the Primitive Mode was not based on some natural visual tendency; it, too, was based upon spectatorial conventions that not only sustained its signifying practices, but also a subject-object relation between viewer and screen. A few years after the Lumière programs, this was made quite explicit by another single shot film that told the story of a country bumpkin whose incredulity upon seeing moving pictures prompted him to stand up and charge at the screen as if the objects and events upon it were real (Porter's *Uncle Josh Goes to the Movies* from 1902, based on an earlier single-shot film from Britain, Paul's *The Countryman's First Sight of the Animated Pictures* from 1901; see Musser 1990:321-22). These movies were part of a whole grouping of depictions of ignorant farmers

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[5]Since motivation implies a character psychology that the viewer can discern.

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or foreigners from backward countries whose childish reactions or incapacity to cope with the technological pace of city life was indicative of the inherent superiority and advancement shared between filmmaker and knowing audience. This already incorporated a production of space larger than that of the movies: the separation between town and country, which translated now into the separation between advanced industrial nations and backward rural nations. But, at the core of this distinction was the representation of a subject-object relationship, which held that only modern, cultured, urbanized subjects would have the knowledge and understanding to distinguish between reality as such (the only level a country bumpkin presumably accepts) and reality *within* representation. That particular subject-object relationship was not activated merely by the presence of the screen (which existed, as already said, at least since Plato's time), but by a whole set of spatialized institutions and conventions that had gradually been distancing representation from reality, resulting in a presumed separation between culture seen as *superstructure* and political economy seen as the *base*.

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The country bumpkin, simply put, is an individual who has not been socialized for the enclosure of art and cultural representation in the separate space of the art gallery or of the concert hall. Thus, when Cavell asks about what the screen screens – repeating, perhaps unwittingly, Uncle Josh's gesture – he actually buys into a historically situated logic, which accepts as natural what is really a socially produced relation between the viewing subject and the object of symbolic representation.

III

Tom Gunning has been one of the most forceful critical voices in fixing a precise analytical position for the earliest period of silent films, in contrast to the narrativized period (the Nickelodeon plus the Hollywood Eras), where the spectator has learnt to subordinate any visual devices to the primacy of narrative

> However, cinema before 1908 (or so) presents a different landscape. Here the assumption of a narrative primacy becomes more of a barrier to understanding than a useful hypothesis. While storytelling is not totally foreign to cinema before the nickelodeon boom (1905-1909), a number of apparent stylistic anomalies and an often radically different mode of exhibition lead us in another direction. Rather than early approximations of

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> the later practices of the style of classical film narration, aspects of early cinema are best understood if a purpose other than storytelling is factored in.
> Cinema as an attraction is that other purpose. By its reference to the curiosity-arousing devices of the fairground, the term denoted early cinema's fascination with novelty and its foregrounding of the act of display (Gunning in Abel 1996:73).

It is important to note that Gunning is not only making here a distinction between what he calls the Cinema of Attractions (or what Burch calls the Primitive Mode) and the narrativized cinema, but also tying-in a historically specific context of cultural innovation associated with the fairground. Accordingly, Gunning calls this the Cinema of Attractions, based on the attractions available as rides or spectacles in the fairs of the era, and also as a way to pay due tribute (in Elsaesser 1990:59) to Eisenstein as originator of the concept in his essay "The Montage of Attractions" (which Eisenstein originally meant to be used for the stage; Eisenstein 1957:230-233; Taylor and Christie 1994:87-89). In addition, he also anchors this categorization of the cinema on a larger notion, based on Benjamin's study of Baudelaire (1968:174-177), of a contemporaneous "Aesthetics of Astonishment"

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> Only a careful consideration of the historical context of these earliest images can restore an understanding of the uncanny and agitating power they exerted on audiences. This context includes the first modes of exhibition, the tradition of turn of the century visual entertainments, and a basic aesthetic of early cinema I have called the cinema of attractions, which envisioned cinema as a series of visual shocks (Gunning in L. Williams 1995:116).

It is important to point out that Eisenstein meant a very different approach to his use of "attractions" as shock (see Chapter 5), whereas Benjamin (together with his contemporary and friend, Siegfried Kracauer, and his predecessor, Simmel) was more concerned with the rupture in human experience produced by the new forms of technological life in the era of galloping urbanization, monetization, abstract labor and alienated modernism. Simmel's blasé attitude (1971:329-30), Benjamin's *flâneurie* (1978:156-7), and Kracauer's cult of distraction (1995:323-8) all stemmed from a new order where human life was no longer capable of encompassing and coping with the accumulation of stimuli that overwhelmed the everyday life experience of any and all individuals in the modern settings of late capitalism (mainly, the large metropolis).

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The "shock of the new," therefore, always confronted a dulled sensorium; an ironic development, given that late capitalism formulated its way out of crises by positing productive intensification in the form of a "technological revolution" – a transformation which needed to capture the imagination of those very individuals whose senses were being dulled precisely by the inhuman barrage of technological innovation. These shocks of the aesthetics of astonishment were part of a culture that was beginning to valorize the capacity of technology to reach beyond humanity's own content, an ethos exemplified by the Olympic motto of *citius, altius, fortius*, which was also designed to replicate in the human body the effects of technological innovation.

It is, therefore, no surprise that those shocks of the cinema of attractions were always presented in relation to the machine or the technocratically organized service – these films usually showed the effects of rapid transit or speedy delivery of goods or services; for example, landscapes hurtling past the viewer (i.e., the camera) mounted on a train, or a car speeding out of control towards the viewer (i.e, the camera) placed in the middle of the road; or a fire that would suddenly

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rage in the interior of a house only to be put out by a group of firefighters, who would arrive at full speed, jump off their firewagon as a team and proceed to expertly combat the flames while carefully, but surehandedly, rescuing the desperate victims (usually women and children).[6] Even when this penchant was itself satirized, for example in

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[6]For example, *The Georgetown Loop (Colorado)* from 1903, which consists of two takes made with a camera mounted on an open train car going up and down the mountains. At some point, passengers looking out the window in front of the camera are seen waving handkerchiefs; during the second take, there is a moment where a train is seen crossing from right to left on a track above the one where the camera and its train travel – this will be notably repeated in later documentaries like Rutmann's *Berlin, Symphony of the City*. A related film is also from 1903, this time with the camera mounted on a river barge, *Skyscrapers in New York City from the North River*. The second category of film is best exemplified by Hepworth's *How it Feels to be Run Over* from 1900. The third category is really a subsection of what could veritably be a "damsel in distress" leitmotif of early cinema – similar to the disaster leitmotif in contemporary cinema since the 1970's; there are many movies like Porter's *The Great Train Robbery* and *The Physician and the Castle* which incorporate this motif into a more complex narrative. Two "pure" examples are: R.W. Paul. *Plucked form the Burning*. (1989) where a woman and baby are rescued from inside a burning room by firefighters, and J. Williamson, *Fire!* (1901-2), which offers a more complex example, showing scenes where a policeman runs to the fire station and the firefighters rush out fixing their horse and cart in a hurry, then showing a man overcome by the fire inside and a firefighter who comes in to douse the flames and carry him out, while from outside, the firefighters bring out other people and a single firefighter has to jump onto an outstretched sheet where other firefighters catch him and carry him off (see also, Low and Manvell 1948:96-98). This was also used in "blue movies," such as *A Fire in a Burlesque Theater* (1904), produced by the American Mutascope and Biograph, a risqué comedy for that time, which consists of a frontal shot of a painted backdrop set, with a cardboard door that opens to let a man out while smoke begins to come out; firefighters rush in and lean ladders onto a window to the left and above the door, young ladies climb down the ladder and

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Fitzhamon's *That Fatal Sneeze* (Hepworth Manufacturing Co., 1907), part of the pleasure of the film consisted in purely showing speed rather than showing the results of the action; thus, the camera was placed above a cart pulled by a frightened horse going at full gallop and nearly running pedestrians, cars and other unfortunate objects and beings on the street – neither of those are carefully framed, the only thing that matters is their fleeting presence of a faint object as it blurs its way across the screen.

It would seem, therefore, that the cinema of attractions would be a sort of visual stream of consciousness of early modernity, in which the relationship between viewer and object would be constituted by the imperative to simply show

> Attractions pose a very different relation to the spectator. The attraction does not hide behind the pretense of an unacknowledged spectator ... the attraction involves an exhibitionistic rather than a voyeuristic regime. [...]
> The metapsychology of attractions is undoubtedly extremely complex, but its roots could be traced to what St. Augustine called *curiositas* and early Christianity condemned as the "lust of

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eventually a firefighter climbs down with a fainted woman draped over his shoulder.

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> the eye." We could list a number of inherently "attractive" themes in early cinema: a fascination with visual experiences that seem to fold back on the very pleasure of looking (colors, forms of motions – the very phenomenon of motion itself in cinema's earliest projections); and interest in novelty (ranging from actual current events to physical freaks and oddities); an often sexualized fascination with socially taboo subject matter dealing with the body (female nudity or revealing clothing, decay, and death); a peculiarly modern obsession with violent and aggressive sensations (such as speed or the threat of injury). All of these are topoi of an aesthetic of attractions, whether of the cinema, the sensational press, or the fairground. Attractions' fundamental hold on spectators depends on arousing and satisfying visual curiosity through a direct and acknowledged act of display, rather than following narrative enigma within a diegetic site into which the spectator peers invisibly (Gunning in Abel 1996:75).

This lustfulness of the eye, which will characterize the visual turn of late capitalist modernity up to our present day, is a key component of the relation between subject and object presented by the particular spatial production of the screen. It has become an abused cliché in recent years to call everything "a site," but the screen is quite literally such an object tied to such a process. The screen is a specific site where modes of signification are implemented and propagated, and these modes of signification have a particular social effectiveness precisely because they are spatial. Put in different words, the set of

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meanings produced under the imperative to simply show in the Cinema of Attractions is part of a spatial use of the screen, so is the specific set of meanings of the Institutional or Hollywood Model. *Curiositas*, therefore, is not merely a psychological disposition but a practice of screen space connected to the larger social context of the era through other productions of space. The Cinema of Attractions will treat the screen as a display case for the (usually) singular visual object depicted photographically; the narrativized cinema of the Institutional Mode, which slowly emerged between the Nickelodeon Era and the Hollywood Era, will treat the screen as a sort of membrane that will resemble the fourth wall of the theatrical stage at the moment that, ironically, the moving pictures supposedly find their "own" language.

Examples abound of pure visual fascination in the early moments of the cinema. G. A. Smith's *Grandma's Reading Glass* (1900), consists of a full shot of a room with a table at which an elderly lady sits on the right; a boy comes in and takes her magnifying glass from the table pointing it around the room – intercut with the action of the boy, we see matted out closeups of the various objects the boy sees: the

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bird in his cage (hanging on the backwall in the long shot), a kitten, grandma's right eye moving and blinking. Soon, this lustfulness of the closer look will become explicit in the close up inserts of a lady's foot peering from under her long skirt and crinolines in such movies as Smith's *As Seen Through a Telescope* (1900) and Porter's *The Gay Shoe Clerk* (1903). Of course, this voyeuristic[7] erotization of the rising skirt was not exclusively present in the comedy closeup (the earliest closeup shots were all in comedies), but also in Edison's Lumièresque *What Happened on Twenty Third Street* (1903), a wide angle of its pedestrian and vehicular traffic on that street, as the windy day lifts the skirts of several women who pass by.

Early filmmakers, in fact, seem to be quite conscious of the "peeping tom" effect to the cinematic lust of the eye, and there are a

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[7]Tom Gunning claims that the Cinema of Attractions offers an exhibitionistic regime rather than the voyeuristic one that could be found in the narrativized era (in Abel 1996:75). We will continue alluding to the voyeuristic positioning of the spectator, because our interest is not in separating formal strategies between two visual regimes but, almost to the contrary, in establishing the origins of certain elements of our era's "visual turn." It is our contention that, even allowing for Gunning's exhibitionist imperative for early silents, the key feature remains the lust of the eye tying into the erotization of the viewed object.

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whole series of movies in which a servant, or a youngster, or an indiscreet neighbor is found peering through a keyhole or a crack in some drapery in order to catch a glimpse of an unsuspecting young lady in her boudoir: Pathé's *Par le trou de serrure* (1901), which copied Smith's idea of the matted out shot in the form of a keyhole, in this case; American Mutascope and Biograph's *From Showgirl to Burlesque Queen* (1903), in which a young lady enters a dressing room and stands in the middle of the frame undressing down to her slip, then, as she's about to remove it, she coyly moves behind a folding screen where she seemingly undresses further, only to come out wearing an ornate leotard and a parasol which she playfully waves around. The playful voyeurism of the latter film gets turned into a visual comedy gag in which garments are draped or propped up on one side of a fence, and a reverse shot reveals a laughing boy instead of the nude lady anticipated by the viewer (Bamforth Company's *Ladies' Skirts Nailed to a Fence* from 1900), a similar movie shows a couple making love while the propped up garments deceive their chaperon on the other side of the fence (Hepworth's *The Other Side of the Hedge* from1905).

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There is a moral ambiguity to this erotization of the female figure peeked at by the male gaze. In a lot of these early movies, there is a degree of punishment or return to reality for the peeping tom. This is certainly true for the men who look into the keyhole or through the telescope in the films quoted above; in other films, the punishment consists in bringing the man back to reality (e.g., Pathé's *Rêve et Realité* from 1901, which shows a man at a restaurant drinking wine while accompanied by a beautiful young lady, in a second shot he wakes up next to a hideous woman who continues to beckon his caresses – actually played by a man dressed in a woman's sleeping bonnet and gown).

A film like Williamson's *Are You There?* (1903) offers a variation on *Rêve et Realité*, mediated this time by technology rather than liquor – a man calls a young lady over the phone and propositions her, she drops the receiver and exits the scene while her father walks in and puzzled picks up the receiver only to be utterly distressed by the words he hears; the man finishes telling his paramour where to meet

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and confidently sits down to await what turns out to be, much to his dismay and surprise, a date with her father's slashing umbrella.

However, not all technologically-induced visual lust was necessarily punitive in the Cinema of Attractions. Almost every exhibitor had a short film or "view" of the interior of a railway car in which a respectable looking couple would be seated, at some point – sometimes involving the darkening of the windows to signify that the train was going through a tunnel – the man would take the woman in his arms and kiss her (G.A. Smith's *Kiss in the Tunnel*, remade by people like Zecca and Porter with different comic variant – e.g., in Porter's *What Happened in the Tunnel*, the man "tries to kiss the woman sitting in front of him when the train goes into the tunnel but ends up kissing her blackfaced maid," see Musser in Elsaesser 1990:128-129).

This form of filmmaking incorporated both aspects of the aesthetics of astonishment. On the one hand, it had the piquant and risqué opportunity afforded by a special moment in the life of two individuals under scrutiny; on the other hand, it also had the

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combination of speed and visual trickery afforded by matte shots displaying passing scenery through the windows of the railway car. In any event, both of these elements of the Aesthetics of Astonishment had in common their marriage to the representation of a technological object (the train, in this case), which was itself as much an object of visual lust as it also was a referent to the technological basis of the cinematographic experience as a whole.

It must be emphasized, from the standpoint of the immediate context of film exhibition, that these films were never the isolated and mute visual samples that we take in from our contemporary perspective of sound synchronization in the motion pictures. These films always depended on the performance of exhibitors, who would normally offer spoken commentary or narration as they projected the films, and often retained the services of musicians to offer a live "soundtrack" which might include sound effects, lipsynched dialogue, etc.[8] The showplace of early silent films was closer to the performance art we know today

[8]Towards the end of the silent era, Gance made a series of films with ambitious symphonic scores to accompany their projection (Norman King in Abel 1996:31-44).

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than to the form of movie theater that began to develop a few years later with the Nickelodeon Era.

The audience entering the early exhibition halls of the cinema, thus, was effectively situated in relation to a technologically-driven visual field, but this field was mediated by a performance which revolved around the human presence of a particular entertainer and had the temporal uniqueness of not being mechanically reproducible. This articulation of technological works and human performance actually made the "apparatus" – the combination of machinery and visual effect/ideology – much more important, since its very utilization was an integral part of the whole act. Many of the early movies were made more effective by the fact that the hand-cranked projectors could be moved backwards and forwards by the performer-exhibitor, thus "reconstructing" or returning to wholeness what was seen as becoming undone (i.e., the very first "magic" of the cinema, such as Lumière's *Demolition of a Wall*). And this may very well have been the essence of both the Frankesteinian and the Astonishing qualities of the Cinema of Attractions: the fact that beyond all the sexualized images of women

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and all the shocking visual cues and tricks, what these early audiences were witnessing was the transformation of life made tangible within a single space; a space within which people could witness the thrilling dizziness provided by images whirling past the naked eye at a rate of speed incomprehensible by the human body in its natural setting. The cinema, thus, became a special place, a space where ordinary people could link their selves to their modern surroundings of technology, world travel, superhuman speed, height and strength, with no other tools than their own senses of hearing and especially vision. It was precisely because the *cinématographe* found a way to move along from "process" to "place" (i.e., from "writing with light" to movie *house*), along with the rest of the institutionalization of modernity, that we can talk of the visual turn of our current age. The cinema – and particularly its screen – became an essential space of transformation (i.e., differential space).

IV

There is a certain ambivalence in the analysis of early film – i.e., on the one hand, there is a near autarchy assigned to the "primitive

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period" that renders a specificity and singularity of their own to these earliest of films; and on the other hand, there is a conceptual preservation of a single substance ("filmness") thought to be developed by two mutually and quasi self-conscious formal approaches ("modes"), with one succeeding the other in a "non-evolutionary" manner. This, in our view, is a result not only of the intrinsic conditions and features of the work under analysis, but of a contextual insufficiency in the analytic efforts to consider works. Admittedly, the terms "modes" and "attractions" are both already contextual (the former stemming from economic analysis, the latter from urban spectacles of that era), and Burch and Gunning's analysis is only meant to valorize that earliest era of filmmaking in its own terms (a reapplication of cultural relativism) – at that, it succeeds brilliantly (in fact, this is now a new "analytic paradigm" in film theory). The point, however, is that allusions to the socioeconomic context of that era only serve to bring up the fact that the history of film happens as part of the history of capitalist development in Western Europe and North

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America, and must be accounted for along with what Polanyi called "the great transformation" (1944).[9]

No branch of the "economy" is going to change "by itself," it changes precisely because of "external" pressures resulting from a fall in consumer demand or use (economic crisis) or due to popular or government-mediated clamor for better conditions of exchange or use (social or political crisis). These two forms of crises are never entirely separate: any transformation of the technical relations of production, therefore, is simply an aspect of an entire transformation of society (which can only be singled out for purposes of analysis).

The particular set of crises that eventually precipitated the Taylorist approach, began in the 1860s when market rigidities and

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[9]The "great transformation" is, simply put, the gradual imposition and "naturalization" of a historically-specific and class-determined economic system: the free market. In Polanyi's account, this happens through the gradual but steadily stronger linkage between a worldwide monetary standard to regulate world trade and a political equilibrium at the international level (which was achieved through a balancing act of coalitions of lesser nation-states pitted against an isolated but stronger nation, thus keeping each other in check and accounting for the "Hundred Years Peace" from the Napoleonic Wars to World War I). This work, along with Hilferding's account of the rise of finance capital (1981), and Gramsci's work on the articulation between base and superstructure at the moment of hegemony (1971:12.59-60) are key precursors of the Regulation School.

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pricing inelasticities led to a second wave of the industrial revolution. The first wave of industrialization revolved around an artisanal arrangement to the technical relations of production, in which the shop was arranged as a collection of single producers; that is to say, each worker was in charge of the entire process of production, often even fetching the raw materials and loading them into the machine. Given the pricing crisis of the late 1800s, one of the imperatives for any industrial firm was to cheapen the cost of any and all inputs: raw materials and the cost of labor (overhead was not as costly as nowadays), including the price of food and textiles that go into establishing the wages. This explains the resurgence of European and North American expansionism in the form of neocolonialism (direct conquest of parts of Africa, South East Asia) and Imperialism (economic subjugation all over the world). But a more important part of the process to cheapen labor and intensify productivity was crystallized in the workplace reforms to the manufacturing process carried out by Frederick Taylor, beginning in the last decades of the 19th century (Braverman 1974:85 ff).

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Taylorism is not *per se* a process of technological innovation, and herein lies its "internally revolutionary" condition – it works with the already established machine-technology of industrialization to find a way to reduce the human factor altogether. This is achieved in a two pronged process: a) the manner in which workers do their job is altered to make it more efficient (i.e., less time and energy spent per unit produced), and b) the alterations to the worker's job routines will now require supervisory oversight and coordination at the shop floor.

The first part of the process entailed a series of studies in order to break down each job into its minimal constitutive tasks, each one of these tasks was then assigned to a single worker who would turn over the semi-processed product to the next worker in order to continue the series of steps necessary to its completion (i.e., assembly line). This minimized the amount of time necessary to train a worker, and made any given worker totally replaceable for the same reason; on top of that, it sped up the production process, given the built in capacity of this system to homogenize work rhythms across the factory floor. Additionally, these studies also looked at the minimal amount of

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movement necessary for the worker to execute his or her task, this consisted in the analysis of motion over time, which also served as the impetus for the series photography of Marey and Muybridge. The second part of the process arose from the new need to have someone in charge of redesigning and controlling the physical plant as well as the workers' execution of their job, given the fact that the capacity of the workers to control and intervene in the production process had been separated away from them (*alienated*) even more than in the previous phase of the industrial revolution.

In order to accomplish this, Taylor began to reorganize the configuration of the shop floor. It was not only the reconfiguration of the worker's immediate space according to efficiency formulas of experts like Gilbreith (*ibid.*, 173-180), which resulted in the new placement of tools and materials so that these would be optimally closer to the worker so as to facilitate work *at the pace* of the machine. In addition, the overall floor was reorganized so that the workers would be lined up one after the other according to the order of the task they had to perform; in effect, the assembly line was invented by Taylor and

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not by Ford, as the popular belief goes. This meant that the relation between worker and work became inverted; the worker no longer had any intellectual inherence in his task (in the Gramscian sense), becoming instead a mere muscular appendage to the machine. Taylorism truly meant the fullest possible division of the technical relations of labor, it is at this moment when the separation between mental and physical labor at the workplace becomes absolute.

Taylor knew that this would come at a price, workers would relinquish their meager intellectual control of the work process in exchange for higher wages, which would allow for a new class dynamic at the workplace that would shift this mental labor to the managerial class. Since workers would now be so specialized as to only be concerned with one single task instead of the overall process of production, their work would have to be conducted by these new intellectual managers of the work process. This is what Taylor himself called "scientific management," thus legitimizing by appeal to the higher truths of science what in effect was nothing else than the habituation to the industrial demands of speed and precision, imposed

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over the worker through supervisory policing (what Foucault calls the society of discipline). Since the scientific managers had to be in charge of directing traffic and penalizing infractions, their new jobs required a full view of the entire plant (wherever possible) and they also required an authoritative presence. Many shops, therefore, began to build catwalks and mezzanines where these managers would be able to, literally, oversee the entire assembly process of Taylorist manufacture. Thus, the industrial shop began to acquire not only a new horizontal configuration along the ground (workers moving part along an assembly line), but also a vertical configuration as literal levels of intermediate management began to be stacked above each other in the factory building.

This, however, was only the beginning. Henry Ford would actually become the first manufacturer to carry out Taylorist management to its ultimate consequences, and many of his improvements would indeed involve the redesign of the factory space (as we will see in the next chapter).

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In other words, Taylorism became a new relation of production because it was able to produce its own space; and that spatial presence became a new social paradigm, yielding its own linguistic logic of everyday life, so well studied by de Certeau (1984:1-28). The spatial quality to conceptual expressions such as "middle management," or "vertical authority" are yielded by Taylorist space. But Taylorism also prevailed because its managerial and planning strategies to oversee the technical relations were able to become inscribed in a larger production of space, extending their ethos into a veritable social relation beyond the confines of the shop floor. The new urban centers, largely springing up because of the availability of new jobs due to Taylorist intensification, became social experiments: the famous grid pattern of Manhattan streets, the engineering feat of the Brooklyn Bridge and the Woolworth Building, Macy's department store and the extension of commerce to the twilight hours thanks to electric lighting and moving stairs all became part of a new society of planning and management in *all* aspects of everyday urban life. And, at the same time, the rapid lifestyle dominated by a nine-to-five schedule and a clocked pace

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("time is money!"), the clamor for the trains to run on, the urge to jaywalk in order to shave time by literally cutting corners (as the former Mayor Giuliani found out, a cherished "right" among pedestrians in New York City) are also equally important to the understanding of Taylorism and the new urban relations of production. Moreover, the very infrastructure of the city gained almost immediate symbolic value – the buildings and bridges, electrical lights and moving staircases all became objects of admiration for a public that traveled for miles to come and *see* the spectacle of the city itself, bringing to bear the fallacy of a separation between base and superstructure: the economic is always cultural, as well.

At the same time, the city became the space *par excellence* for the fair and the amusement park with its mechanical rides and electrified attractions. Yet, nothing would insert itself into the spectacle of the modern city as proficiently as the new motion picture entertainment; a lot of this can be attributable to the confluence of mechanical and electrical devices that comprise the making and projecting of the film itself, but much of the success came from the fact that film completely

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entered and recodified the everyday life experience of the urban dweller. In any case, the development of film "parallels" too closely the development of these forms of social relations of production to be considered purely coincidental.[10]

This, however, was only a beginning. The Taylorist factory would be improved and perfected under Ford, the city environment would extend its influence and "mechanisms" to entire regions, and the cinema would transform its humble storefront operations of the early years into the sumptuous movie palaces of the cult of distraction. That transformation would be entailed by the imposition of a regulatory system to cope with irregularities in the mass production/mass consumption cycles required by Fordist manufacture; this imposition, needless to say, would also produce its own space out of the spaces

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[10]Of course, our argument all along has been that there is no difference between the development of Taylorism (and Fordism) and the development of a new "culture;" from our point of view, it clearly is not an accident that film and Taylorism happen at the same time. Even a transcendentalist position that would separate subject from object and base from superstructure would have to admit a very close relationship in this case. That position may look for mysterious homologies between the forms of the economy and the ideology of the cinema; for us, the mystery simply is not there and the question of "correspondences" between film and economy is simply part of a false dilemma.

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already "inaugurated" by Taylorism – that is why, at least from a historical perspective, Taylorist spaces are differential spaces.

Simply put, the new regime inaugurated by Taylorism (mass production) would eventually overwhelm the macroeconomic factors and the international political equilibrium of the first industrial revolution; this would not only cause warfare and civil unrest on an unprecedented scale, but it would also cause runaway inflation (Postwar Germany) and the first stock market crisis of global proportions. At the same time, Taylorism would yield a new scopic regime at the level of everyday life – the city would be literally meant to be seen, and this visual quality would imply that the "infrastructural receptacle" of economic activity would also be the "legitimizing monument" of its own political and economic making.

Taylorism and the "city of attractions" were emerging as the movers and shapers of Modernity (roughly, 1880 to 1915), but history shows that this was clearly only an initial phase in a lengthier process of socieconomic development that would eventually require the regulatory mode of the Fordist regime. Taylorism, thus, must be

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understood as a transitional phase in a historically lengthy process of emerging relations of production. The departmentalized factory floor, the "city of attractions," the nickelodeon and the spatial dynamics of their mutual interrelations all must be understood as the production of *differential space* under the Taylorist transition.

V

Given the transitory or differential nature to Taylorism, it is not strange that the regime of exhibitionist display under the Cinema of Attractions (i.e., to simply show) turned out to be a short lived moment in the history of the modern screen. There simply was a sheer and direct pleasure at the animated picture views of snow covered cities (Pathé's *Moscow Covered in Snow* from 1901), or patently faked reconstructions of historic events (see Low and Manvill 1948:65-70 on topical films covering events of importance at the time ; e.g., the explosion of Mt. Pelee in Martinique made with clay models and fiereworks, or Williamson's *Attack on the China Mission* from 1901, filmed in his own garden); or trick films (e.g., the work of Meliés, or R. W. Paul's *The Explosion of a Motor Car* from 1903).

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By 1905, a different kind of film and a radically altered visual regime was beginning to make its domination felt. This transformation was not a simple move from "display" to "narrative;" it did not depend, in other words, on simply honing techniques of editing, mise en scene, or camera placement. It was the birth of a rather different system of visual signification, and the specific site where this system was played out could not be found in the filming studio or the editing room, but within the space of the screen itself: the screen of the Cinema of Attractions can be termed as unitary, whereas the screen of the Institutional Mode can be seen as hierarchically subdivided in complex ways (see Chapter Four).

There are plenty of examples in the Cinema of Attractions of a certain playfulness with the representation of space. A film like Williamson's *The Big Swallow* (1901) in which a man gestures for his picture to be taken immediately, then he approaches the camera and opens his mouth wide until the darkness of his open mouth covers practically the entire frame; then we cut to a man behind a camera and tripod (his back to the viewing audience) against a black background

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towards which he glides until falling into the dark cavity; we cut back again to the open mouth which quickly moves back, revealing the face of the first man as he chews away and finally smiles with satisfaction. Other films address the discourse of the unseen camera more obliquely but perhaps more effectively (since the camera itself is not "narrativized" into the diegesis); like Porter's *The Dam Family and the Dam Dog* (1905), which uses a set that looks like a framed photograph to show a "portrait-vignette" of each member of the family – the patriarch, who wipes his mouth respectably after sneezing; the daughter, Miss U. B. Dam, who smiles and flirts with the viewer; and so on, until getting to the dog which is first lying down, then suddenly gets up and jumps out of the make-believe photoframe and towards the real-but-unseen movie camera. A few years later, a film like Pathé's *The Dog and His Various Merits* (1908) will maintain the sequential format of successive "character positions," but will privilege a documentary strategy and location shooting to show various types of working dogs – the first sequence is notable in prefiguring the formal strategies of the Hollywood Model: it begins with a full shot of a

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woman who opens a gate and lets her dog run directly towards a large horizontal wheel that he has to push (possibly a mill), there is a closer shot of the dog approaching the wheel which is almost a perfect match cut to the action from the long shot except for the fact that the woman no longer occupies her place next to the dog.

Here we begin to see the difference between the Primitive and the Institutional Modes, it has to do in part with what Burch has termed "Building a Haptic Space" (1990:162-185). Burch catalogs a series of procedures involving lighting, camera placement, movement of actors and, eventually editing and tracking shots to give an illusion of a "real" space within the representation; a space that the viewer could "touch" (hapticity), if he or she could become one of the characters in the visual narrative. The acquisition of these techniques of spatial representation has been taken as evidence of the gradual evolution of film towards the pinnacle reached by Griffith in his Late Biograph Period (1909-12) and his Classic Period (1912-1923). However,

> The dedication of film form to a narrative task that rules Griffith's early work was hardly the outcome of a previous evolution or gradual discovery of film's essential nature. Griffith

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> and his contemporaries (and some immediate predecessors) were engaged in a redefinition rather than a discovery of film – a redefinition shaped by an economic reorganization attempting to regulate the film industry in the wake of the enormous expansion of nickelodeon exhibition. It was at this point in history and within this intersection of economic and social forces that film "discovered" its narrative vocation (Gunning in Abel 1996:73).

Gunning points out the socioeconomic context of film, tying it into the regulatory drive of the period, which we will shortly discuss as a total social drive rather than as a localized aspect of film production. Before doing so, though, it is important to note some thematic continuities between the two modes of cinematic representation in order to establish the weight of that social context in terms of form and content, and not exclusively as a determining force external to a presumably 'autonomous sphere" of creativity.

One of the running comic motifs in the Cinema of Attractions is the sneeze that wreaks havoc. There is, of course, the aforementioned *Fred Ott's Sneeze* by Dickson, where a powder case is waved under Ott's nose, inducing him to sneeze in a medium shot that captures his own slight amusement just before the film ends. The sheer pleasure of showing a physiological function gets encoded soon afterwards into a

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class based ideology with the "proper and dignified" behavior of Mr. Dam in *The Dam Family and the Dam Dog* (see Burch 1990:95-106 on the early cinema and class ideology in Britain – which can certainly be extended to Porter and the U.S.). As the Nickelodeon era begins to reach its peak, an entire film, Fitzhamon's *That Fatal Sneeze* (Hepworth Manufacturing Co, 1907) takes the narrative motif to its ultimate consequences by having a mischievous boy literally point out to the audience the objects that he is smearing with snuff and the sleeping man who will be victimized; the rest of the film is a series of single full-shot vignettes of the man waking up, moving around and sneezing violently, while the boy creeps around laughing – chaos ensues to the point where everything around him flies off and crashes onto walls and floor; in the street an entire storefront collapses, a terrified horse takes off at full gallop, and finally the camera begins to sway simulating an earthquake, and the next and final shot shows the man disappearing in a puff of smoke after his last and fatal sneeze. The man's progress through the streets has all the hallmarks of the continuity system particular to the Institutional Mode – the man walks

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off from right to left in one shot, and in the next shot he enters a new street location on the right and continues moving towards the left; as the chaos grows, however, the continuity breaks down (one shot he moves from right to left into the next shot, where he enters left and moves right, and so on), giving the impression of a man who has lost his bearings.

The golden age of silent comedy will reproduce this type of scenario in all its variants. Whether it is Harold Lloyd climbing up the skyscraper in *Safety Last* (1923), Charlie Chaplin sliding up an down the tilted floor of a cabin perched at the edge of a cliff in *Gold Rush* (1925), or Buster Keaton in any of his movies but especially in *Steamboat Bill, Jr.* (1928), the comic antihero finds himself negotiating a situation in which things are out of control because of the massive size of the forces of chaos. Be it a hurricane or a publicity stunt, the fact is that an overwhelming amount of these movies show human-made constructions (wood frame houses and skyscrapers alike) as a threat to the physical integrity of the individual; and it is precisely in the negotiation between human frailty and surrounding might where the

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comedy lies: it will be in the balletic gyrations and contortions of an unimposing physique having to dodge and weave through impending doom and disaster where a commentary is made about a modernity that has gone beyond all measure and proportion supplied by the human body.[11] Shakespeare's man as the measure of all things no longer obtains, and the only way to cope with this emerging reality for both the Cinema of Attractions and the Hollywood Model is to laugh away the terror.

A related set of issues is presented by the disaster movies of the Cinema of Attractions – e.g., Paul's *Plucked from the Burning* (1898) and Williamson's *Fire* (1901-2). These movies capitalize on the terror of the wife and child left at home, alone and at the mercy of the

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[11]Paula Marantz Cohen (1991:43-70) has a different and more self-referential treatment of the human body, especially the male body, in American silent movies. She does connect, however, the pantomime of silent comedy to the acts of Houdini, thereby associating film to the larger social context of representation. In fact, a whole context of commerce and modernization applies to most silent comedy. For example, the stunt of climbing the building to publicize a retail store is not only part of a whole context of publicity stunts in airplanes, cars, etc, but part of a whole dissemination of consumerist modernity through magazines, store catalogues, etc. (see, Rappaport in Charney and Schwartz; Keller in *ibid.*; Ewen 1976; Ewen and Ewen 1982; Hansen in L. Williams).

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surrounding world. This fear is also encoded in class conflict and ideology when the narrative films of the institutional mode begin to emerge at the dawn of the Nickelodeon era. Hepworth's *Rescued by Rover* (directed by Fitzhamon, 1905) might be the best known example of a transitional film of this type. An already complex and sophisticated narrative film, this example offers both thematic as well as formal points regarding the switch from one mode to the other. The film opens in the comfortable sitting parlor of a bourgeois family, framed in a tight long shot that simulates a family portrait complete with baby and dog lying by the side. Next we see a nanny, dressed in her white uniform, walking down a country path pushing a perambulator and passing by a ragged looking woman who begs and is ignored. In the next shot we see the nanny stopping and leaving the perambulator slightly behind in order to meet a policeman who comes to romance her. The baby is kidnaped from his perambulator by the disaffected beggar, who had been hiding behind some bushes. After some moments, the babysitter walks off without looking into the carriage. There is a cut back to the parlor, where the mother is still

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sitting on her chair knitting, the nanny rushes back into the house and gestures in desperation; while the family laments its fate, Rover runs out of the room, jumps out of a window into the garden, continues running through the garden and the street until finding the whereabouts of the baby. The dog returns and entices his master to follow, the baby is rescued and the truant is apprehended by the police. The film ends with the same "tableau" of the family in the living room, this time they show their effusive appreciation to the dog. The class ideology is obvious in this film not only in the actions of the beggar, but also by the carelessness and flirtatiousness of the nanny who fails to do her job in contrast to the obvious loyalty and nobility of the family dog.

More interesting, however, are some of the formal aspects of the visual narrative, beginning with the fact that the film still has no intertitles (presuming the presence of a narrator during exhibition), while at the same time it is so fully descriptive in its visuals as to make a narrator unnecessary. There is also a consistent use of screen directions, and the exclusive use of long shots establishes the space of the action very clearly. Some of that visual fullness, nevertheless,

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seems to be closer to the exhibitionistic tendency of the Cinema of Attractions than to the more narrativized Institutional Mode. For example, the film calls for the dog to go through the garden and up and down the same sidewalk several times – back and forth during the first trip of exploration and discovery, and one more trip with his master following behind. In each case, we see the dog traversing the entire length of a very long shot (a large garden with an entire pond, followed by the full length of a street block); the camera is just left running and its placement never changes. There is also some trouble with the time-space consistency needed for a realistic haptic space – how can the beggar, who was passed by in the previous shot, already be hiding under the bushes in the next shot? Clearly, the Aesthetic of Astonishment is more concerned with simply watching the comings and goings of the dog or with the salient fact of the kidnaping than with any semblance of "realism," which would imply a different principle of narration. Once the Hollywood model established its narrative precepts as normative (that is, as principles to be followed by any "correctly made" film), then these peculiarities were dealt primarily by changing

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the camera angle (e.g., a side angle or a reverse angle) and "editing out" the excess action.[12]

A few years after *Rescued by Rover*, a film like Pathé's *A Narrow Escape* (also known as *The Physician of the Castle*, 1908) will add the machine to this type of story, bringing together the centerpiece of the Cinema of Attractions – the display of technological innovation – and a key narrative of the emerging Institutional Mode – the melodrama of danger and foreboding. In this film, a false telegram is used by a gang of thieves to lure a doctor out of his mansion and away from his wife and daughter; once the car has gone down the road, the gang gets into the garden and begins breaking into the house. The alarmed wife calls the castle where her husband has been summoned – he has taken the

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[12]In Spanish, this excess action where no new narrative information is presented (e.g., a character having to move across an entire length of space in "real time", etc) are called *tiempos muertos* or "dead time," attesting to the negative effect that this allegedly has on the viewer. The principle of "tight cutting" in the Hollywood Model is meant to eliminate as much of this as possible. As we will later, however, some of the countercurrents of cinema form the sixties on have made a virtue of using this type of excess action (i.e., Antonioni, Tati, Cassavetes; and more recently, Kiarostami, Kore-eda, Yang and others). Of course, Godard is chiefly known for questioning this practice in his early films, purposely jump cutting through these scenes (i.e., taking the head and tail of a shot and splicing them together, thereby really cutting out the excess but without the niceties of a different camera angle and a match cut on the action).

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opportunity to pay his social compliments and respects. The husband has a brief conversation over the phone and rushes out while the lord of the castle takes the phone and presumably calls the police. The robbers are breaking into the room where the woman and the girl are, while the doctor is driving down the road, stopping only to pick up some policemen. As the robbers go into the room, the doctor and the cops come in right behind; the gang is apprehended and the family is happily reunited. This film shows three of the four key forms of technology represented in early film – a car, a telegram, and a telephone; the only machine missing is the locomotive (airplanes were shown only sparingly and mostly as technological failure – e.g., M. Cody's *Aeroplane Flight and Wreck* from 1910). The achievement of this film is that it is one of the first examples where form and content come together in the sense that the tension between the evil (false telegram) and the socially good uses of technology (car, telephone) are echoed by the cross cutting between the space of the doctor's mansion and the castle where the attentive doctor has been summoned. This not only becomes a "cinematic solution" for the problem of simultaneous action

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between separate spaces (in contrast to the divided set of *Are You There?*), but it also accentuates the technological production and mediation of increasingly distant spaces in everyday life (the very source of dread and foreboding among the socioeconomic elites).

A Narrow Escape was remade by Griffith as *The Lonely Villa* (1909), and Richard Abel traces the origin of this film back to the Grand Gignol play *Au Telephone* by de Lorde, which had already been adapted for the screen in 1904 by Pathé as *Terrible Angoisse* (1994:150). In that version, a lawyer is summoned to appear in court, and the family left behind is strangled by the gang of robbers while the man listens helplessly over the telephone. The ending was more typical of melodrama than the happy conclusion in the later remakes by Pathé or Griffith, and places this film as a prototype of the "thrillers" or the "action film" which remains popular today. This film is also, at least, indirectly related to earlier prototypes of other genre films, such as Porter's *The Great Train Robbery* (1903), which not only thematizes good versus evil by presenting it as a law and order issue linked to

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technological developments (the train,[13] the telegraph and the revolver pistol), but also offers one of the first examples of transitional or blended mode of cinematic representation – although the film does not show true cross editing, it implies simultaneous action by cutting from the bandits escaping in the woods to the station where a little girl rescues the rail workers who go and alert the good citizens (not unlike the shot where the beggar steals the baby in *Rescued by Rover,* or the shot in which the doctor and the police show up in the living quarters in *A Narrow Escape*). Porter's film also has the posse catch up to the bandits much too soon (thereby eliding the haptic space-time illusion of cinematic realism) and, in a surprising conclusion, the ending consists of one of the actors simply pointing the gun at the camera and then firing (a true moment of the Aesthetic of Astonishment, "how it feels to be shot" as clearly related to films like *How It Feels to Be Run Over*).

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[13]A fair deal has been written about the train and modernity, as well as about the train and artistic and cinematic representation (Schivelbush 1979; Coatsworth 1981; Klingender 1947:115-130; Kirby 1997; Gunning in L. Williams 1995:114-133, esp. 114-124; Burch 1990:34-40).

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Ben Singer (in Charney and Schwartz *op. cit.*) localizes this fear in the rise of sensationalism caused by the hyperstimulus of modernity, basing his argument on Simmel's "Metropolis and Mental Life." In our view, the context is less general and more class-specific than this, and its origins are to be found in the specter that haunted the European and North American elites since the Paris Commune of 1871 (scarcely 35 years prior to the production of these films). This event proved to the bourgeoisie, especially its lower strata of the petit-bourgeois, that the barbarians were perennially at the gates, and that no amount of respectability and material well being would be enough to guarantee safety. It is no accident that as the Nickelodeon Era cemented the demand for narrative films, a whole spectrum of stories emerged where the threat was located out in *the street.*[14] After all, the streets of Paris

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[14]Almost any classic gangster film is exemplary of the poisonous street world, but there are also plenty of threatening forces shown in the urban melodrama. Notable ganster films in the silent era are Griffith's *The Musketeers of Pig Alley* (1912), and Walsh's *Regeneration* (1915). The classic example of the urban melodrama is Vidor's *The Crowd* (1928), where the lackluster hero finally gains a promotion and arrives home with presents for the family; as he yells out the window to show his children their new toys, his little girl lets go of the brother's hand and runs across the street and into traffic while the man's joyful expression immediately changes to panic and then pure horror. The girl goes into a coma and fights for her life at

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were the battleground for the first, and arguably only proletarian political entity in history – to the point where the *comunards* tunneled through buildings in order to move their snipers up and down the block, thereby replicating the street several levels aboveground (Ross 1988).

Immediately after the fall of the Commune, those very same Parisian streets were transformed into the first form of concerted urban planning, Haussman's radiating set of wide boulevards to allow marching soldiers through (Benjamin 1978:159-162). This was a spatial appropriation (or expropriation, more properly) and reappropriation of historical proportions, and the consequences were not lost in those middle class intellectuals like Le Bon, Lippman, and Freud, whose dire writings about the mentality of the mob were really class-based complaints coded as universal warnings. In effect, the Taylorist intensification of capitalist production and accumulation had

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home while the man almost deliriously tries to go and quiet down the people going about their business in the street, a cop finally stops and scolds him saying "You can't expect everybody to be quiet just because your baby is sick!" (Intertitle). The street is both dangerous and coldly unforgiving, a stereotype set for posterity in this classic example of the urban melodrama (see Section IX below).

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transformed the world into a new society, a Mass Society; and, to extend Gunning's analysis of early film production, this new social world was precisely in need of regulation. If the production of space of the Paris Commune and its urban aftermath was part and parcel of the social crisis of modernity, then there would have to be a production of space to counter this.

VI

One of the first steps that the cinema needed to take in order to survive and grow was to find its audience; or, to put it (somewhat anachronistically) in Fordist terms, one of the first steps that cinema as a mass medium needed to take was to produce its mass market – that is, mass production needed to engage in the production of mass consumption. It is in this sense, and not in the sense of a developing language or aesthetic form, that we look at the transition from the Primitive Mode to the Nickelodeon Era, and later on to another transition towards the Classic Hollywood Model. In fact, it bears pointing out that the Nickelodeon Era is named after the exhibition halls that emerged at that time, rather than after any linguistic or

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aesthetic qualities of that era's film form, further attesting to the decisive importance that the audience and its space had in the development of the cinematic medium. This may be due to the fact that this first moment of transition was total – narrative strategies, modes of film production and modes of exhibition (including theatrical spaces), all changed simultaneously; whereas, the second transition (to the Hollywood Model) did not imply a simultaneous transformation of exhibition spaces.[15]

Sadoul (1972:54-55) and Musser (1990:418-20) trace the Nickelodeon Era to Harry P. Davis, a real estate broker and penny arcade entrepreneur in Pittsburgh, who rented a small storefront in 1905 to show, initially, Porter's *The Great Train Robbery*. Whether this is the case or not,[16] the fact remains that rapid change was

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[15]In any case, the fact that change is simultaneous in one case and not in the other should attest to the difficulty, if not the false dilemma, of establishing a causal connection between spatial and formal or aesthetic change. Suffice it to say that both *space* and *aesthetics* are possibly determined by the common denominator of social change, itself "motivated" by the need in late capitalism to combat market rigidities and obstacles through constant innovation.

[16]As with any point of historic origin, this information is contested. For example, John Izod (1988:9, probably based on Sklar 1994:24) claims that the Nickelodeon began with Thomas Tally's Electric Theater in New York; however, he describes

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occurring, especially in the exhibition halls of the cinema. The original showplaces for movies were an assortment of fairgrounds and penny arcades, as well as whatever available rooms there might be in the diverse public establishments at the time (beginning, of course, with the Salon Indien). In many cases, these shows were presented by itinerant showmen who often subleased a space for a number of shows, or who would be included as a segment of a longer act. In the United States, this procedure was particularly popular in the vaudeville theaters, which could accommodate occasional film shows as part of their variety programming.

The history of the motion pictures and vaudeville theater is checkered at best. Low and Manvell actually present an entire category, the "Vaudeville Branch" of early British filmmaking, which they claim as the first type of filmmaking to record not actuality but artifice; since the performers were well known, these comics, jugglers and acrobats were the first named players in the cinema – additionally,

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this phenomenon with a very close, but uncredited, paraphrase of a description used in a sociological study of Nickelodeon audiences in the Pittsburgh area (Jowett 1976:40), leaving some doubt about Izod's research.

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they place films with facial gestures and skit-type material, such as *The Big Swallow*, under this heading (1974:74-79). However, it is not clear that this was a successful operation altogether. Jowett does claim that the White Rat Strike of 1901, in which live vaudeville artists attempted to form a union, forced vaudeville theater owners to schedule motion pictures instead of live acts, and the audience kept coming back much to their surprise (1976:29). Musser (1990:276-7), however, shows that the influence of the White Rats in creating an audience for the movies was modest if not minimal, given the fact that vaudeville theaters in Brooklyn, for example, did not show any motion pictures at that time. Sklar points out that after an initial burst of enthusiasm, vaudeville exhibitors actually began to show motion pictures as filler to make patrons leave the theater in order to allow new customers into the next show (1994:13-4). And, Burch notes that the American Films of the Primitive Mode were clumsily addressed towards the new immigrant and the most unsophisticated audiences, while the vaudeville was actually intended to attract respectable ladies and honorable gentleman, so that "the cinema actually passed the vaudeville audiences by"

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(1990:113). It is clear from this that the new medium would not necessarily find its breeding ground within the "legitimate theater," it would have to create its own space; and it is also clear that this space would be open, if not entirely dedicated, to those new audiences comprised of that bottom stratum composed by the mass of laborers and immigrants whose interests were too lowly for even the vaudeville to pursue.

So, the search for a proprietary cinematic space also involved the search for the cinematic audience. If the earliest silent films were scattered and ephemeral in their attempts at exhibition, the Nickelodeons were able to catch the proverbial lightning in a bottle. The success was decisive and immediate, as Peter Stead neatly sums up

> In 1907 it had been noted that nickelodeons were opening up on every American street and it was not hard to account for their success. ... They really were "5-cent theatres" and therefore very different from the more expensive vaudeville and even more expensive theatres. What is more, no special preparation had to be made, no time had to be set aside, programmes only lasted fifteen minutes, and one could enter and leave as one pleased. It was everywhere noted that nickelodeons offered relief for the 'foot-sore shopper' and that these shoppers only needed 'about one minute to find this out.' The craze hit Dallas in 1907 and it was observed that the first audiences were made up of women

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> and children; only later did men follow. But people could go on their own or go with groups and families. No special dress was needed and one never had to feel that one was on show or in any sense making a public appearance. The American critic W. Stephen Bush reflected on how the poor and lowly had only been tolerated in the theatre and all too often forced up into the gallery, but the movies had 'emancipated the gallery' and had wiped out forever the 'odium and ridicule' that had always been shown towards its clientele (1989:7-8).

Jowett quotes a study of the steel mill town of Homestead, in the vicinity of Pittsburgh, where the skating rink and the Nickelodeon were the only forms of entertainment

> Men on their way from work, stop for a few minutes to see something of life outside the alternation of mill and home; the shopper rests while she enjoys the music, poor though it may be, and the children are always begging for five cents to go to the nickelodeon. In the evening the family often go [sic] together for a little treat.... (1976:40)

We can already see, at this most basic and immediate level, how the first formalized exhibition spaces for the motion pictures constituted themselves into a differential space. This was precisely the space for an emerging social class that previously had no place in the cultural life of a society that privileged upper class audiences to the almost absolute exclusion of the lower class. Moreover, this was a class of new

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workers, low in socio-cultural status but with somewhat of a disposable income and enough leisure time to take a rest while shopping or returning home from work; and there were enough of these new consumers as to have a nickelodeon apparently in every street. These working and consuming spectators were, in sum, already being constituted as a proto-Fordist audience, a mass market where shopping and entertainment were becoming undifferentiated forms of leisure. As we will see, this mixture of shopping and entertainment would become an even more important form of combat for Regulatory Fordism, as the fight for the 8-hour workday made inroads in giving more of the working masses that extra income and more time of "their own" to engage in material consumption.[17]

First of all, though, the nickelodeon was part of the new forms of capitalist investment, a small but lucrative venture

> The economics of operating the nickelodeon ware fairly simple, and the weekly operating costs in 1907 were estimated by Joseph Medill Patterson in a *Saturday Evening Post* article to be about

[17]Nevins, Henry Ford's biographer, comments that in Jan 1914"the company was reducing the work day to eight hours, converting the factory to three shifts instead of two, and instituting a five-dollar basic wage" (1954:532 and ff.).

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> $175 to $200 a week [...] "Merely to meet expenses, then, the average nickelodeon must have a weekly attendance of 4,000. This gives all the nickelodeons 16,000,000 a week, or over 2,000,000 a day. Two million people a day are needed before profits can begin, and two million are forthcoming. It is a big thing, this new enterprise" (Jowett 1976:32).

The data is actually stunning. Stead mentions that by 1907 the average daily attendance in Chicago is 100,000 (1976:16), while Jowett reports that "in 1907, Barton W. Currie in an article in Harper's Weekly estimated that there were 500 moving picture houses in New York City, and that over 200,000 people a day were attending these (1976:45)". He further adds that the *Review of Reviews* in 1910 estimated that NY, with a population of 4.3 million, had 450 theaters with a seating capacity of 150,000; followed by Chicago, with 2 million, and 310 theaters with 93,000 seats; Philadelphia, with 1.5 million, and 160 theaters with 57,000 seats; and St. Louis, with 824,000, and 142 theaters with 50,410 seats (*ibid.*:46). Bowser cautions that these figures are hard to corroborate when checked against publications like *Trov's Business Directory*, which listed only 123 theaters for Manhattan; of course, there were a large number of nickelodeons in

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Brooklyn and a "Cony Island saloon, with no show license, gave film shows for free and gained their profits from the sale of drinks" (1990:6-7).

The nickelodeon is, in many ways, the last of the differential spaces for the age of the screen. Neither the presentation on the screen nor the theatrical accommodations are exactly what we have now, and yet the nickelodeon and the films of its era are already showing most of the basic elements that will make up the contemporary form of cinema. The production of space at the level of the theater allows for the public collectivization of those formerly privatized and withdrawn (*asketic*) aristocratic subjects of the camera obscura, while retaining the individualized position of the single observer sitting in the dark – this time observing a technologically-rendered virtual reality (as opposed to an *in situ* reflection of a real object). At this initial level, the subjectivation that takes place is already complex: the individual becomes a subject of a technologically-induced reality, observed by an equally induced collective form (the mass public); while, at the same time, the viewer retains the self-awareness of being an autonomous or

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individual perceiver (an awareness which is spatially constructed by the conditions of cinematic exhibition). We will see below how this space gets further transformed into its own source of signification.

To extend Richard Abel's concept of the Bricolage Model (1994:105-109; admittedly applied to a limited number of films in that work), this transitional era yields a bricolage-like strategy of representation in which disparate elements are mixed to incongruous effect – examples abound in this period of films that already privilege a protagonist-centered form of dramatic narrative based on conflict, as opposed to the sheer visual display and the shock effects of the esthetics of astonishment particular to the already defunct Cinema of Attractions (which nevertheless are incongruously inserted into these transitional films; e.g., the ending of *The Great Train Robbery* or the time-lapse problems of a film like *The Doctor of the Castle*).

Musser explains these incongruities by opposing Porter to Griffith, where the former belonged to a presentation strategy that relied on lecturer-narrators or on the audience's familiarity with the literary or anecdotal source of the story; so that any formal

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"inconsistencies" in his films actually served as a form of resistence to the standardization of narrative proposed in Griffith's films (in Elsaesser 1990:128-131). In structural terms, at the syntactic level, the problem lied in finding a way to shift from the arrangement of self-contained shots in the discontinuous narrative of attractions to the sequence-driven buildup of continuity narrative in what eventually became the Hollywood Model; at the semantic level, the problem lied in devising an embedded lexical index, so that the spectator would be able to follow the "correct" meaning of the film.

On a larger socioeconomic context, this transitional era involved the synchronization of several spaces through enormous demographic shifts on a never-before-seen worldwide scale – in essence, the first manifestation of what now has come to be known as "globalization." Late capitalism meant not only the functional transformation but the veritable acculturation of swelling ranks of immigrants into the world of assembly line production, mass consumption, urban dwelling, and institutional law and order (often with a national character of nebulous identity for a population whose worldview was rooted exclusively in

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their locality). That acculturation (to modernity) was carried out in the movie theater, and the key aspect of that process was the transformation of a population from its old habits of self-sufficiency and material deprivation into an urban, consumerist class. This required the relative homogenization of culturally diverse and pre-modernized immigrants, which could only be achieved by standardizing (i.e., homogenizing) film, leaving behind the "artisanal mode"of the narrator-exhibitor[18] in order to develop a true mass spectacle (Musser in Elsaesser 1990:269). Presentation and representation would merge into the same entity (the image *on* the screen), and the audience's attention would be directed towards one sole object of consumption, the film itself rather than the performance of a narrator-presenter. The modern observer, hence, came to be

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[18]This is a problematic concept. There is nothing inherently artisanal about narration or master presentation. In fact, scientific and technological modernization is often carried out by all-knowing personages in white coats or business suits touting the advantages of a particular theory or new product. As far as culture and the arts are concerned, the presenter or narrator was certainly maintained for the high arts, like the theater or the opera (surviving to this day in the Public Television Broadcasts from Lincoln Center); as far as film is concerned, this narrative strategy was quickly recovered with the advent of synchronized sound, at a time when the cinema could not be seen as other than a mass medium.

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under the magic spell of a hidden and disembodied technological apparatus of production and exhibition.

Miriam Hansen observes the effect that this process had on immigrants to the United States

> The "despatialization of subjectivity" (Mary Anne Doane) that marked the immigrants entry into American modernity was just as much an experience of violent detemporalization. It is thus that the cinema might have functioned as a "time-place" (*Zeitort*) in Kluge's sense, a site for the actualization of different temporalities. ... With its lack of a fixed schedule and continuous admission, [Roy] Rosenzweig contends, the nickelodeon provided a "refuge from the time discipline of the factory." Mothers for whom family leisure activities actually meant a continuation of housework on different premises could disappear in the darkness of the movie theater for a few hours, with or without children, to vary on Horkheimer and Adorno's notorious phrase, "just as [they] (*sic*) used to gaze out the window, when there were still homes an hour after a day's work [*Freirabend*]." The dimness of the theater set the stage for the viewer's surrender to the manipulations of the time on screen – the duration of a panorama shot, the thrills of fast and reverse motion, the simultaneity of parallel editing – at least until filmic temporality became more firmly subordinated to the linear momentum of narrative (1991:108-110).

Hansen goes on to add that the incorporation of women into the public sphere through the vehicle of film going was a contradictory and uneven process: on the one hand it did offer women a place among the

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public, whereas before they had been confined to the private realm of the home; but on the other hand, it also offered women a worldview where their beings and desires were subordinated to an external hierarchy dominated by the male gaze (*ibid.*, pp. 114-125).[19] This was a product of the era in which linear narrative was instituted, while the nickelodeon remains as an example of the road not traveled towards what could have been an alternative public sphere (M. Hansen in L. Williams 1995:134-52).

There is a problem in this formulation, however. The combination of "public" *and* "sphere" makes up a doubly spatialized term, which additionally implies a social function. At its very core, the production of a public sphere is precisely a production of space, a space which not only fixes and delimits what is to be done; but, more importantly, what is to be known in public. It also serves to create that separation between public and private realms, with all of what that

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[19]This process is itself rife with contradictory possibilities of interpretation. For example, Stuart and Elizabeth Ewen see the entry of immigrant women into the public sphere of work, leisure and social display as a positive development against the traditionalist oppression of their home life (1982:81-105).

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implies in the capitalist order of things. Given not only the all encompassing colonization of life implied by late capitalism but also the permanent change implied by Fordist intensification, this alternative public sphere remains all too dubious. In terms of the concrete history of the cinema, this alternative sphere existed precisely because the exhibition halls of the primitive period and the Nickelodeon Era were differential spaces; that is, they were sites for the gestation and eventual imposition of an (initially) alternative and (eventually) dominant mode of socioeconomic regulation. For the cinema to have remained as an alternative public sphere/space, it would have had to turn into a marginal activity; this is a historical impossibility, given the constitutive aspects already discussed (the capacity to link technologically produced and technologically displayed symbols before a mass audience in a single type of space). The transformation from a "primitive or artisanal mode" to mass production meant that the cinema (or better yet, the screen) was in a privileged position to turn into *the main* component of the contemporary public sphere, and this involved the transformation of the viewing subject

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from simple member of the audience into part and parcel of the modern mass public (i.e., the "consumer market").

If the bourgeois public sphere of the early capitalist world served as a vehicle for well-heeled private citizens to participate in politics and other activities related to the running and managing of their everyday world, the Fordist public sphere of mass media and mass society now served as a means to regulate information and knowledge in the hope of controlling, at the very least, production and consumption, if not all other aspects of human behavior (e.g., Walter Lippman's famous principle of "manufacturing consent," with a telling industrial tone to its figure of speech).

This move from the "alternative" public sphere of the nickelodeon to the central public sphere of the Institutional or Hollywood mode, meant that the cinema screen and its associated spaces were no longer a set of *differential spaces*, but rather the organic production of space of a hegemonic set of social relations (mass society) with its mode of regulation (Fordism). It is at this point, roughly around 1912, that the already complex web of presentation and

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representation of space linking screen, theater, city and industry adds a final production of space to its sequence of associated spaces in order to complete the formation of a Fordist historic bloc: the contemporary, neo-imperialist[20] nation state and the lavish movie palaces of its cities.

VII

During the Nickelodeon Era, business boomed even more impressively than ever before. According to Jowett, the Twentieth Century Club of Boston conducted a study which showed that in 1909 among live theaters, the weekly seating capacity was 111,568 for First class theaters, followed by Burlesque houses with 80,700 and vaudeville houses with 45,744, the opera came last with 13,500. Moving picture theaters had 402,428, and vaudeville combined with

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[20]The mechanisms of this new political-economy will be developed in the following chapter; but, in a nutshell, it implies, primarily, "economic" domination as opposed to territorial conquest and direct political domination. As with all historical dates and labels, this is not a clean term: the U.S., as one of the chief exponents of this phase of imperialism, had already completed its phase of territorial expansion through extermination (Native Americans), land purchase (France and Russia), outright invasion and annexation (Mexico), or full war (Spain in 1898). However, unlike classic imperialism and colonialism, from the Spanish Hapsburgs to Napoleon, the United States subordinated the external world through puppet regimes; the "independence" of Panama – in exchange for concessions to build a shipping canal – is the quintessential example of neo-imperialism.

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moving pictures had 79,362. As for expense, the cheapest tickets were for the moving picture shows at $0.10, then vaudeville plus moving pictures at $0.15, regular vaudeville at $0.50, regular theater at $1, and the Boston Opera at $2. Of the entertainment seating total, vaudeville and moving picture shows accounted for 85.4 percent, legitimate performances for 13.5 percent, and grand opera for 1.1 percent. The population of Boston was estimated at 625,000 at the time (1976:37). Jowett also shows that the movie moguls had a captive market

> one of the studies from the Pittsburgh Survey of 1907-1909 tells the story of a researcher who bought a ticket to a nickelodeon and had to wait in the heat along with a mass of other ticket holders while the previous show was still on. The researcher marveled at the persistence of the workers who were still standing in line to get in, long after the researcher and companion decided to leave. ... The survey showed that of 22,185 working women surveyed in Pittsburgh in 1907, only 258, or less than 2 percent, were in touch with a center for social development and recreation. ... The report on recreation in the U.S. government study *Recent Social Trends* indicated that in 1910 only 17.6 percent of the playgrounds were operating on a year-round schedule, and that organized playground activities formed only a small part of the regular recreational program of the urban community (*ibid.*, pp. 38-41).

This is another side of the production of representational space that we have been discussing. The moviehouse was an instrumental force in

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helping generate the distribution of neighborhoods within the modern urban context (discussed at the end of this chapter), and the accompanying lack of other recreational spaces within that urban context also helped generate an immense market-audience for the cinema.

It did not take long for a puritanical movement to target the emerging nickelodeon business. One of the earliest attempts – Chicago had already established a law of prior censorship of movies in November of 1907 – at suppressing the nickelodeons and censoring film was spearheaded by the Catholic Church and the Knights of Columbus, and it involved Mayor George McClellan of New York City, who held a public hearing on December 23, 1908. On December 24th, McClellan announced that he was closing all motion picture houses due to health hazards, and upon inspection he would reissue permits on condition that licensees agreed in writing to close on Sunday (which the industry refused to do because it was their best business day). The Mayor also threatened prosecution to those who injured public morals, but did not specify who would be prosecuted and

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exactly for what. Confusion ensued and finally the motion picture industry, with the ubiquitous distributor William Fox at the helm, got together in a meeting and had their lawyer secure a court injunction on December 26. This basically ended the attempt, it was clear that McClellan had only intended to make a show of force for his Irish Catholic constituency just before Christmas (Jowett 1976:111; Bowser 1990:48; Uricchio and Pearson 1993:24-33). Nevertheless, the film producers got the message, and it was partially as an answer to the conservative backlash that the Motion Picture Patents Company (MPPC) justified its own creation

> At Mayor McLellan's hearing, Vitagraph's J. Stuart Blackton spoke of the MPPC and "told of a meeting held last week in the home of Thomas A. Edison, whereat it was agreed that hereafter no film of an unproper character will be made in America or allowed to come into America and be used" [reported in the New York Herald, December 24, 1908]. ... The Patents Company also paid attention to exhibition venues, announcing that site inspection would ensure the "absolute safety and decency of all licensed theaters" and briefly sponsoring fire and accident insurance for its licensees. The MPPC's obvious concern with the upgrading of exhibition venues once again indicates that, whatever, the reality, both those within and without the industry perceived nickelodeon conditions and locations as a major problem (Uricchio and Pearson 1993:45).

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This example alone should make evident how social conflict and resolution revolved around the material practice of space. Both the "content" upon the screen (as a source of morality) and the "situation" in the theater (as a source of ethical behavior) were assailed and targeted by the reformers. At the same time, the defenders presented their activities as not only here to stay, but also as part of a beneficial alternative to what otherwise took place. Rachel Low notes in England the same concern about the cinema and the riff-raff, while members of the elite are nevertheless flocking to the nearest Electric Palace. In Britain, just as in the U.S. (through the advocacy of Progressive Reformer Charles Prague Smith and his People's Institute), the cinema industry would argue its virtues as an alternative to the pub or saloon, and would even attempt to position its product as an educational aide (Low 1948 vol. 2:26-38; Uricchio and Pearson 1993:33-40). MPPC producers like the American owned Vitagraph (Uricchio and Pearson 1993), or the French companies owned by Pathé and Meliès (Abel 1994:39-45) began to release literary adaptations and historical scenes to attract a high class, cultured public as a legitimation strategy and as a

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form of business expansion, too. Those movies had to be presented in suitable venues, and a first stratification of theatrical space began to emerge in motion picture exhibition – this is the historical meaning of Rachel Low's statement that "the penny gaff was to give way to the Bijou Theatre" (1948 v. 2:15). By 1913, the cinema had already become a major industry and was in the process of entering the cultural mainstream of society, the Reformers simply pushed that production of space along.

The same can be said at that time for the Hollywood studios, which will be explored in the next chapters for their links to the reorganization of nationalist ideology under Fordism. The other key production of cinematic space to emerge at this time (1913-19) were the lavish "picture palaces" as the other key production of cinematic space to also emerge at this time. These new theaters were equally representative of the national reorganization imposed by Taylorism and continued by Fordism

> It took an organized set of theaters, operated from a central office, to realize the benefits so well knows to Sears-Roebuck, Woolworth's, and A & P. Thus, from the nickelodeon to the

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> movie palace, the leading exhibitors sought to learn the tenets of the ongoing chain store revolution. During the first two decades of the century, chain stores became a significant force in the United States economy. [...]
>
> The methods seemed simple. Chains kept costs low by taking advantage of economies of scale. Fixed costs were spread over more and more operations, so that the cost per store was far lower than the competition across the street. For example, A & P had one central accounting department handle financial records and inventory control for their stores in a number of states. Store managers only made entries; others kept the books.
>
> To take full advantage of this type of savings, chains relied on "scientific management." Owners hired university trained experts to study the situation and propose methods by which to minimize costs and maximize sales. Each department of the modern chain store enterprise was simply asked to perform its specialty at maximum speed and minimum cost. Owners and operators of single store outlets had to be jacks-of-all-trades. Master of specialties could do the jobs faster and cheaper – and spread over hundreds of operations. There was no reason to think that "scientific management" could not be applied to the exhibition movie business (Gomery 1992:35).

As nickelodeons turned into "movie palaces," the internal composition of their space began to conform itself to the tenets of modern business. Under the guidelines of the "scientifically managed establishment," film exhibition became departmentalized – with specific spaces and specialized personnel in charge of diverse tasks: a ticket booth with its attendant, a snack bar with its attendants, a separate hall for the

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projection with its ushers and a booth for the projectionist, etc. (Bowser 1990:123).

The cinema went from an artisanal mode to an assembly line mode, by now becoming more than an unadorned one man show

> All kinds of amenities were brought in to make the new theaters comfortable elegant and refined. The unwashed might be made to feel a little out-of-place, and the better classes more assured. Marble, beveled glass, polished oak and walnut, dazzling electric lights, lavish carpeting, and huge mirrors began to appear in newly redecorated theaters. Restrooms became a necessity rather than a luxury with longer programs, and these were finer facilities than many customers had at home. Exhibitors were told that the "well conducted motion picture houses have uniformed attendants." These gave an appearance of order and encouraged good conduct (Bowser 1990:126).

Class distinctions are made up of practices of space. Presentation was part of the push among cinema entrepreneurs to not only pacify reformers but to seek a wider and more lucrative market, the growing middle class (May 1983:153-8). Having class meant turning the movie theater into a space that knew not only how to bring people in, but also how to keep certain people out

> early examinations [of mass entertainment] found that the 1908 patrons were workers; by 1912 25 percent of the audience was clerical and 5 percent was business class of both sexes. Detailed

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> examinations from the twenties and forties showed that this expansion continued (May 1983:164).

As Nickelodeons became more lavish (even before the advent of the movie palace) there was already evidence of segregated seating for Negroes (Bowser 1990:9) and of a concern with minorities and immigrants keeping respectable patrons away (Sklar 1994:16).

The interior of these movie palaces (already a form of hegemonic space as we will see in the next chapter; see, May 1983; 2000) are an indispensable practice of space in the construction of a Modernist *and* modern subjectivity – what Kracauer called the "cult of distraction" (*loc. cit.*). The "cult of distraction" is actually a twinning of ideas which are highly contextualized, both in Marx and in Kracauer's other writings in *The Mass Ornament*. The idea of cult is derived from Marx's notion of the fetishism of the commodity from Chapter I of *Capital*. As with the old simile of the camera obscura in *The German Ideology*, the important aspect of the fetishism of the commodity is the reversal that operates between the illusion of exchange value and the reality of social relations (which form the basis for exchange itself but

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are obscured by the naturalization of value as an independent attribute of things, so that "relations between people appear as relations between things"). Since exchange value is established in order to equate beings of quite different qualities and ontological status, it is a foregone conclusion that the homogenization[21] of labor relations into a flattened and undifferentiated mass is simply a product of the all encompassing intensification of the capitalist process of production, undertaken by Taylorism and Fordism. When transformed into a cultural form (which plays on the etymology of cult), commodity fetishism turns into an adoration of abstract rationalization (geometrism, detachment of effects from the body that produces them, etc); when this is turned into an act like the Tiller Girls (a combination of the Roquettes and the dancers in Busby Berkeley's choreographies), culture becomes "mass ornament"

> The structure of the mass ornament reflects that of the entire contemporary situation. Since the principle of the *capitalist production process* does not arise purely out of nature, it must

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[21]Marx's earlier notion of *entfremdung* (estrangement or alienation) from the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, is clearly applicable here as well; except that the first complete publication of this text did not come out until 1932, much too late for Kracauer to have known about it while writing the texts under discussion.

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> destroy the natural organisms that it regards either as means or as resistance. Community and personality perish when what is demanded is calculability; it is only as a tiny piece of the mass that the individual can clamber up charts and can service machines without any friction. A system oblivious to differences in form leads on its own to the blurring of national characteristics to the production of worker masses that can be employed equally well at any point on the globe (1995:78, italics in the original).

We can see, yet again, the telescoping of a spatialized sense of capitalist relations. The mass ornament of the Tiller girls serves as a sort of cell form – similar to the commodity for Marx's method in *Capital* – from which one can develop all the determinations that flesh out the dialectical totality of a system of relations. The above citation extends the totality of the capitalist production process to the entire world, precisely by means of the interchangeability and standardization of pieces (in this case, individual workers) that are so characteristic of Taylorism and Fordism.

What Kracauer does, in short, is to filter Marx's commodity form through the relational lens provided by Simmel, who understands the individual as merely a node of relations between him or her and other individuals plus any constitutive elements of society. Looking at

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Simmel's *Philosophy of Money* (1978), what emerges is exchange value as a cultural form – an imposition of calculability as a behavioral and mental norm that obliterates not only national and personal differences, but also all other human attributes that allow for community. For Kracauer (as it previously was for his mentor, Simmel, and for his own friend, Walter Benjamin), this was not exclusively a drying up of life under the weight of an economic process, but a culturally produced social world. And this production rested not on some sort of mystical force from beyond (as it would, for example, in Lang's *Metropolis*), but in tangible and discernible spatial activities.[22] The act of the Tiller Girls was, after all, both a spatial representation (humans as disassembled parts – limbs, heads, etc – geometrically distributed) *and* a representation of space (as a sheer aggregate or patterning of visual points – a calculable form with no other content). As such, this exemplar of the mass ornament allowed

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[22]Kracauer was not only a journalist but also an architect, and from this he took the point of view of reality as construction; so that, despite his claim that "the mass ornament reflects" its social reality, he actually granted thought and culture greater agency than the term "reflection" would allow.

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for that observable unfolding of one spatial principle into a second one, which of course then allowed for a third space of representation – the Tiller Girls were not only a representation of space but a representation in space, which meant that the space that surrounded them (the theater and its audience) also mattered as a basis for the production of social meaning (representation as metaphor through synecdoche, as a miniature model of the larger world – hence the notion of art and culture as a "reflection of the entire social world").

At the same time, Kracauer had a positive understanding of these cultural forms in that he saw them as true manifestations of a specific moment in the process of capitalist production; therefore, he also tried to accept their premises and work out their logic in order to unmask the real nature of capitalist relations, rather than opting for a reactionary return to some "correct" cultural form of an already outmoded and retrograde past

> Critics chide Berliners for being *addicted to distraction*, but this is a petit-bourgeois reproach. Certainly, the addiction to distraction is greater in Berlin than in the provinces, but the tension to which the working masses are subjected is also greater and more tangible; it is an essentially formal tension, which fills

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their day fully without making it fulfilling. Such lack demands to be compensated, but this need can be articulated only in terms of the same surface sphere that imposed the lack in the first place. The form of free-time busy-ness necessarily corresponds to the form of business.

A correct instinct will see to it that the need for entertainment is satisfied. The interior design of movie theaters serves one sole purpose to rivet the viewers' attention to the peripheral, so that they will not sink into the abyss. The stimulations of the senses succeed one another with such rapidity that there is no room left between them for even the slightest contemplation. Like *life buoys*, the refractions of the spotlights and the musical accompaniment keep the spectator above water. The penchant for distraction demands and finds and answer in the display of pure-externality; hence the irrefutable tendency, particularly in Berlin, to turn all forms of entertainment into revues and parallel with this tendency the increasing number of illustrations in the daily press and periodical publications.

This emphasis on the external had the advantage of being *sincere*. It is not externality that poses a threat to truth. Truth is threatened only by the naive affirmation of cultural values that have become unreal and by the careless misuse of concepts such as personality, inwardness, tragedy, and so on – terms that in themselves certainly refer to some lofty ides but that have lost some of their scope along with their supporting foundations, due to social changes. ... In a profound sense, Berlin audiences act truthfully when they increasingly shun these art events (which, for good reason, remain caught in mere pretense), preferring instead the surface glamor of the stars, films, revues and spectacular shows. Here, in pure externality, the audience encounters itself; its own reality is revealed in the fragmented sequence of splendid sense impressions. Were this reality to remain hidden from the viewers, they could neither attack nor change it; its disclosure in distraction is therefore of *moral* significance.

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> But this is the case only if distraction is not an end in itself. Indeed, the very fact that the shows aiming at distraction are composed of the same mixture of externalities as the world of the urban masses; the fact that these shows lack any authentic and materially motivated coherence, except possibly the glue of sentimentality, which covers up this lack but only in order to make it all the more visible; the fact that these shows convey precisely and openly to thousands of eyes and ears the *disorder* of society – this is precisely what would enable them to evoke and maintain the tension that must precede the inevitable and radical change. In the streets of Berlin, one is often struck by the momentary insight that someday all this will suddenly burst apart. The entertainment to which the general public throngs ought to produce the same effect (1995:325-7).

Kracauer goes on to lament the fact that this is never the case, and reproaches film spectacles for devaluing their own formal worth by placing the pictures within a live variety show that tries to glue back the pieces of a bygone world. That strategy hides and devalues the truth of its function of "distraction – which is meaningful only as improvisation, as a reflection of the uncontrolled anarchy of our world" (p. 327).[23]

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[23]This is a contradiction in terms – improvisation is an active term, while reflection is passive – and it is here where we can, perhaps, come to a fuller understanding of Kracauer's constructive and analytic difficulty. For us, the cinema is an active production of space and its consequent social effects geared to impose an organizational order (regulation) precisely on that anarchic world that Kracauer claims to be reflected in the cult of distraction of the movie theaters. As a Fordist

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The entire section of Kracauer's essay was quoted in full not only because of its admirable coherence and systematic buildup towards its unusual conclusion (at least for that epoch), but also because of its ethos of High Modernism. Like the avant-garde artists of his time, Kracauer embraces the urbanized, mechanized, and chaotically overstimulating world of that era; and, at the same time, he is critically aware of the faults and contradictions of that present moment and of the need, if not the inevitability, of moving on to another time, another era ("someday all of this will suddenly burst apart"). To any observer "*in the streets of Berlin*," this would appear as insight and not as teleology. This, if nothing else, was due to that blasé attitude discussed in "Metropolis and Mental Life" (*loc. cit.*), Simmel's classic analysis of

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"tool," the cinema always tried to impose that order – even the darkest of the German Expressionist films – *Nosferatu* or *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, for example – showed a restored social order at the end. In context, however, the Berlin of the Weimar Republic that Kracauer observed at that time was buffeted by social and economic upheaval from the burdens of the failed war effort and the costly postwar debt, the ensuing period of inflation, etc. Even the slightest hint of a regulatory possibility must have seem remote there by comparison to Detroit or the rest of the U.S. Thus, it is quite possible that the regulatory impulses of the Fordist cinema acted in constant tension with the reality of Berliner chaos. It is not surprising that, in the long run, this became one of the crucial sites of sociopolitical contestation in the framework of global Fordism.

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the massive amounts of urban stimuli and their effects on the psyche of city dwellers – many of whom had recently arrived from the countryside with its small towns, so that the patterning of their mental life was anchored on a static way of life that no longer obtained in the hyperkinetic and noisy environment of a Berlin with four million residents. The blasé attitude that by necessity had to be derived as a coping mechanism to such environment is directly related to the notion of distraction; but while Simmel's concepts are psychologically internal, Kracauer's are fixed in space and broken down to show their material structure and constitutive elements.

Distraction as a High Modernist concept, then, makes us aware of its intended effect as much as it also points out the mechanisms of its own making. Distraction must be understood in a double meaning, which is hard to grasp strictly in English, for it not only entails "loss of attention or concentration" but also "diversion, amusement, entertainment, recreation."[24] Distraction, that is to say, does not just

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[24]In the Romance languages, distraction has precisely that double meaning, which is applied to many forms of recreation (from crossword puzzles to amusement park rides). The Italian translation of the original German *Kult der Zerstreuung* is *Culto*

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happen, it is meant to be – "it corresponds to the form of business" that makes up the urban-industrial world. Since distraction is a construct, it has a structure and a utilization (or a misuse), which in Kracauer's analysis are labeled as sheer space: he always uses terms like externality, peripheral, abyss, Berlin (or any other large modern city, as opposed to the provinces), and, most of all, movie palaces. In German, these special movie theaters are called *lichtspielhäuser*; which could be translated as "playhouses (or theaters) of light," accentuating the logic of artificiality in the spectacles they present – made up of beams of light reflected by multicolored mirrors, with an orchestra playing and, at times, other types of live performance; what Kracauer calls *a total artwork of effects* (p. 324).

As a cult, distraction must have its temple for worshiping, and the movie palaces are such "shrines for the cultivation of pleasure." Despite the fact that the architecture and the spectacle bombard the senses, these shrines are much more tasteful and worthy than the

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del Divertimento, which connotes the notion of recreation and amusement, as well as recalling the old Rococo musical form – precisely meant to be pleasant and uncomplicated to amuse and entertain the artist's patron and his guests.

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"pomposity of Wilhelminian secular churches – like the Rhinegold, for example, which seeks to give the impression that it harbors the Wagnerian Nibelungen" (p. 323). For Kracauer, in contrast to a number of "Postmodern Geographers," space is also history, at least as an indicator; and, in this case, the "elegant surface splendor" (*ibid.*) of the movie palaces is representative of the historic progress of the time (tied to the abstract decor of some palaces or the tasteful imaginative craftsmanship of others), as opposed to the backwardly imperial personality cult of the previous regime (Kaiser Wilhelm, Wagner) and the aristocratic mythology of a pure blooded original Germany (Nibelungen) that sustained its obfuscating nationalism. A decade later the Nazis would rise to perform an even fuller array of visual and auditory effects through the streets of Nüremberg; the pomposity of Wilhelminian nationalism would be revitalized by joining the mass ornament to an even grander production of representational space. Kracauer's optimism may have been misguided, his analysis was not.

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VIII

Kracauer did not see the cinema exclusively as an activity of mass ornamentation (representation). His writing on the movie palaces cannot be seen outside of the context of "Calico-World," his other writing on the Hollywood-like UFA studios in the outskirts of Berlin[25]

> In the middle of the Grunewald is a fenced in area that one can enter only after going through various checkpoints. It is a desert within an oasis. The natural things outside – trees made out of wood, lakes with water, villas that are inhabitable – have no place within its confines. But the world does reappear there ... everything guaranteed unnatural and everything exactly like nature.
>
> In order for the world to flicker by on film, it is first cut to pieces in the film city. Its interconnections are suspended, its dimensions change at will and its mythological powers are turned into amusement. This world is like a child's toy that is put into a cardboard box. The dismantling of the world's contents is radical; and even if it is undertaken only for the sake of illusion, the illusion is by no means insignificant. The heroes of antiquity have already made their way into the schoolbooks (pp. 281-2).

Once again, the fetishism of the commodity and the upside down world it produces are in evidence here. It is no accident that the beginning of the citation, which is also the beginning of the article, talks about a

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[25]Both writings were published early in 1926, and "Calico World" was also broadcast over the radio (pp. 394-5). Kracauer was clearly following the entirety of the film process, from production to exhibition (i.e., consumption).

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fenced in area that one can only enter by going through checkpoints. This is the world of private property enforced by hired sentinels.

The irony, of course, is that the public being kept out by walls and checkpoints is precisely the consumer target of this secretive place. In fact, what is being protected is not only the material property inside that space, but the process of production itself – the production of an illusory reality which the public must never realize to be made out of faked materials (i.e., the calico cloth used for set construction) and film effects. In that sense, the studio is the equivalent of what Goffman calls a "back room," in relation to the "front room" of the movie house; the back room is open to "authorized personnel only" and it is the space where the dirty work is carried out, the public must never see the sweat that went into the beautiful presentation served in the front room (Goffman 1959:107-40; see also Giddens 1979:207-9). That division of space had been familiar to modern customers for a long time, but the increased division of labor and work spaces under Fordism now allowed for the back room to be geographically separate from the front

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room where the merchandise could be distributed and consumed.[26] In this case, the public is barred from seeing the very fact that the world they deem to be real upon the screen is absolute fakery in actuality.

Here lies the particular strength of film-as-merchandise, in its essential form (its capacity to fake off reality more convincingly than any other art form) it involves the very inversion of the world that legitimizes the commodity form (the realism of the artificial – i.e., exchange value as natural quality of the object). And Kracauer understands that the befuddling fakery of the studio is only the starting point (physical and metaphoric) of an entire social process: "In order for the world to flicker by on film [projected upon the screen], it is first cut to pieces in the film city [that starting point of the process]; as a consequence, the world's interconnections are suspended, its dimensions change at will and its mythological powers are turned into amusement." But the illusion is not insignificant when seen as part of

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[26]The coordination of Fordist productions of space on a global scale is once again in evidence with the UFA studios, the first of which were constructed in the area of Tempelhof in 1913 – the same year that the assembly line was fully implemented in the Highland Park plant and Griffith moved permanently to Hollywood.

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the entire social process – as the heroes of antiquity recede into the history textbooks, the heroes of the moment begin to live in that ersatz reality of the film screen. Like the child's toy put into the box, everyday experience and the myths necessary to sustain it are wrapped up in tinsel and put up on the screen. The new pageantry of social order (power) is made strictly of moving light and sound effects, the piazzas with their statues have been rendered obsolete.

IX

This notion was embraced not only by the ruling elite and its hegemonic intellectuals (fimmakers, media journalists, critics, etc), it was also embraced by the avant-garde movement of the 1920's almost in its entirety. We will just make a few brief observations here (see Chapter Five for a fuller development), it is imperative that we make mention, however briefly, of the role that some avant-garde artists had in forging a vision of the city that remains in the modern imagination to this day.

The sudden burst of avant-garde documentaries where the city itself becomes the "main character" is a well known fact in film

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history; in a very brief period we have Cavalcanti's *Rien Que les Heures* (1926), Vertov's *Man With the Movie Camera* (1928), Ruttmann's *Berlin, Symphony of a Great City* (1928), and Ivens' *Rain* (1929). The first three films treat the city as a "biographical subject," showing the different aspects of a single day in the life of a given city; the latter film becomes a lyrical visual poem of Amsterdam under the rain. All these films go against the already entrenched Institutional Mode imposed by Hollywood, and instead treat the city as the unitary space that supports a parade of images and events that otherwise would have no diegetic aspect in common. We find ourselves, once again, before the "cinema of attractions."

The "attraction" elements are quite evident in those films, especially in *Berlin, Symphony of a Great City* and *Man with the Movie Camera*: the geometric patterns of buildings, streets, electric poles and cables, etc.; the groupings of people walking, going up stairways and elevators, lined up desk after desk typing furiously, etc.; and, most of all, the speed and accelerated rhythms of city life, cars, trolleys, railroads, subways, spinning parts of machinery, rushing water over

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river dams, pedestrians running across the street dodging machines that go even faster than them, etc. This dizzying and exhilarating array of kinetic stimuli is surely bracketed by the leitmotif of a day's journey from dawn (sunup/beginning of workday/the city wakes up) to night (sundown/nightlife/the city plays and goes to sleep); but it is also bracketed by a second leitmotif involving the journey of the machine, from the arrival to city by train – the circular motion of the wheels upon the rail, the billows of smoke, the rural landscape blurring by the window and slowly turning into urban outskirts, then city streets, and finally the urban station (echoes of Hale's Tours) – to the spinning of th gyroscopes and the lights that shine upon the athletes or dancers that make up the nightly activities of a city that eventually fades out into sleep only to, presumably, begin the cycle again.

The city becomes a huge organism, a living being whose existence is made up of more than the accumulation of activities and experiences of its inhabitants. Nothing, allows for this interpretation better than the "cycle of life" contained within the city in both *Berlin* and *Man with the Movie Camera*. Vertov has a lengthy series of

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sequences in which we see pregnancy, labor, maternity wards, schoolchildren, etc. Ruttmann is even more concise, choosing to show (in the subsection titled "Akt III") the same process with just a few shots that seemingly depict events along a single city street: a smartly dressed young woman walking down the street, street traffic, a young woman walking past a man turning a corner and stopping by a store window while the man stops and looks through another window of the same store then decides to turn the corner and pursue the woman, a motorized mannequin in the shape of a man pushing on a pedal that operates some sort of grindstone, a wedding party getting off a taxicab and going up the front stairs of some ceremonial building, another store window featuring a display of rotating dolls shaped like little girls, another motorized mannequin also in the shape of a man brushing off dirt from a shirt collar, different scenes of street traffic, from across the street an old lady (seen from the back) slowly goes up the front steps of a church and then into the church as traffic goes by, after some scenes depicting parades and other ceremonial events there is a fancy hearse carrying a coffin and moving along with the rest of the street traffic.

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The section goes on to show other aspects of city life – long distance trains loading luggage at the station, men inside giant papier-maché dolls as walking advertisements (reminiscent of the "sandwich-board man" in Vidor's *The Crowd*), and fast moving traffic, especially trains running through buildings in elevated tracks. The strategy of intercutting the "cycle-of-life" with random and non-diegetic shots of everyday activities in the city creates an overall "montage-effect" that places the city at the level of a supra-organic organism: it simulates the ontological status of a human being (i.e., it has a "biography") and yet it contains and transcends the individual life of each of its inhabitants (it becomes "larger than life").

In this respect, Cavalcanti's pioneering *Rien Que les Heures* is the archetype of the Modernist urban representation in the cinema: after a brief preamble explaining the non-narrative strategy of the film, the presentation begins with an intertitle stating that "the painters of all origins (*race* in French) have taken a look at the city;" what we see next is a closeup of an eye which remains without expression for a few moments and then opens wide as if surprised, the next thing is a

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montage of Post-Impressionist paintings and drawings of city streets and landmarks (e.g., the Eiffel Tower), this is followed by a very high top shot of an old lady staggering her way through a dark alley (intertitle:"aimlessly wandering (*errante*), the old lady"), followed by a shot of a candle burning on a small table, a pair of hands come in and brush stuff off the table and then put out the candle by pressing on the wicker; then we see a sequence with a heavily made up young lady who tries to invite a man passing by to be with her (the intertitle simply says, "the girl," but she seems to be a prostitute), this is followed by a sequence which inercuts (through vertical wipes) objects like garbage pails, vegetable stands or bunches of flowers with paintings depicting similar objects, this connects to a group of shots depicting the beginning of the workday – a man opening the shutters to his store, a lathe hanging from the ceiling with a couple of loops attached to it (which is first immobile and suddenly begins to rotate), a sign with an arrow pointing down to the "concierge" and a woman who emerges from a doorway into a courtyard yelling for someone, etc., an intertitle saying "morning time" appears and is followed by shots of rooftops

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with smoke coming out of the chimneys, and a lone shot of a jug with steam coming off its top. This sequence is doubly bracketed, once by the eye and its double object (the city it observes and the visual representation – paintings – that result from this specular totalization), and the second set of brackets provided by the "montage" between the dying old lady and the literal snuffing off the candle of life while at the other end the smoking chimneys are the result of the coal burning in order to heat up the steaming milk or coffee that would end up at the breakfast table – cause and effect are fused into a functionally organic whole.

The old lady, in fact, will spend the entire film staggering her way through the city at the edges of the frame (i.e, literal marginality in terms of the depicted action), shifting from a metonymic depiction (i.e., one character who is part of city life) to a metaphoric depiction (i.e, the biological passage of time as emblematic of the passage of history). Along with the introduction on paintings that reflec the city, this depiction allows the film to become the ultimate metaphor, the reflection of the reflection; in other words, the work of art presents

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itself as a representation of the elements and conditions of its own making, which is the core ideology of avant-garde Modernism (see Chapter 5). In everyday life, the city takes the same characteristics, it is at the same time "non-diegetic presentation" (i.e., the actual passage of everyday time in an everyday space) and "self-reflective representation" (i.e., the everyday bombardment of advertisements, fashion statements, architectural panoramas, mechanical speed and other urban "spectacles" that celebrate the technological making of the Modern Age). The aesthetics of astonishment can only exist and persist within the modern city.

X

The urban celebration of the Roaring Twenties, however, had its underbelly – which those avant-garde films did not entirely eschew: there are depictions of miserable living conditions in the form of vagrants sleeping on the sidewalk or picking up discarded cigarette butts; in *Rien Que les Heures*, specifically, this is accentuated further by isolated shots of garbage and rats infesting the city streets, these are the same streets where a newspaper girl coming home with her day's

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earnings gets brutally mugged and left to die by a pimp. Cavalcanti is carrying out the representational aesthetics of Surrealism

> The important thing was to rediscover life under the thick carapace of centuries of culture – life pure, naked, raw, lacerated. The important thing was to bring the unconscious of a city into unison with the unconscious of men (Nadeau 1965:98).

Even in non-Surrealist films like Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927) and *M* (1931), along with King Vidor's *The Crowd* (1928) and Willard Van Dyke's *The City* (1939) the city is bereft of all lyricism, and shown instead to be a dysfunctional and oppressive setting, a place which by its very being and shape can only help but to bring out the worst in the human spirit.

Metropolis is, of course, much talked about for its futuristic models of a city with flying vehicles and super-elevated thruways, there is also the mass of silent and downtrodden factory workers going in formation down to the underground pit of the industrial plant (a joyless version of the Tiller-girl form of the mass ornament). In fact, though, this film is more about a conventional love story than about the city: the rebellious young son of the industrialist catches a glimpse of

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and immediately falls in love with the beautiful girl, who is made more attractive to him by her saintly devotion to the workers (summed up in her presumably counter-alienating exhortations to make the heart and the mind come together). In the end, both youngsters stop a worker rebellion and broker social peace by causing the girl's metaphoric exhortations to become actualized in a handshake between the leader of the workers and the head of management, as homologous counterparts to body and mind. The organic metaphor of the alienating relations of production under capitalism is now a physical setting for state corporatism[27] – a blend of Fordist regulation and authoritarian subsumption (which Kracauer notes as a symptomatic explanation of the pro-fascist social psychology of the era and of Hitler's own admiration for that film, 1947:162-4).

On the other hand, Vidor's *The Crowd* dispenses with the organic metaphors, inaugurating in tandem with Lang's *M*, a Modernist representation of the city as the quintessential conduit for contemporary

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[27]At this point, the metaphor is not only extended to the "class struggle" but also to the nation-state, that level of cinematic discourse which will be analyzed in the next chapters.

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social dysfunction – that is: if people are going to be criminals, they will be more so in the city; if people are going to become disillusioned by their lot in life, this will be more so in the city. At one level, this could be seen as the simple reiteration of Simmel, but in Vidor this was more likely an echo of classic melodrama and provincial nostalgia. One can see the evident connection between "recent arrivals" and urban anomie – the multiethnic population of the slum circulating in the same streets where the ethnically-centered gangs also roam (e.g., Griffiths' *Musketeers of Pig Alley* and *Broken Blossoms*, or Walsh's *Regeneration*) – and one can also see the fresh faced and ambitious rural go-getter searching for fame and fortune only to get buffeted by the spiritually monstrous physicality of the city (e.g., Harold Lloyd's *Safety Last*).

At another level, *The Crowd* already begins to show a city where cruelty and victimization, false promise and certain failure are part of the system rather than a result of maladjustment. And, in this respect, the representation of space is compelling: this film, for example, is one of the first (if not the first) to have the now cliched shot with the

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camera traveling along the facade of a high rise building with its evenly spaced rectangular windows only to enter a room filled with hundreds of rows of desks, each with a hunched over clerk or secretary, chillingly spaced in the same geometrically-calculated fashion as the windows.

In a sense, the entire movie becomes a catalog of melodramatic clichés, beginning with the opening scene where the film's "tragic-anti-hero," John Sims, is born on July 4th, 1900; his proud father, of course, proclaims that the boy is destined to do great things. The rest of the movie is, predictably, a lengthy tale of failure and dashed expectations: John is not a great man, instead he works in a huge, impersonal environment full of clerks all looking alike, all literally doing and saying the exact same thing. One day, he meets pretty Mary and begins courting her, on their first date they go atop a double decker bus where they can see the spectacle of the city streets, this gives John occasion to show great hubris in pointing at and making fun of a man walking up a sidewalk with a "sandwich board" advertisement (already discussed above in relation to *Berlin, Symphony of the City*); it is only *de rigouer*

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for this type of occupation to end up being Sims' own fate towards the end of the movie. Even John's moment of triumph, when he earns a lot of money by winning a contest for a slogan to an ad campaign, is the indirect reason for his daughter's death, since the little girl crosses the street against the traffic to see the toys her father has brought home. John cannot even help his little daughter as she lies on the bed struggling between life and death, the traffic and street noises are simply not going to stop, no matter how he gestures at the people passing by; even the beat cop warns him that the city cannot stop just because his little child is sick.[28] As a result, John loses his job, is in the process of having his condescending in-laws take away his family, and is about to jump off a bridge when renewed hope comes in the form of

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[28]This becomes the melodramatic equivalent of the hero's fate in Greek tragedy, the tragic element resulting from human hubris to defy the irresistible force of the *deus ex machina*; the melodrama resulting from the inverted relationship to the tragic announcement – instead of fulfilling a tragic destiny, the melodramatic antihero *fails* to fulfill his or her promise. It connects to what Peter Brooks has analyzed as the "aesthetics of muteness" in melodrama (1984:62-68), whereby characters are dramatized for their incapacity to articulate their own position and intervene in their own fate; in addition, melodrama also contains a Manichaean structure (pp. 28-36) that polarizes all characters between absolute good and absolute villainy, creating an easily digestible moral universe for the middle class spectator.

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his own little son saying that he wants to be like his dad when he grows up. This prompts him to rush and get the job as a sandwich man in order to run back home and announce that he is not giving up, his wife literally comes out of her brothers' car to embrace him and stand by her man ("for richer or poorer, in sickness or health"). The film ends with the restored family in a movie theater laughing and enjoying the show while the camera zooms back to reveal a room full of anonymous faces doing basically the same thing.[29] Once again, we have the self-

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[29]Some two decades later, Preston Sturges would base one of his movies on a contest for an ad campaign (*Christmas in July*); another movie would reach its climactic turning point with a pretentious film director in jail laughing along with his fellow inmates at a simpleminded comedy film and realizing that "entertainment movies" brought joy and hope to the real people "out there" (*Sullivan's Travels*); and two movies would also present the hapless everyman being despised by a domineering in-law (*Miracle at Morgan's Creek*) and being thrust into an unlikely public role by a mob of townspeople (*Hail the Conquering Hero*). This multiplication of characters over several movies and distinct locations (e.g., *Miracle at Morgan's Creek* takes place in a small town, while *Christmas in July* takes place in New York City) is an indication that the Modernist features localized exclusively within urban spaces in the First Postwar of 1920's had already become a nation-wide feature in the Second Postwar of the 1950's. The only Preston Sturges movie to clearly establish a connection between urban space and dysfunction would be *The Great Maginty*, where dysfunction is no longer socially generalized but localized at the level of political corruption, and the characters in that movie will all be entirely urban as opposed to John Sims' origins in the pastoral setting of "small town Americana."

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reflection of Modernism, a film showing a movie theater, this time in a mainstream narrative work (this film did enjoy commercial success).

If the cinema of attractions (including Vertov and Ruttmann) took the technological city at face value and developed a dreamworld of utopian optimism based on a promise of mechanical bounty and the scientific perfectibility of the human condition; movies like *The Crowd* began shortly thereafter to expose a catastrophic potential exacerbated by a double dose of anxiety, which stemmed from the oppressively alienating conditions of an impersonal capitalist world and from the drying out of the postwar economic bubble that sustained the Roaring Twenties, leading eventually to the Crash of 29. Lang produced *M* in the aftermath of that crash, when the catastrophe of our times had become tangible to all[30] in the form of spiraling unemployment and financial bankruptcy, dizzying loss of purchasing power due to

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[30]That same year saw the release of Whale's *Frankenstein*, Browning's *Dracula* and Dreyer's *Vampyr*; Wellman's archetypal gangster film *Public Enemy* as well as Milestone's *The Front Page*, the first movie version of Hecht's memorable satire of corrupt urban politics and bloodthirsty journalism; Capra's darkest comedy *Platinum Blonde* along with Chaplin's *City Lights*; and two European classics that echo *M*'s representation of business as mixed with crime, Pabst's *Three Penny Opera* and Clair's *À Nous la Liberté*.

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hyperinflation (especially in Germany), and a concomitant popular discontent steadily hardening into militant fascism.

Within this context, *M* takes the space of the city as a framework for social dysfunction in a similar manner to *The Crowd*; but it shows a systematic exploration of space that allows for a critical look at the capitalist system as a whole, as opposed to the individualized melodrama of Vidor's film. *M* is about a series of murders involving little girls, leading to fear and collective frenzy in Berlin; the Mayor is under political pressure, and he, in turn, hangs this pressusre over the head of the Chief of Police. The result is the near imposition of martial law, which cuts into the activities of the city's criminals. Both the police and the organizations of street criminals throw parallel dragnets to catch the culprit, who turns out to be a small and mild mannered man; revealed as a suspect by his own penchant to whistle a specific tune, recognized by a blind balloon vendor. The vendor notifies one of the members of the "beggar's union," who had been deputized by the leaders of crime to find and track the man; the alert "beggar" uses some chalk to place a large and visible capital letter M on the man's back as

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he is trying to entice a little girl to go with him. The man realizes what is going on and tries to flee into an office building that has already closed for the night, he hides in an upper floor warehouse cowering like a cornered animal. The association of criminals appoints their various skilled professionals and divides their tasks in order to efficiently break into the building and catch the man; they eventually succeed and whisk him away to an abandoned brewery, where a kangaroo court takes on the role of judge, hangman and jury. The police, meanwhile, have also been using all manner of detective methods and technological devices to conduct their own search; one of the guards in the office buildings manages to break free and trip an electric alarm wired to police headquarters. The criminals know exactly how much time is left and they clear out just before the cops arrive; but one of the criminals had been left behind in the building, and after a skillful interrogation from the head of police, he finally breaks down and tells them about the brewery. Meanwhile, the trial is in its final phase, and "M" is pleading for his life in dramatic fashion, claiming that he is not in control of his impulses. As he is about to be

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lynched by the mob of criminals, the police come in and take control of the situation; a tacked on ending (so melodramatic that is seems forced upon the story by moralistic studio executives) shows a couple grieving mothers sitting against a wall, tearfully expressing their learnt lesson that "us parents, too, have to watch more closely after our children."

The spatial articulation of Lang's critique is most clearly seen in the sequences that depict the simultaneous efforts by the police and the organized criminals to find out who the murderer is. Kracauer observes the fact that these sequences are characterized by

> Ingenious cutting [that] interweaves the milieu of the police and the underworld: while the gang leaders discuss their plans, police experts, too, sit in conference, and these two meetings are paralleled by constant shifts of scene which hinge on subtle association. The comic touch inherent in the cooperation between the lawless and the law materializes on various occasions. Witnesses refuse to agree upon the simplest facts; innocent citizens indict each other fiercely. Set against these gay interludes, the episodes concentrating upon the murders seem even more horrifying (1947:219-20).

This is certainly correct, but there is a key feature – the representation of space – that differentiates these activities, grounding them in a sociopolitical practice of everyday life. As the same activities are

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crosscut in order to accentuate the interconnection, the one thing that remains stable is the fact that the cops exist literally above ground and their superiors exist in even higher ground (in upper floor offices, some of them with nice views of the city); while the criminals also exist in the street, but mainly below (literally undergound). In a memorable scene, the beggars and petty thieves enter a building and descend to the basement where there is a full cafeteria, the camera tilts slightly up to reveal a large blackboard behind the counter where the "clerks" write down the exchange rates for various goods available that day (based upon what could be "appropriated" by the footsoldiers of the organization). Crime is a form of business, with its own entrepreneurial sense, just like any other. Later on in that scene, the police descend into the underground hall, trapping all the criminals and forcing them to make a line in order to show their identity papers and account for their whereabouts – this is what prompts their leaders to conduct their own search for the murderer: as a modern enterprise, crime has as much of a stake in the law and order of the capitalist regime as the police, or any other type of "legitimate institution."

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Meanwhile, the authorities (the mayor and the chief of police, as well as the leaders of the criminal organizations) all have their meetings in upper floor rooms – the governmental officials communicate by phone, each in their respective offices; the leaders of crime meet face to face in their clandestine apartment. The chief of police has his own ground forces that radio in the indications which he traces on a map for purposes of triangulation; the criminals also use the phone, but rely mostly on their own wits and skills, more along the lines of pre-industrial labor. But when the criminals outdo the police and are able to chase the murderer into the office building, they recruit a variety of skilled "craftsmen" who are already able to line up one behind the other in order to perform the series of tasks necessary to handle a search on such a large space – this is a Taylorist division of labor under conditions of an economy of scale. These rogues are no longer the *pícaros* of the Spanish Baroque (perhaps the first narratives of alienated labor; see Zamora Vicente 1968, Talens 1975, Maravall 1986), they are industrial specialists habituated into organizing their labor as an assembly line. Just like the police transgressed spatial

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arrangements by *going down* into the criminal's underground hall, the criminals are now mirroring that transgression by *going up* into the heights of a building where they clearly do not belong – even there, though, we see Lang emphasizing the underground tendencies of the criminals in an elaborate attempt to break into a vault by pick-axing through the floor above and going down into the secured area.

It is this clear divergence of represented spaces that allows for what Kracauer sees as the horrifying tone to the murders. Two formal devices are actually in play here. One of them is the specific lighting and composition that Lang chooses, the daytime shots are drab due to low contrast and at key times end up involving large groups of extras (the ever present mass society, localizable only in the urban street); at night, the shots are lit with high contrast, having predominating areas of black cut through by starkly lit swats of bright electrical light. This visual strategy actually creates a highly atmospheric texture as the murderer approaches the building where he ends up hiding; at that moment, the masses of extras have disappeared and only a series of individualized but shadowy figures can be seen lurking around,

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recognizable only by the manner in which they carry preassigned tasks during the pursuit: even at the moment in which the urban space permits individuation, alienation remains supreme by rendering these individuals featureless and recognizable only by their operational and occupational position in the composition (i.e., in the space of representation).

The street is the space where all these spatially differentiated social agents intervene as a collectively socialized "organism." At the moment of crisis, though, the street loses all of its organic order and turns into an unruly forum for animalistic (i.e., anti-social) response – that is what strikes the viewer during the moments of collective frenzy and finger pointing at innocent passers-by. As an ethical problem, this phenomenon is compounded by the final sequence – the "kangaroo court" – in which the criminals "privatize" the street by carrying their prisoner into their own secluded space, while still maintaining a street-like lynch mob attitude. At this point, the prisoner is transformed from object into subject, and in his extended monologue he further externalizes his subjectivity through mannerisms and gestures

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reminiscent of Munch's *The Scream*, the classic Expressionist engraving that helps associate this film with that avant-garde movement.[31] The fact that Lang and Peter Lorre (playing the murderer) are able to turn around the spectators' sympathy somewhat towards the murderer is one of the great acting and directorial feats, achieved largely by isolating the murderer within the space of the room and by allowing the gestural expressions of Lorre to range from desperate

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[31]Kracauer shrewdly observes a series of separate scenes where the murderer is surrounded by objects that externalize, in Expressionist fashion, some of this subjectivity: a scene where he stands in front of a shop window full of knives as he attempts to lure a little girl, his reflection on the knives becomes significant in the extreme even to the murderer himself (who is shown to be capable of self-awareness but not of self-control); another scene where he sits in a café having a brandy, looking at the street through some plants like a stalking animal (pp. 220-1). He also observes the pre-eminence of sound (p. 220), the murderer's propensity to whistle Grieg's "Hall of the Mountain King" from *Peer Gynt*, accentuated as a sonic and non-visual element by the fact that it is recognized by a blind man, this irony is enhanced by a previous scene in which one of the criminals is able to spot the murderer's hiding place because he hears the man's attempts to unscrew the lock that is keeping him trapped in the upper floor warehouse and preventing his escape (the same situation was shown when the police raided the underground hall, the criminals could not escape because the cops had taken control of the only exit door). Lefebvre points out the importance of sound and hearing in the lateralization and localization of space (1991:199-200; Metz begins his exploration of sound by talking about offscreen space but he quickly dissolves this materiality into an ethereally disembodied signifier, in Mast *et. al.* 1992:313-316), *M* clearly opens this possibility through a sonic Expressionism of externalized subjectivity (made available by the new synchronized sound process in motion picture technology, itself part of the Fordist form of production).

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introspection to sheer terror, while the kangaroo court turns into a progressively frenzied mob grimacing with pure, irrational hate (once again, lined up in their seats and reacting *en masse*, like a terrifying version of the Tiller girls). The pleas of the "defense attorney," an alcoholic and vagrant former lawyer, that the suspect's right to due process are being violated by people who have committed an even greater number of similar crimes simply fall on deaf ears. The cops happen to come in as the cornered murderer cowers by the stairway to the exit door while the mob of criminals advance towards him, a reassuring hand on the shoulder rescues the murderer from his own worst nightmare: the society of law and order is the only thing that ensures the permanence of civilization in the face of mass society turned into the Leviathan of a vengeful mob (which is precisely what scared Le Bon, Lippman, and Freud). Later on, and already in exile, Lang would use the same visual strategy but would not let the police show up on time, forcing his point even more effectively (*The Fury*, made in 1936, perhaps the most terrifying portrayal of the lynch mob and a perfect complement to a reading of Le Bon or Freud).

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Ruttmann has a similar scene in Akt III of *Berlin, Symphony of a Great City*, in which two men start a fistfight at the edge of the sidewalk, a mob forms but a policeman shows up just in time to separate the men with a paternalist smile, allowing the mob to disperse without further incident. The "environment at close quarters" of the overpopulated city is seen to induce people towards neurotic outbursts of violence, hence the need for visible agents of law enforcement, seldom seen in the small towns. In *M*, this reassuring irruption of the cops takes place under a more ominously activist mob than in *Symphony of the City*; as the Weimar Republic was plunging into social chaos induced by economic crises, the filmmaker's call seemed to be for the forces of the state to restore order, while perhaps admitting that the bourgeois middle class is also responsible for the chaos. If the ending is perhaps ethically and politically ambiguous in *M*, the reality was not: when the Nazi's incarnated that call for a police state in Germany, Lang fled to the United States after divorcing his wife, Thea von Harbou; she had been the screenwriter of both *M* and *Metropolis*,

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and she instead chose to remain in Germany, actively collaborating with the new fascist regime.

Fascism and state corporatism were, of course, responses to the Crash and the ensuing Great Depression. But, even before the crisis of 1929, it had been clear to all parties concerned in business and economic affairs that the system of capitalist production and consumption was running into pricing chaos (hyperinflation), external trade rigidities (short term liquidity), and distribution bottlenecks (large inventories due to drop in demand). In effect, mass production, which presupposes large-scale distribution, was unable to control its own rate of output in relation to consumer demand, and the perspectives for future growth beyond the mid-1920's began to seem uncertain. It was this uncertainty that precipitated the investment panic which led to the Stock Market crash and the collapse of the consumer banking system, when costumers began en masse to withdraw their savings. The system needed to be regulated, and figures such as Keynes began to look for the solution to that problem. As a response to the Crash and its ensuing Depression, Roosevelt instituted a new mode of regulation over the

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whole economy, a New Deal affecting the social relations of production (or reproduction, which would be more apposite). Planning and reorganization were advanced with a view towards a modernized equilibrium to all facets of social life and across all areas of the nation, if not the world; this became the spirit of the New Deal Era. *The City*, directed and produced by Willard Van Dyke and Ralph Steiner and based on an idea by Pare Lorentz (taking the work of Lewis Mumford as the core of the argument), was commissioned for the World Fair of 1939 in New York City (Barnouw 1974:122-3). As such, this film was imbued by the spirit of the dwindling "Progressive Era" (prolonged within the Works Project Administration, where Pare Lorentz led the film section), and by the spirit of scientific planning extended from Taylorism into Fordism (i.e., as a new mode of regulation to seek renewed equilibrium within the framework of mass capitalism).

The film begins with a prologue presenting the farming towns of the Berkshire Mountains as the social origins and continuing organic ideal for the American community (explained through a voiceover narration, and punctuated by Aaron Copeland's score, both of which

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would continue over the rest of the film). Most of this sequence is filmed with the camera mounted on a horse-pulled cart that is bringing metal and other items into town at a leisurely pace (the camera travels along, pointing to the side of the road to give the viewer an idea of the slow speed, while a young boy calmly rests atop the items being brought from the farm to the nearest town store).

The first section of the movie begins in one of the working class neighborhoods of Pittsburgh, where some of the sloping, hilly streets are shown in all their poverty, lack of urban services like sewage or public transportation, while the constant fog created by the local steel mills hovers over the adults as they exert themselves walking uphill and the children play amid the mud and garbage of the unpaved streets. Then, the setting shifts to New York City, where the filmmakers go on to illustrate the inhumanly frenetic pace (accompanied mostly by Copland's music) of a workday timed from nine-to-five with only a half hour for lunch; they also show the dangers of an unruly city where children have to play amid the fast moving automotive traffic (echoing *The Crowd*). Even the weekend is shown as a lunatic exodus from the

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city to the neighboring countryside, marred by narrow country roads and endless lines of jammed cars, with some weekenders giving up and simply having their picnic by the side of the unsightly road.

The second part of the movie goes on to illustrate Mumford's ideas of the "garden city" (1938:392-401), a suburban community connected to the city by roads that allow buses to take people from their "bedroom community" to their place of work (mostly done with electrified miniature models). The film also shows how a system of roadways would allow the automotive traffic to go above groups of bicycling children, who now can live in a place with many green areas, woods and a nearby pond. Meanwhile, their mothers all enjoy the comforts of electrified homes with washing appliances, carefully laid out kitchen counters and interiors leading to outdoor porches that share the same bucolic view of verdant, tree-lined front lawns. Of course, Mom also has the luxury of sending her child to the nearby supermarket, which contains rows of perfectly aligned canned goods in a brightly lit and antiseptically hygienic store. One sequence shows how there is enough space for children or adult men to have a weekend

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softball game, while Mom takes advantage of her modern kitchen and convenient nearby shopping to literally bake an apple pie – the suburbs come full circle to the Mom and apple pie myths of the American pastoral, set in the Bekshires for both Mumford and The Saturday Evening Post. A coda reprises some of the key shots of the entire film in order to pose the final question to those citizens contemplating the future as the go through the Fordist attractions of the World Fair: will we allow the madness of an unregulated and unplanned urban environment continue to dehumanize its inhabitants, or does the country have the wherewithal to gather resources and establish sanity in its conditions of urban existence?

It is easy nowadays to dismiss the utopian faith in suburban planning when more than a half century has simply served to expose the catastrophe of that demographic paradigm. It is also evident that the filmmakers had their most creative moments when they were illustrating the rhythms and features of Manhattan's lifestyles, while their exposition of the "garden city" was simply flat (straight ahead camera angles, low contrast ratios, predominance of stark white tones

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for children's clothes and backgrounds such as walls, etc.). At the same time, the New York City sequences partake of the same aesthetic impulse of the avant-garde urban documentary tradition of Cavalcanti, Ivens, Ruttmann and Vertov: the camera seems to glide up and down the sides of buildings, along the sidewalks, watching pedestrians bob in and out of sidewalk and street traffic, depicting the city as an ecosystem where the social organism is intertwined with the architectural design and the multiplicity of urban machines, from clocks to toasters to cars. During the lunchtime sequence, the film turns into a nearly cubist depiction of an overcrowded counter similar to the old Woolworth's or Choc Full O' Nuts; after a couple of establishing shots show the customers eating as fast as they can while others wait in line behind each stool, the camera simply closes in on every element of the process – closeups of toasters popping dozens of slices at the same time, hundreds of meat patties being mechanically flipped, faces of customers hurriedly shoving food in their mouths, hands distributing food on griddles or plates a dizzying speeds, stacks of plates quickly disappearing as people take one after the other, more

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faces with food rapidly shoved into the mouth – the rhythm of the music and the editing steadily speeds up to give the impression of a mechanically human organism cranked out of control by an invisible force. This is no longer the malfunctioning machine slapping the hapless and unsuspecting worker in Chaplin's *Modern Times*, this is now an established way of life in which people and machines function alike.

It is this fusion of the urban and the human with modernity that becomes culturally fixed as the interwar period comes to a close (at the inauguration of the World's Fair, the Anschluss was already a year old and the Invasion of Czechoslovakia was in progress). It is impossible – despite the clearly opposite political positions of the filmmakers – to avoid the connection between the perfectly lined up cans in the supermarket and the perfectly lined squadrons of Nazi troops and Nazi youths parading through the streets and the open spaces of Nuremberg in Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* (1934), cowritten with none other than Walter Ruttmann. What associates the opposing utopianism of both films is an underlying basis in Fordist Regulation as a nationalist

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agenda (to be fully explored in Chapter Five). It is here that the city itself ceases to be the differential space of Taylorism and joins the nation state in becoming part of the hegemonic space of Fordist Regulation. If we can offer a corollary to Lefebvre's thesis that every new mode of production must produce its own space, we would like to posit the notion that, under late capitalism, the transformation of social relations of production (i.e., of historic blocs) seems to be accompanied by such spatial transformations, as well. The American Mode of Fordist Regulation was able to produce its own quasi-differential space[32] (suburbia), while neither the Soviet nor the Fascist models of Fordist Regulation were able to produce their own space – the Soviets

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[32]The adjectival qualifier is there because suburban spaces were actually part of a reorganization of hegemonic space to such an extent that government and banking policies were more or less overtly established to extend easy terms of payment to White home buyers in order to lure them out of the city, while Black applicants were discouraged or simply denied any loans so that they would stay within the city limits. The clearest example of this is offered by none other than the nation's capital. The term inner city as synonymous with minority neighborhood is another example of the cultural legacy of this spatialized scheme of *planned* demographic segregation. The suburbs, as a quasi-differential space of Fordist Regulation, were anchored by the instrumental rationale of capitalism, and could not help but to be shaped by a scientifically planned progressivism which comingled with the mythically racist irrationalism characteristic of the dialectic of the Enlightment (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002).

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simply relied on the same urban-national composition of Western capitalism, and the Nazis actually expressed their retrogression not only by setting their monumental rallies in the old city of Nuremberg, but by calling for a revival of Charlemagne's Thousand Year Old Reich, which is the very marker for the beginning of the Middle Ages.

In any case, with its urban aesthetics and its legitimating discourse of scientific planning and regulation, *The City* fully illustrates the fact that the cinema had become the central site for the cultural logic of Taylorist and Fordist mass capitalism.

XI

Until ten or fifteen years ago, there was a certain irregularity in film theory that consigned early silent pictures to a pre-linguistic status that could neither account for the massive amount of films made over a twenty-year period, nor establish a specific reason or pattern for "language acquisition" in a very short period of time, except by recalling the Romantic notion of "genius" applied to D.W.Griffith (whose sudden discovery of a "film language" will be treated in the next chapter). We have shown, instead, that there is a connection

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between the Taylorist transformation of the industrial process of production and its extension to the rest of the social world. This extension does not take place in a mystified pre-linguistic manner; instead, it is specifically carried out through the material practices of space imposed by a new set of relations of production – from the rearrangement of space at the shop floor to the rearrangement of an at-large societal space.

One of the resulting rearrangements of societal space, the technological city, is most characteristic of Taylorism, as it begins to fuse "scientific management" with "urban planning." Thus, if the first attempts to create an overall urban plan obeyed the military needs of a restored bourgeoisie bent on repressing any new forms of popular revolt after the Paris Commune of 1871 (Benjamin 1978:159-62); the Taylorist urban plan now had economic imperatives to attend, with its streets laid out in right angles according to a giant grid pattern, the beginning of a rapidly growing technological infrastructure (electrification, rapid transit, sewage and drinking water, etc). And, of course, there was an urban centralization of capital itself in the form of

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banking and financial services, as well as other forms of urban institutionalization of money power (Harvey 1989), that often carry their spatiality as their own appelative in telling form – e.g., Wall Street for banking and finance, Fleet Street for journalism, Broadway or Tin Pan Alley for specific forms of entertainment, or Madison Avenue for advertisement and publicity.

As a result of this centralization of financial and productive (manufacturing) capital, cities began to expand not only their radius of economic and cultural influence but also their territorial expanse due to demographic transfers from the country to the city. This urban expansion was facilitated by such Taylorist features as rapid transit, infrastructure and the true differential space of Taylorism: the attractions, those urban amusements offering technology itself as a spectacle, chief among them being the cinema. In fact, it became a matter of strategy for real estate developers to place a movie theater right by the new subway stops that connected the new neighborhoods to the manufacturing and commercial center of the city (Gomery 1992:44-7). The city itself was being transformed from a differential

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space of technological innovation to a hegemonic space of technological domination, and the cinema is inextricably linked to the territorial and demographic expansion that allowed for this hegemony. Far from being a mere space of representation and social reproduction, the cinema is an active agent in the production of space (new neighborhoods); the production of space of the cinema cannot, therefore, be separated from the continuing production of space of the modern technological city

> [When] one looked closely at the only section of Manhattan Island that saw a population growth in the 1920s, that area north of 145th Street, it can be seen that entrepreneurs built movie palaces far exceeding any section of the island outside Times Square. The area north of 145th Street had one-twentieth of the population but one-fifth of the movie palaces. This area was the only part of the island that in the 1920s offered a high-quality life-style at affordable prices (Gomery 1992:46).

Taylorism incorporated to the urban space an entire sense of Modernity as a fact of everyday life; and this was achieved largely through productions of space: "uptown," meaning residential area (with its attractions) and "downtown," meaning commercial district, are

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but one lexical indicator of those everyday transformations imposed by Taylorist modernization.

The social function of the cinema, however, was not exclusively geared to produce a new urban space; rather, its intent was to produce a form of subjectivity that would allow for Taylorized production and consumption to be conduits of desire with a high valorization of novelty almost for its own sake. This is what accounts for a twenty year period of the "cinema of attractions," correlating the space of the screen to the space of the technological city with its pure thrill of new machines and high-rise engineering. The modern movie screen, however, did not stand alone, its triumph actually came from its articulation to the space of the theater (which was the real innovation of the Lumières). Rear projection, in fact, 'evolves" from a single operator or "artisanal" mode to a departmentalized or "Taylorist mode" in just a few years, demonstrating how quickly this "scientific act" became incorporated into the cultural mainstream of modern capitalism. The cinema as a "theatrical paradigm" is nothing else than part of the logic of mass society, rapidly fostered by Taylorist

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intensification. The spectator, thus, was placed in a specific relation to both the theater and the screen (along with their respective surroundings); the ensuing subjectivation (the commodification of specular pleasure as an enticement to mass consumption) is produced through specific practices of space and not through a metaphysically ethereal "gaze" or a mysteriously powerful form of "ideological penetration."

As Taylorism gained ground and thus needed to crank up the pace of innovation to ensure continued growth, the social world began to crack under the strain of transformations that it was not equipped to handle at such a furious pace. Modernity soon became a new age in crisis. This is precisely what allowed for the onset of Fordist production and its eventual regulatory mode. And the cinema now acquired a central role: if the city square or whatever other form of the public sphere had already moved inside the cinema during the Taylorist "revolution," then film would "naturally" be the new monumental way to transform the modern subject from simple member of a gleefully consuming public into a willing participant in a mass society; a mass

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society whose desires would now be rearticulated through the sociocultural paradigm of the nation-state.[33]

The nation-states would also have to be reorganized in order to further develop their economic growth *and* yet also regulate the new framework that forced growing mass consumption as a way to meet the demands of intensified mass production (calling especially for export growth at the level of international competition). This required further domination over the social life of a new collective self that by now was happily attending the movies every week, and in quite a few cases everyday. To this we turn next.

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[33]The permanence of this powerful articulation of mass consumption with nationalism as an object of "paradigmatic desire" is attested by President George W. Bush's own remarks made shortly after September 11, 2001, when he stated that it was the patriotic duty of Americans to go shopping in order to help the economy, so that terrorists would know that "they" could not defeat "us." The fact that these terrorists gained entrance into the American national space precisely by being consumers of the American economy (buying services like flight training), remains largely ignored by these new patriots or their critics. If fully explored, then, the contemporary absurdity of paradigmatic nationalism would become evident; what remains significant, nevertheless, is the fact that President Bush could still utter those remarks in this day and age.

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Chapter Four
The Discrete Chambers of the Bourgeoisie: Fordist Space

I

If the Crash of 1929 is emblematic of the first complete collapse of late capitalism, the need for a renovation of Taylorism had already been in evidence at least since 1905, if not earlier. It was not simply a matter of adjusting technical relations of production or expanding social relations into previously non-colonized territories to ensure the continuation of economic growth. Taylorism had, in fact, become a victim of its own success, reaching the maximum capacity of its initial phase of inception in what seemed as record time from a historical point of view. In effect, the solution offered by Taylorism was its own burden: mass production required increasingly large segments of the world population to be subsumed under its business cycles in order to maintain its, relatively speaking, increasingly smaller profit margins in relation to the costs of production incurred at every cyclical turn. Aside from questions of territorial and cultural penetration, the other problem with the type of market expansion needed by Taylorism was

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that it required immense outlays of "non-productive capital" – i.e., capital spent in all those activities related to product placement, from military and/or "anthropological" ventures into exotic cultures and territories, to marketing and transporting, and so on. This is perhaps the main difference that Baran and Sweezy found between the initial phase of industrial capitalism and what they called "monopoly capital" (1966; also, Sweezy 1942:254-286).

The problem for capitalists was that the speed of production could not be matched by the speed of extra-territorial market conquest, so that Taylorist enterprises still had to base their greater distributive and consumptive reliance on their local markets. But these local markets were themselves easy to saturate, and the pressure to buy more could not be easily absorbed by consumer populations that already possessed in abundance and had little extra money to waste on what they did not need or already owned in the first place. It is here, where the "genius" of Henry Ford comes into play.

Fordism can be understood, since 1907, as a specific form of the technical relations of production within the framework of late

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capitalism; or it can also be understood, since 1930 or so, as a specific mode of regulation to Taylorist intensification in its final phase – hence our occasional use of the term "Regulatory Fordism". Fordist manufacture emerged over a short ten-year period, and it was the basis for what eventually came to be known as Fordist Regulation (already described in Chapter Three as the core of Roosevelt's New Deal).

The use of the term itself is just as confused. Gramsci (1971:279 ff) used it as part of his analysis on "Americanism," since he was pondering whether a general reorganization of the social relations of production (including issues of gender and demographics) would result in a period dominated by U.S. economy and culture. The use of Fordism in Gramsci is general; that is, it applies to the entire set of transformations related to the manufacturing techniques and especially the new habituation of labor to a rationalized and planned economic system. Thus, he contemplates the more generalized forms taken by the new social relations of production, such as the movement towards Prohibition as part and parcel of a "puritanical" initiative of American industrialists to create "Fordised workers" (*ibid.*, p. 303); and he also

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looks at more specifically "economic" issues, such as the need for high wages to compensate for increased intensification and degradation of work in Ford's factories, as well as the overall tendency towards inflationary conditions and the instability produced through the net transfer of savings from workers to industrialists with its concomitant rise in credit schemes and fictitious capital (*ibid.,* pp. 308-318). He also shrewdly observes, in opposition to conservative commentators, how the notion of quality becomes "dis-qualified" in the eyes of consumers by the quantitative imperative the new, Americanized system (*ibid.,* pp. 307-8). Gramsci clearly understands that a complete socioeconomic transformation is taking place, and he recognizes the insinuation of a planning (if not regulatory) imperative to this new American way of business; but, it is not until the work of the Regulation School that we find a specific use of Fordism related to the Crash of 1929 and its aftermath.

Aglietta initially poses the standard understanding of Fordism as a new form of socioeconomic cohesion that supercedes Taylorism based on the greater capacity of its innovations to the semi-automatic

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assembly line process, and on its "principle of *an articulation between process of production and mode of consumption*, which constitutes the mass production that is the specific content of the universalization of wage labor" (Aglietta 1987:117; italics in the original). More than any improvements to the assembly line process or any specific inventions and industrial innovations, Ford's great contribution to the modern world was to indelibly foreground for capitalist culture what Marx already knew: that the objective of capitalists is not manufacture but the production of consumption. Ford's comparative advantage in relation to other capitalist entrepreneurs of his time was the fact that he devised his regime of production as the initial phase of what in reality was a consumer-based strategy: to manufacture in large volume, thus reducing prices in order to meet an already existing (and equally large) but untapped consumer market[1]

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[1]From a 1906 advertisement for the new Model N: So, in making the price of the 4-cylinder runabout, the question was not, "How much can we get for this car?" but "How low can we sell it and make a small margin on each one?" — "How many cars must be turned out to get the lowest cost per car, and will the demand absorb this tremendous output?" (Nevins 1954:282-3)

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> Countless people, no doubt, confuse mass production with mere quantity production. ... it is something far more complicated. As Henry Ford wrote, it "is the focusing upon a manufacturing project of the principles of power, accuracy, economy, system, continuity, speed and repetition." While all these elements are important, special significancy attaches to three: accuracy (which includes standardization and the interchangeability of parts); continuity (the moving manufacturing line or assembly line, to which moving component lines are geared); and speed (which means a carefully timed correlation of manufacture material, handling, and assembly). The great contribution of the Ford Motor Company to technology lay in an expert combination of all these features (Nevins1954:466-7).

While auto manufacturers were still producing in an artisanal mode aimed at the luxury market, Ford began to produce exponentially cheaper automobiles aimed at the very masses created by Taylorist production. The first element of Fordist regulation, therefore, was the rationalization of the technical process of production *in alignment* with a marketing strategy. Ford shrewdly took the same nation-making "spirit of the frontier" and applied it to the uncharted market potential offered by the new mass proletariat.

The second element of Fordist regulation involved a pincer movement made up, on the one hand, by a public relations drive to (self) promote both the producer and his product and, on the other

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hand, by an intense effort to intervene in the governmental processes related to all manner of policy-making affecting mass production and automobiles (i.e., ranging from anti-trust and fair market issues to road construction, etc.). This often included direct participation in party politics (Lash and Urry 1987:73-82). This pincer move began in the early 1910's, with the first evidence of success for the Model T, and continued into the 1920's, setting the framework for the actual set of policies that make up the Fordist mode of regulation.

The final element of Fordist regulation encompassed the entire set of micro and macroeconomic factors that allowed for the fullest possible control of the entire economic process on a truly global scale for the first time in history. Thus, the New Deal advanced a Keynsian set of policies that articulated the sociopolitical capacity and the economic agency of the State with the still privatized arena of business activity in order to pull the nation out of the downward spiral of underconsumption and unemployment. This type of regulation came out of the Fordist understanding that business would prefer higher taxation so that the government could reallocate purchasing power even

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to the unemployed so that they could nevertheless continue being consumers (more than a general consumer market, Fordism understood now the need for a stable and regular consumer base). This was the "demand-side" Welfare State that came under the "supply-side revolution" of "economic neoliberals" like the Chicago Boys and the economic advisors of the Reagan Administration.

At the macroeconomic level, the reigning in of monetary policy and credit systems under the Federal Reserve Bank (created only in 1913) led to the regularization of the banking industry and served as a stabilizing factor in pricing, and in controlling but not necessarily ending inflation (Aglietta 1987:327-51). Additionally, the federal deposit insurance calmed public fear and allowed for bank savings to be restored. This created the basis not only for restored capacity but for more rational flows of external trade, eventually to be further regulated by the institutions created in Breton Woods immediately after World War II.

Capitalism may have thus become "organized" (Lash and Urry *op. cit.*), but Aglietta reminds us that financial crises simply became a

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necessary feature of capitalist regulation, even with the creation of a system of "national money" the cycle of financial crises continues to be a necessary feature of capitalist regulation (Aglietta 1987:351-379). We have already adduced the fact that the capitalist system is constantly hurtling towards crises as the main factor in explaining the set of adjustments and transformations that by necessity, in our view, have to be grounded on productions and practices of space. The object of this chapter is to demonstrate the spatial connection between the gradual development of Fordist Regulation and the parallel development of the Hollywood Model in the cinema.

II

The development of Ford's production system is also the development of a specifically Fordist space. In that regard, the first key step to push automaking beyond Taylorism came when the company's manufacturing process moved into the Piquette Avenue plant in 1907, the year that the nickelodeon boom began

> The great opportunity of the Ford Motor Company for instituting a larger degree of systematization, progression and mechanization in their work came with the consolidation of the

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> Ford Manufacturing and the Ford Motor companies early in 1907. Ford and his aides at once moved all of their better machinery from the Bellevue Avenue plant to the enlarged Piquette establishment; placed new machines, some of them specially designed, alongside the old; and effected a novel and better arrangement of operations. The change seemed at the time almost revolutionary, though it was really but a good beginning (Nevins 1954:364).

In effect, this really was the beginning of Fordism not only as a system of industrial production but also as a form of industrial and, soon to be, socioeconomic regulation. Ford was interested in transforming *and* permanently controlling both the method *and* the mentality of capitalist production, distribution and consumption (cf., Flick 1988:35-39, for an interesting breakdown of different production strategies in America and France).

The twin efforts of intensified manufacture and marketing created a communicating vessel effect in which production and demand helped each other swell up. The Ford Motor Company, for its part, had to maintain growth by going through another production of industrial space in order to further intensify the technical aspects of its manufacturing system, but in a place which would have the size and

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flexibility to regulate this process more accurately. In January 1910, operations began to move from Piquette Avenue to the newly designed plant at Highland Park, hailed as Detroit's "Crystal Palace" for its spacious and airy steel frame design by Albert Kahn, noted architect of several auto making plants. This plant was the first to integrate spatial arrangement with sequential flow of assembly, allowing for cranes, hydraulic lifts, and other engineering devices to transport parts from the second floor where parts were being mounted onto the chassis, to the fourth floor where different aspects of finishing, like upholstery, were carried out (Lacey 1986:104-5; Nevins 1954:451-57). The innovation was not esthetic but technical

> at Piquette (as at rival automobile factories) certain elements of mass production had come in: standardization of parts, simplification of product, ever greater use of machine tools, and a careful arrangement of workers, machines and materials in sequence to furnish "line production." ... At Highland Park two essential elements were now to be added: the continuous motion of work, and careful timing to keep all the moving lines geared at just the right speed. Once they were fully added, mass production had been created (Nevins 1958:461).

The new step in the regulation of the technical process, which truly distinguishes manufacturing Fordism from Taylorism, was the

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concerted effort to reduce assembly time by standardizing each of the parts and the manner in which they had to fit together. Assembly line workers no longer had to waste time, say, filing down a part to fit into the body of the car simply because different suppliers used different gages; everything was designed to come together as automatically as possible.

At the same time, Ford could not neglect the distribution of his product: the network of Ford dealers and distributors became more vertically incorporated to central management through standardization and productivity management. Ford was the first firm to send price lists of spare parts as well as traveling salesmen who trained dealers on how to handle these parts and do repairs. In addition, the quantity of dealerships and retail outlets was steadily increased, so that by 1912, Ford had more dealers that all other automobile manufacturers combined. Dealers were carefully picked and constantly supervised so that the floors of their dealership would be clean, attractive and impressive to the buyer; enough stock parts were kept in dealerships so that customers in a given region did not have to wait for shipments

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from Detroit to have their cars serviced. Eventually, freight train space became too inefficient for assembled cars to be shipped over thousands of miles, and the company began to establish a whole series of assembly plants at regular geographic intervals (Nevins 1954:402-409). In particular, there was a remarkable application of scientific management to the space and operations of dealers in order to regulate the intensification efforts of sales and consumption

> Year by year, it was the policy of the company to reduce the area allotted one dealer and increase the number of dealers. At regular intervals, the United States was analyzed by cities, counties, and townships. If it appeared that a country dealer was not making proper sales in some townships, the company reassigned these territories. If it appeared that a city representative was not reaching some districts, these were transferred to another retailer. *Thus selling constantly became more intensive* (*ibid.*, p. 403, our italics).

Business success was like war, it depended on the steady conquest of territory. That success was immediate and the business boom was extraordinary for Ford. Ford's sales of cars and parts in 1909 amounted to $3,413,000 for Detroit, and $5,628,000 for the branch offices; by 1912, it was $11,590,000, and $30,888,000, respectively; and for 1913, an astonishing leap to $18,857,000, and

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$70,252,000 (Nevins 1954:402). This was matched by a tremendous rise in output, cars were sold at a rate of 18,664 units in 1909-10 (Lacey 1986:105); 78,440 in 1911-12; and 168,305 in 1912-13; by 1916-17, Ford was actually producing 730,041 cars (Nevins 1954:473). This happened while the price of the cheapest issue of the Model T dropped from $825 in 1908 (Nevins 1954:410) to $440 by 1914 (*ibid.*, p. 511); while increased efficiency allowed the company to reduce its workforce from 14,336 to 12,880 in 1913-14, the year that the assembly line method was fully introduced to the Highland Park plant (Lacey 1986:109). That was also the year when Griffith moved permanently to Hollywood.

Two years later, Ford "began buying up huge tracts of land along the River Rouge southwest of Detroit and announced plans for developing a great industrial complex there" (Flink 1988:58). Then

> On October 1, 1915, [Ford Motors] celebrated its millionth car, and a few months later the millionth Model T. The fifty-six acre home plant at Highland Part made an imposing center for its activities. With dozens of buildings, 5500 humming machines, fifty miles of belting, one and one half miles of conveyor track, and 18,000 workers, the area, announced the *Ford Times* of

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> April, 1915, was "the most productive acreage of equal extent in the world" (Nevins and Hill 1957:9).

That same year, Griffith produced *Birth of a Nation.*

The River Rouge Project was part of whole new level of production of space in Fordism, which would recast the nation – any nation – as an extended market place

> Ford argued that to manufacture partly at a main plant and partly elsewhere was desirable. [...] Ford pointed out that rural factories would tend to distribute purchasing power more evenly. His village industry workers could buy tractors for their farms and cars for transportation. Thus they purchased more Ford products, and more products in general, expanding the manufacturer's market while making a better life for themselves (Nevins and Hill 1957:229).

The River Rouge project was a truly revolutionary concept – in the sense of the permanent internal revolution of capitalism – since it reconceptualized the technical relations of production in a multi-dimensional way

> The basic element in his conception was flow. He and his associates had already demonstrated in the moving assembly line that flow in the factory was of vital importance, but Ford recognized that without the flow of materials *to* the point of manufacture, the flow *at* that point might be impeded or stopped. This recognition led him and his associates beyond the Rouge to long distance transportation, and to the raw materials required for

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> the manufacture of cars – iron and steel, lumber, coal, limestone, silica, sand (for glass). Ford meant to control transportation, at least by water, and to possess the sources of raw materials (Nevins and Hill 1975:202; our italics).
>
> Even by 1915 the [River Rouge] project had achieved scope and detail in Ford's mind, for in June of that year he talked to reporters not only of blast furnaces and a tractor plant, but of employing more than 20,000 workers and building a great inland port. "He will make the Rouge a harbor for craft that will bring ore from the upper lake district and for craft that will carry the Rouge cargoes of motors direct to England, France, Germany, South America, Australia, and the Orient," ran one account of his plans (*ibid.*, p. 201).
>
> [I]n a tract free of surrounding city congestion, Ford could lay out his plant with the fullest freedom. He could place there a large number of producing units, and the ample space made possible one-story buildings, without cumbersome elevators that impeded operations in four or six story structures. Finally he could make these units serve each other in constructive ways, as we shall see, and link them by rail or conveyor. This close inter-relation of its units was to be one of the Rouge's points of superiority (*ibid.*, p. 204).

This was a unique production of space, not only planned for maximum productive efficiency and capacity to obtain the highest margin of profit possible, but also set in such a geographic way that it could achieve practical autarchy – the industrial plant as an island onto itself. The transformation of what was a natural tract of land into the most impressive industrial center of the epoch is a perfect illustration of

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Lefebvre's notion that the history of space is the move from absolute space (nature) to abstract space (calculable, subdivided, scientifically planned). Lefebvre looks at millennial, Ford needed two decades.

It becomes evident already in the planning phases of the Rouge project that, as with the screen and its associated spaces, industrial Fordism has the same Russian-doll effect of productions of space encased within larger productions of space – an entire articulation of production and consumption which involved a sequence of regional-national-international spaces. At the level of production, one can see a progression of productions of industrial space in the various eras of the Ford factories; at the social level of everyday life, the cumulative effect of this industrial progression produced a brand new metropolitan region, Detroit – not only as a modernized and industrialized city, but as a *place* synonymous with a specific product; in short, a company town. At a regional level, this concentration of growth radiated towards areas which locally constituted themselves as new productions of space, but collectively incorporated themselves into whole regions; thus, the previously rural or unpopulated areas of Ohio and

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Pennsylvania became attached to automaking in the form of towns for tire manufacturing (Akron), metal works (Pittsburgh, Bethlehem, Scranton, Allentown), all of which produced for automaking and building construction alike. Commercial ports like New York City, became centers of finance and export, serving Detroit in both capacities. This new lineup of towns, which ranged from Midwest to Northeast, resulted in the devastation of previous regional forms of economic integration (e.g., the Erie Canal).

At the same time, Fordist intensification could only lead to greater degradation of work and, by extension, of much social and psychic life under the push of mass production and mass consumption. Perhaps no space embodies the contradictory nature of Fordist degradation of human qualities in the labor process better than its last colossus: the plant at River Rouge. The Rouge plant became famous for its imposing size and phenomenal productivity, but its very make up turned into something of a monstrosity for the people engulfed in it

> This mood [of the workers] was to some extent created by the size of the plant. By its very massiveness and complexity it denied men at the top contact with and understanding of those

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> beneath, and gave those beneath a sense of being lost in inexorable immensity and power (Nevins and Hill 1957:295).

The even more contradictory aspect of this space dwells in the plant's Ford Museum, where Diego Rivera painted some of his finest depictions of industrial workers performing at the machines, while portraits of well known labor organizers and leaders looked over the entire scene.

The manufacturing plant thus ceases to be a pure space of production and instead becomes a signifier, a presenter of meaning; an industrial fortress crushing worker psyche and subjectivity and, at the same time, an artistic monument. As a monument, it first signals the praises of industrial strength and even freedom of expression (when even a Mexican Marxist can foreground the workers in his murals, it surely must mean that labor, too, holds a valuable stake in the system). But, beneath the self-promoting celebration of architecture and forms of production, that could only be the pride of a self-gratified industrial bourgeoisie, lies the daily dehumanization resulting from the most extreme and brutal forms of abstract labor – a reality that only Fritz

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Lang, in the throes of Nazism, was able to depict in full (see Chapter Three).

The utopian dreamworld and the catastrophe of the times were both practiced and inscribed in the same space, a space that in its industrial hegemony looked towards the aestheticized marriage of form (architecture, painting) and process (labor, management) to exalt what, seen from another direction, was nothing more than Lefebvre's terrorism of everyday life. If the dreamworld of the Rouge (and, as we also see below, the movie palaces) was a world of material progress, racial harmony, and rational truths; the catastrophe was made up by the underbelly of Fordism – class war. For it happens that

> Conditions on the assembly line were grudgingly accepted only by workers accustomed to even more repressive systems of labor or whose opportunities for employment elsewhere at a living wage were almost nil. Arnold and Faurote recognized that "the monotony of repetitive production can be alleviated only by a satisfactory wage-rate, and is, perhaps much more easily endured by immigrants, whose home wage stood somewhere about 60 cents for 10 hours' work, than by native-born Americans." Indeed, one [of] the major reasons why mass-production techniques came to be innovated in the United States is that, in contrast with Europe, automobile manufacturers here could count on the availability of a large labor pool of unskilled, recently arrived, and as yet politically impotent peasants from the most

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> socially and economically backward countries of Europe, and of blacks escaping from the oppressive socioeconomic conditions of the rural American South (Nevins and Hill 1957:118).

By 1914, 70% of Ford's labor force was made up of recent immigrants speaking about 24 different languages and little or no English; by 1919, Ford also employed a large number of convicts and handicapped people, including employees with epilepsy and tuberculosis; and by 1923, Ford also employed about 5,000 Black workers, more than half of the entire automotive industry (Flink1988:20). The diverse cultural background and work experience of this group was not the only problem for Ford's industrial planners, the process had become so regimented that many workers would rebel against performance standards and threaten to form unions or would simply quit (Braverman 1974:124-235; Flink 1988:120). Thus, even worker conduct and behavior needed to be carefully controlled through scientific management. Fordist regulation, therefore, ceased to be a strictly technical affair and began to take widespread sociopolitical characteristics

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> "The organization is highly specialized and one part is so dependent upon another that we could not for a moment consider allowing men to have their own way," Ford explained. "Without the most rigid discipline we could have the utmost confusion. I think it should not be otherwise in industry." Consequently, the easy camaraderie on the job that had been normal in American industry for unskilled as well as skilled workers was forbidden at Highland Park. Straw bosses and company "spotters" – another new element in the work force – enforced rules and regulations that forbade leaning against the machine, sitting, squatting, talking, whistling, or smoking on the job. Workers learned to communicate clandestinely without moving their lips in the "Ford whisper" and wore frozen expressions known as "Fordization of the face." "There is not much personal contact," understated Ford. "The men do their work and go home – a factory is not a drawing room" (*ibid.*, p. 119).

By necessity, Regulatory Fordism always came to be implemented first at the manufacturing plant and, shortly afterwards, this was extended to the social world at large; for example, as part of the "puritanism" that Gramsci noted. As Regulatory Fordism became socially instituted, it turned into the full throttle "society of discipline" (Foucault 1979; 1980:92-165), with its specialists worker discipline and industrial oversight visibly posted aboveground as well as directly on the shop floor to advertise the threat of repression – not unlike the checkpoints that Kracauer noted at the UFA studios. Even the purported separation

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between the space of production (the factory) and the space of leisure (the home) would soon be blurred, if not obliterated by Ford's incessant quest for control.

The solution to the continuing problem of worker flight or union activism, was the much heralded $5 dollar and eight-hour workday. This was conceived not as a form of charity or social justice but as a "profit sharing plan," where an advance on the company's profits would be added to the wages, rounding up the day's earnings to a minimum of five dollars. The worker got this extra amount "as an incentive for cooperating in increasing the efficiency of Ford production" (Flink 1988:121). In fact, this measure had been the outcome of a report by Ford's chief recruiter, who had also embarked on a process of rationalization of the wage system and the hiring practices at the company. To further this Taylorization of labor hire and remuneration, a Sociological Department was created, ostensibly to figure out worker eligibility to the profit sharing plan, "and to ensure that the profits shared with them were put to uses approved by Henry Ford" (*ibid*). The Sociological Department was soon changed to the

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Education Department and placed under the direction of Ford's Episcopal Minister, Dr. Samuel Marquis, who in the most advanced tradition of social reform from the Progressive Era launched a comprehensive program of visits to

> worker's homes gathering information and giving advice on the intimate details of the family budget, diet, living arrangements, recreation, social outlook, and morality. Americanization of the immigrant was enforced through mandatory classes in English. The worker who refused to learn English, rejected the advice of the investigator, gambled, drank excessively, or was found guilty of "any malicious practice derogatory to good physical manhood or moral character" was disqualified from the profit-sharing plan and put on probation. If he failed to reform within six months, he was discharged and his profits accumulated under the plan were used for charity (Flink 1988:122).

We can clearly see how, under Fordism, the technical relations of labor were quickly extended into social relations of labor, blurring not only the lines of demarcation between the private space (home) and public space (factory), but also between work time and free time.

Fordist regulation was a totalizing effort, striving to control life itself from the most minimal personal level to the largest social aggregate

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> The impact of Fordism on the worker was debilitating. The individual became an anonymous, interchangeable robot who had little chance on the job to demonstrate his personal qualifications for upward mobility into the echelons of management. Thus, the American myth of unlimited individual social mobility, based on ability and the ideal of the self made man, became a frustrating impossibility for the assembly-line worker. As the job became a treadmill to escape from rather than a calling in which to find fulfillment, leisure began to assume new importance. The meaning of work, long sanctified in the Protestant Ethic, was reduced to monetary remuneration. The value of thrift and personal economy became questionable, too, as mass consumption became an inevitable corollary of mass production (Flink 1988:119-20).

We have come full circle to the equation of mass production to mass consumption, and can now clearly see that the problem for Fordism was not the exclusive regulation of "economic behavior" (say, wages + advertisements), but the regulation of the entire life-world so that mental processes and everyday habits would conform to the necessities of an overwhelmingly intensified business cycle. Leisure, therefore, becomes a necessity; not only for the tired worker to escape the frustrations of a monotonous and unrewarding everyday existence, but also for the Fordist regulators to encroach into every possible space and moment in time in order to ensure that worker discipline also becomes

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consumer discipline during weekends at the store. As Veblen (1953) observed, a society of leisure must thrive on conspicuous consumption; and in that respect alone, the movie palaces were shrines to *Fordist distraction.*

Fordist regulation was caught in the double bind of its own framework, it had to make sure that manufacturing intensification, wage levels, and product output were aligned; but it had to do it with a population that had only recently been inducted into wage earning and mass consumption discipline. So, the key regulatory question for early Fordism became how to transform a large ragtag mass of wage laborers into an ever increasing *and* constant consumer market for industrial products and services – in practical terms, how to turn ignorant peasants into tireless shoppers.

This was achieved through an all-encompassing project of modernization, involving a full transformation of the social relations of production at all levels: political systems were both modernized and became modernizing agents, socioeconomic trends began to shift to urban centers as hubs of new employment and as major regional

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markets; product design became the vehicle for publicity and marketing firms to induce the thoroughly modern urbanites to buy more and more; and the innovative cultural output emerging from the cities became, quite simply, synonymous with Modernism. This is where the connection between the motion pictures and Fordist industry becomes almost self-evident, and it is, in fact, what helps explain why the cinema became organized as an industry, instead of fading away as simply another momentary fad in popular culture. The cinema, after all, was a product of this so-called Second Industrial Revolution, and some of its key constitutive elements included a relatively self-conscious display of the technological prowess resulting from that new industrial wave. Clearly, Fordism could find a path towards the full transformation and control of the social world through the cinema.

III

We have already shown that the Cinema of Attractions was by no means a static period in film production: there was a transition from a one-man artisanal performance mode to the Taylorized departmentalization of the moviehouse, while the formal elements

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shifted from a sheer pleasure in just showing to a bricolage of sight gags, narrative elements, and mise en scene approaches. No matter how Taylorized the nickelodeons may have been, Bowser does note the imperfection of this system; the bigger and fancier theaters in the major cities were well managed and put on an well conceived show, but the smaller theaters were full of stories of inappropriate ragtime music or sound effects accompanying tender love scenes, an so on (1990:13 ff). This type of irregularity was simply incompatible with the systematic standardization and market regularization sought by Fordism. To accomplish the totalizing regulation of the cinema that Fordism would require, all cinematic productions of space – the studios, the screen, and the movie theater – would have to be standardized in order to fit together efficiently and in order to control distribution and consumption.

The transformation of studio space is the most obvious one: the move from New York City across the country to the outskirts of Los Angeles, where the name of a geographic location became the label for an industrially reconfigured mode of film production (another example

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of the Fordist company town being created at the time). Being that most shooting was done in exteriors and with available light, by 1907 producers began to shuttle between New York or Chicago in the summer and Florida or California in the winter in order to maintain a steady flow of new pictures (Cook 1990:42). By 1911, there was a race between New York City and Los Angeles to build studios for year-round production. Los Angeles won because of its climate, diverse terrain for location filming, favorable tax incentives and cheaper labor pool, but mostly because of the availability of vast and affordable tracts of land.[2]

In effect, the Hollywood studios are the cinema's equivalent to the River Rouge plant. The vast land and the year-round availability of favorable conditions of production allowed producers to concentrate and control each and every aspect of production under one single roof. Just like the plans for River Rouge envisioned the entry of raw

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[2]This information is well known and need not be specified further. The history of Hollywood has been told in all imaginable forms, ranging from scholarly histories and analysis of business practices (Bordwell *et al.* 1985; Schatz 1988; R. Davis 1993; Bowser 1990; Koszarski 1990; Balio 1993) to popular accounts like biographies of moguls (e.g., Thomas 2000[1967]; 2000) or the sordid deeds of stars and filmmakers (Anger 1975), explorations of racism and sexual repression among pioneers (Rogin 1996; Gabler 1988; Mann 2001), and literature (West 1962).

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materials through one end of the plant and the emergence of a ready to go automobile out of the other end in a matter of hours; the studios envisioned a comparable assembly line process that literally housed every aspect of film production within the same complex, with each studio also owning its distribution outfits and theater chains all over the country (subject, years later, to the famous anti-trust ruling that separated production from exhibition, ending the golden era of the Hollywood Studios).[3] The fact that the Hollywood studios accomplished their own reorganization of industrial design and new systematization of production at the same time or even before the

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[3]Another "coincidence" between Ford's automaking empire and the Hollywood cinema is the early history of their battles against rival cartels, their own attempts at cartelization, and their own anti-trust battles in court. Both were relatively successful (e.g., Ford was able to fight off the ALAM, while the early moguls were able to fight off Edison's MPPC), but the similarities end at some point – Ford did have to obey anti-trust legislation; while Hollywood cartelized its distribution through the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA), formed during World War I under the leadership of Will Hays (of the infamous "Code"). This practice continues to this day, with Jack Valenti at the helm of the same cartel, now called the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA). For Ford's battle with the ALAM, see Flick 1988:51-58; Rae 1984:39-41; Nevins 1954:415 ff.; Lacey 1986:98-102. For the Hollywood cartels, see Bowser 1990:21-36 and 73-85; Bordwell et. al. 1985:397-400; Staiger in Elsaesser 1990:189-210; Segrave 1997:6-28; Thompson 1985:13-27.

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Rouge plant is an indication of the pioneering role that the cinema played in the imposition of Fordism as a regulatory norm.

In short, what this new production of space made possible was the conversion of film production from a small enterprise to a fully industrialized Fordist standard.[4] For instance, Izod (1988:43-44) comments on the electrification of California studios in 1915 and the

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[4]There are some highly detailed studies of periodicity in early film history based on perceived differences in the specific modes of film production. Janet Staiger, for example, proposes five different periods based on successive systems of production: 1) The director system (1907-1909); 2) The director-unit system with increased manufacturer output after 1909; 3) The 'central producer' system after 1914; 4) The "producer unit" system which began in the early 1930s; and 5) The "package system" which began in the early 1940s and became dominant in the 1950s (in Bordwell *et al.* 1985:83-153). Musser counters Staiger by pointing out only one noticeable break in the area of fiction filmmaking, which he sees as happening around 1909 involving a gradual shift from collaboration to the central producer unit that Staiger proposes. He also disagrees with Staiger that this had to do with salaries and that it led to an output of assembly-line mediocrity. He shows how salaries actually rose as these changes took place, which had more to do with centralized control and accountability. He again reiterates his claim that real assembly line work in the cinema came in the final copy rooms where multiple prints were made and handled mostly by female workers, and in the projection booth where operators became mere machinists. He also reminds the reader that early film companies were more involved in manufacturing equipment than in making narrative films; so that the filmmakers and their crews were more like those units in the auto industry in charge of producing a single prototype, which could then be mass marketed, if management wished (Musser in Abel 1966:85-108). Despite these differences, it is clear that filmmaking and exhibition changed during this time, and that there is at least a broad connection with other developments in industrial capitalism, especially automaking. See also, Thompson in Bordwell *et. al.* 1985:262-293 for details on early standardization and innovation in film technology.

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fact that the new Kleig lights allowed for better lighting of subjects and sets. Wilfred Buckland, de Mille's designer, had worked with David Belasco, the theatrical impresario, and began to use three-dimensional sets lit in a mixture of naturalism (light coming from doors, windows, lamps in the shot, etc.), but in a highly expressive manner to heighten illusion. Because of the lighting, actors did not have to wear the masks of make-up of earlier films and this increased the use of individual features and expressive accuracy in gestures, conducive to individuality of character and the implementation of the star system. Just as the assembly line was perfected at the successive Ford plants through mechanical advances and electrification, Hollywood was able to use those same forces of production to have an "internally revolutionary" effect that ranged from film production to film form.

At the same time and on a national scale,[5] the East Cost/West Cost polarity was born, and the resulting Hollywood Dream Factory

[5]The nation, of course, being a historically older production of space, was now in a process of reconfiguration to fit the needs of the Fordist mode of regulation.

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led almost immediately to the type of mass production of word-wide scope – yet another set of Fordist productions of space.

The movie theater would experience a similar systematization of its diverse functions. It was no longer a question of simple Taylorization as with the nickelodeons, now everything (from the ticket booth to the projection booth) had to become consistent through standardized practices

> Rapp and Rapp became prime designers of lavish movie houses. Their designs, however, were also functional. There was a perfect view of the screen from any angle, unlike vaudeville theaters; the lighting was low intensity to keep patrons in their seats and not moving about; and "the rule of thumb was that a Rapp and Rapp lobby ought to comfortably hold ticket holders equal to the number of seats in the auditorium" (Gomery 1992:47-49).

The immigrant peasants were turned into industrial workers and ushered towards middle class modernity through the front door of the movie theater; this socializing impulse of regulatory Fordism would link itself with regionalist and nationalist ideologies sometimes tinged with chauvinism, as we shall see below. The palaces in their opulence and cosmopolitan ambience (Greek columns and statues, ceiling and

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wall paintings of mythological or historical figures and events, live orchestras and pipe organs) was meant to be a dreamlike place where reason and progress could nevertheless also be found. The main focus was on professionalizing a full service experience delivered to a mas audience now reconstituted in their consumer role as "patrons"

> Barney Balaban and Sam Katz argued: "We cannot afford to build up patronage depending entirely upon the drawing power of our feature films as we display them. We must build in the minds of our audience the feeling that we represent an institution taking a vital part in the formation of the character of the community." Balaban & Katz carefully formed this institution by taking advantage of certain factors where it did hold advantage over the competition. By differentiating its corporate product through five important factors — location, the theater building, service, stage shows, and air conditioning — Balaban & Katz was able to transform itself, and the film industry as a whole, form a small-time operation into a part of the growing chain store revolution (Gomery 1992:42).

Not everybody fell for the illusion, however. Richard Koszarski tells how John Grierson remarked that the theater had displaced the film, being such a lavish fantasy place with such excellent service ("being ushered like a princelet, mounting staircases like a modern Jacob") and then sitting down to see a movie so bad as to say: "The hospitality was excellent, the meal terrible. The mountain was laboring

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hugely and giving birth to mice" (1990:25). This is where we appreciate best the subjectivation effect of the cinema and its regulatory function under Fordism. While Grierson clamors for the restitution of that object of contemplation and analytic focus proper to pre-Modernist viewership (from the Renaissance through Romanticism), the cinema helps usher a brand new era of kinetic visuals and "managed attention" (Crary 2001);[6] or, in Kracauer's felicitous phrase, a "cult of distraction" (1995:323-238).

As palaces of Fordist distraction, those movie houses of the late 1910's and the 1920's were meant to remove people from the "machine world;" but, at the same time, their architecture and decor resembled the mansions of early tycoons so mistrusted by the public; to overcome this, for example, the ushers at Balaban's chain in Chicago and "Roxy" Rothapfel's theaters in New York were young and instructed to be friendly in order to make everybody feel at ease in a personalized place where any theater goer was treated as an equal (May 1986:156-158).

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[6]We reiterate our contention that Crary's "managed attention" is another result of what we have been calling Fordist regulation or regulatory Fordism.

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A Fordist ideology for the new social order began to emerge from the presentation of the theatrical space in which the film was exhibited. A modern sense of efficiency and uniformity was itself codified for the moviegoing audience through their repeated experience of a well run cinema, not only in their neighborhood but anywhere else they went in the country. Any sense of locality was rapidly yielding its way to a preferable order of things that, in appearance at least, had more to do with time than with space – modern efficiency, that is, became desirable not because it happened "here," but because it seemed to be an irresistible force of a better today happening everywhere.

By 1923, the success of Hollywood cinema in the U.S. was not only formidable but had managed conclusively to marginalize or eliminate those foreign competitors which had once upon a time had a hand in the U.S. market[7]

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[7]According to Izod: "By the mid-1920s the big American companies were so powerful in their domestic market that by tacit agreement they supplied their mutual needs almost exclusively. That is, since no single studio could furnish a sufficient supply for its own theatres' requirements, they bought what they lacked from each other. But they did so in a mutually supportive way, and limited outside competition by declining to buy from independents unless the other major companies were unable to fill their needs. [The big studios also] had no intention

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> [Size of film industry from *Film Daily* of January 23, 1923]: Theaters in the US 15,000; Seating capacity (one show) 7,605,000; Average weekly attendance 50,000,000; Admissions paid annually $520,000,000; Permanent employees in all branches of the industry 3000,000; Investment in the industry $1,250,000,000; Approximate cost of pictures produced annually $200,000,000; Salaries and wages paid annually at studios in production $75,000,000; Average number of features produced annually 700; Average number of short reel subjects, excluding newsreels, annually 1,500; Taxable motion picture property in the United States $720,000,000; Foreign made pictures sent here for sale (1922) 425; Foreign made pictures sold and released for exhibition 6; Theaters running six to seven days per week 9,000; Theaters running four to five days per week 1,500; Percentage of American film used in foreign countries 90% (Jowett 1976:140).

This was the result of a combination of greater product quality and downright unfair market practices – ranging from block booking to the aforementioned monopolistic integration of production and exhibition (Segrave 1997:7-14).

Capitalist enterprises have demonstrated a tendency towards cartelization since the era of Finance Capital began in the late 1800's (Hilferding 1981), the film industry had been no exception (Thompson 1985:13-4). This tendency was self-protective: the elimination of

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of allowing foreign product equal opportunity for competition. Imports into America actually fell from 16 million feet in 1913 to about 7 million in 1925" (1988:62-3).

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competition safeguarded against the type of cutthroat price gouging of the 1860's, and the sheer size of the trusts and cartels allowed for control of production (choking up supply when prices needed to go up, or cornering distribution outlets and both supply and consumer markets), as well as greater versatility and deeper pockets in research and development (which shored up profitability further and discouraged competition at home and especially in the underdeveloped markets abroad). In other words, this was a rough game in which a given cartel or trust would protect its own assets, while advocating the destruction of similar enterprises. This took a decidedly spatialized character when that protection was couched in terms of territory: as Fordist enterprises began to bulge with profits *and* inventories, they needed to further expand their overseas markets in order to maintain growth (since their bulging inventories indicated local market saturation). Fordist ideology, therefore, had to change from a vaguely cosmopolitan Modernism, to a ringing endorsement of nationalism, presenting a need to protect local industry against attacks from the foreign barbarians and, at the same time, teaching those barbarians to

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"buy American." Fordism was both a nationalist doctrine and an internationalist paradigm, and its operations as well as its ideology were always torn between the centripetal force of one, and the centrifugal force of the other.

World War I is the true beginning of a linkage between Fordist production and nationalism, and this was also implemented in all the spaces and representations of cinema (the latter to be discussed in Chapter Five). What emerges is a calculated management of the signifying elements of the architecture and interior design, which were meant to direct the spectator, step by step, from the street into the theater and on to the screen. This process of subjectivation became an integral part of the American war effort, aimed at changing the general isolationism and neutrality of the citizenry into an all out support for the abrupt entry of the US into the war. Moviegoers were transformed (subjectivized) by these practices of space from being an audience to becoming the public. In a nutshell, the Fordist agency of the cinema consisted in the creation of a nationalist public sphere. However, this

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sudden burst of patriotic activism also served the self-interest of private capital

> As early as 1915, Epes Winthrop Sargent, author of *Picture Theater Advertising* (and columnist for *Moving Picture World*), had urged managers to promote their theaters as vigorously as they promoted their entertainment programs. "Films are but a part of what you have to sell. Advertise all your features." .... From Roxy Rothapfel, the trend-setting manager of the Rivoli Theater in New York City, to C. W. Martin at the Temple Theater in McCook, Nebraska, exhibitor's ultimate goal was to make their theaters an integral part of their communities. Participating in the war on the home front, film exhibitors were simultaneously creating goodwill for their houses, and they knew it (Midkiff DeBauche 1997:75).

It is notable how clearly it appears that "being part of the community" involves spatial practices that emphasize signification. Leslie Midkiff DeBauche details the Russian doll effect cinematic space at the time of World War I, in what is a standard historical account with no particular attention to any concept of production of space. In a section called "Outside the Theater," the author tells of one manager who found the second largest flag in town and hung it from wires in front of his theater, while another one announced that soldiers would be admitted free (except on weekends and holidays), and a third

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one made a big announcement about donating a portion of the tickets to the Red Cross and had children dressed as big red crosses parading all over the town (*ibid.*, pp. 77-78). In another section brimming with spatial production, "Inside the Lobby," she describes how the lobby is like a store window displaying patriotic posters and paintings with the US President and the flag, also offering framed copies of those paintings and posters to the customers. Meanwhile, Douglas Fairbanks linked one of his Westerns to a campaign for the Red Cross in which placards should be on display in the theater lobby; and one theater held a ceremonial unveiling of a plaque listing all of its staff members serving in the armed forces, while other theaters allowed enlistment efforts to take place in their lobbies (*ibid.*, pp. 78-9). "Inside the Auditorium," describes the use of patriotic music to such high demand that the Rialto in New York had to hire more musicians, and theaters with stages used that space to advertise Liberty Bonds and the like (*ibid.*, pp. 78-80). It was not just for private enterprise to take advantage of the new medium, State politics also had to come into a true public sphere, so

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> In addition, the government's propaganda bureau, the Committee for Public Information (CPI) sponsored the Four Minute Men, a corps of 75,000 men and women in some 5,200 communities in the United States who were available to make talks of four-minute duration during the reel changes at motion picture theaters. Close study of this organization yields information about the federal government's assessment of the audience in movies. It also highlights the government's belief that such unification could occur at the movie theater (*ibid.*, p. 80)

"The Screen Inside the Auditorium" tells about the hand-colored patriotic slides, or the slides advertising patriotic goods like "stars and stripes for sale at 10 cents a foot," courtesy of the American Biograph. There were theaters which showed slides of enlisted men or even movies of local boys at boot camp, and when local newsmen began to make movies of townspeople in order to send them to the front, the theaters wasted no time in showing them as well (*ibid.*, pp. 84-86). So successful was this sort of sociocultural pressure, that even in Milwaukee, where the population was overwhelmingly of German descent, movie goers still fell for the image of wild Germans, and young boys wanted to throw stones at images of "Kaiser Bill, the Hun."

After World War I, a second moment of crisis in the development of Fordism, the Crash of 1929, put the final nail to the coffin of the

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giddy cosmopolitanism that characterized the postwar movie palaces of the Roaring Twenties

> Hollywood producers in the Twenties emulated monopolists whose grandiose speculations brought the stock market crash. Symbolic of those false values, large studios and theater owners built lavish, sumptuous theaters that identified with the standards of the rich who looked to Europe for models of social hierarchy. Within structures that emulated the historical styles of an older age, it appeared natural that wealth and power were unequal. Yet after three years of Depression, [the editor of the *Motion Picture Herald* Terry] Ramsaye exhorted owners to design a modern theater "more a part of the town and less something imposed by outside Supermen"... (May 2000:101-2).

This is a perfect example of the combination of ideology and production of space: all of a sudden, there is an "inside community or town" that appropriates the scientific planning and design of Fordist Modernism, and this "inside community" is pitted against a dangerous bevy of "outside Supermen" threatening the stability of the American town.

It is this purposeful aegis of socioeconomic stabilization and calculability that inspired Ben Schlanger, designer of movie theaters in the 1930's, whose parabolic floor plan allowed for a continuous arrangement of seating with uniform sightlines and no separation from

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the wall where the screen was mounted (an optical illusion, the screen curled around the side walls)

> it is this transition which should allow the viewer to feel as little consciousness of the surrounding walls and the ceiling as possible, so that he can completely envelop himself in that which he is viewing. This portion of the auditorium should be flexible ... its form should be changeable and its lighting effects should be varied to suit the tempo of that which is being presented (quoted in May 2000:119).

This is quintessential management and regulation of signifying practices. The control of the screen and its associated space is purposefully attempted to produce a given meaning ("enveloping" of the self, so to speak) and to enhance other affective meanings issuing from the screen ("suiting the tempo" of the presentation). The management of thought is no longer a semi-spontaneous effect of the management of vision, as in the camera obscura; it is now an expected outcome based on calculation.

In this manner, a "populist nationalism" began to appear in the movie theaters of the 1930's, peaking within the context of New Deal Fordism. The rise of the modern style was not simply a change in models, geared to stimulating demand. In response to hard times, the

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modern movie house evoked the ideals of a modern pluralistic producer's democracy, which mirrored the themes that appeared on the screen. At a theater named for Will Rogers, built in the heart of a working-class area of Chicago, the streamlined style heralded a merger of the star's appeal with that of the movie house. On the inside, regionalist-styled murals depicted Will Rogers on horseback, with the legend, "There is only one thing wrong with the world today... selfishness" (May 2000:38). As theaters in a similar style spread, the modernist design soon swept others aside, so that by the second half of the decade film exhibitors imitated it as unthinkingly as they had in the earlier and far more lavish "atmospherics". Yet the wholesale adoption of the modern design was more than the rejection of a stale commodity for the fresh look. Underlying the promotion of the modern aesthetic, in the view of critics and architects, was the creation of a democratic public space that had shed the past in favor of a new "Americanism" (May 2000:101-35).

Regionalism, for all its supposed local specificity, became the new standard for the real phase of Fordist Regulation after 1929. In

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New York City, there were theaters with murals of "people whose skills and trades made the city possible" (May 2000:128). A theater in Kansas City sought a painter from the Artist's Colony of Taos, New Mexico, what resulted was a mural of mule drivers, cooks, and other people who blazed the trails of the Far West (*ibid.*, p. 129). At the same time, formerly ignored or ostracized minorities and recent immigrants found themselves represented in the same walls of these theaters; in one example, a New York cinema, the depictions were of "whites and racial minorities working and playing together in the city" (*ibid.*, 128).

This "egalitarianism" was part of the need to regulate and maximize consumption, especially in the industrialized cities of the Northeast – the South, of course, continued to be brutally segregated and largely de-industrialized. In order for megaproduction to tear down the wall of economic crisis and "underconsumption," it was necessary to turn everyone into an industrial consumer, regardless of race, creed or national origin. That is not what "allowed" but what *required* the desegregation of space between Whites and racial

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minorities – a Fordist economy divided against itself cannot stand. Nationalist ideology, spatial reorganization, and economic regulation seemed to fit into each other.

And yet, there is, of course, the direct contrast with other forms of spatial segregation that were in place at the time, and continued to be in one form or another. This is the same tension between the universalizing cosmopolitanism of Fordism and the isolationist exceptionalism of neo-nationalist integration in the wake of World War I and the Depression. The paradoxes of Fordist modernization were further embodied in the tension between the "democratizing" technological entertainment of the cinema and the spatial practice of neighborhood segregation, that is, of "Black Theaters"

> In general, black cultural presence was asserted in the theaters not through the entertainment on screen but by the performance on stage. While certain economic strategies on the part of theaters mitigated against the success of black film productions, other business strategies in the form of promotion of live entertainment provided an opportunity for the Race to "show our own people" *in the space of the theater*. Black vaudeville and musical performance figured prominently *in the same neighborhood* theaters that showed William Hart and Hoot Gibson westerns, Sennett and Arbuckle comedies, Pathé

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> newsreels, and *The Perils of Pauline* (Carbine in Abel 1996:245, the italics are ours).

The author quotes the work of Lizabeth Cohen to argue that segregated neighborhoods actually reinforced ethnic or racial identity, since "working class people encountered mass culture under local or ethnic sponsorship" (*ibid.*, p. 235). When Blacks bought "race records" or went to the local cinema, these "acts of consumption were a means for blacks to feel more independent and autonomous as a race" (*ibid*). By the same token, the Black press was full of complaints about White entrepreneurs poaching the most successful acts from their neighborhood cinemas and taking them over to the fancier movie palaces for their white clientele (*ibid.*, 250-255). When placed in the context of commentaries on the inappropriate use of jazz for certain high brow films, the author contends that this signals a specific reality for "black entertainers who had an altogether different relationship with the audience than did the stars on the screen" (*ibid.*, p. 255).

Although the above examples are from the 1920's, it is clear that the practice of segregated entertainment continued until World War II,

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when even the Armed Forces were also segregated. Carbine's entire argument, however, is embroiled in the tensions and contradictions of the social process it describes, since it assumes the normalcy of some sort of "ethnic pride" obtained through mass culture – which, of course, is the same type of cultural process used for the imposition of that mainstream ideology which by necessity discriminated against the singularity of specific "sub-cultures." The fact of the matter is that this is no longer a Black culture beyond mass homogenization, but rather a Black culture resulting from a marriage of convenience between mass culture (i.e., business) and segregation. Thus, the specific practice of the cinema allowed for two distinct spatial practices of mass culture: we see that on the screen those theaters still had the same movies that the *entire* rest of the world saw (e.g., *The Perils of Pauline*, produced by Pathé in 1914), or the comedies and Westerns of unmistakably White entertainers like Sennett and Arbuckle or Hart and Ince, respectively – despite the fact that these movies often included a Black buffoon or an inferior Mexican or Indian sidekick or villain. These are certainly not the representations that an audience bent on its own ethnic

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or racial pride would welcome. If there was any allegedly specific "Black culture" in those theaters, it occurred *below* the screen, wherever the live entertainment was staged. Any thought of a capacity to resist domination by the White mainstream culture was immediately put to rest by the absorption of the best entertainers into those segregated theatrical spaces where Blacks (and other ethnics) were not allowed.[8]

What this demonstrates is the spatial basis for any set of social contradictions; in this case, the racial-ethnic contradictions of Fordism, despite its regulatory attempts to control through socioeconomic homogenization. One sort of space clamors for equality and/or uniformity (these two categories are not exactly identical), and another one calls for separation and/or distinction. When these two practices are juxtaposed within the same space, an uneasy coexistence, at best, is formed; a marginalized practice can even get its space, but there is no

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[8]The most dramatic example of this is not a cinema but the famous *Cotton Club* in the middle of Harlem. That cradle of jazz and African American entertainment (comedy, tap dancing, etc.) only admitted Whites.

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question that the space afforded denotes inferiority.[9] In other words, the space of the theater becomes an exemplar of the combined ethos of Fordist capitalism, which is based on a combination of a technologically-driven cosmopolitanism and a crisis-driven nationalist isolationism and racist segregation.[10] Insofar as the theater gathered all under its roof, it had a homogenizing function: it could unify feeling and deed since everyone was undergoing the same experience at the

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[9]This was the case for those "alternative spaces" of the avant-garde, especially the new wave of the avant-garde that attempted to politicize cinema in the 1960s and 70s (see Chapter Six). A slightly different, though related situation was faced by women from the 1920s through the 1950s, this came not in the manner of spatial but of scheduled differentiation – often, moviehouses would schedule women's movies, such as melodramas and love stories during the day (while the husband was at work); at night, the whole family would be entertained with comedies or films for the boys and men, action-adventure, Westerns, etc. The movie industry carried out all manners of research to understand gender and age-driven preferences, and was well prepared to target audiences according to time, geographical location, etc. (Jowett 1977:375-9, 455-6; Koszarsky 1990:25-34).

[10]This extended even to the working class, presumably most homogenized in its condition as abstract labor degraded further by Taylorism. By all accounts, workers should have been able to organize as a whole group. Moreover, labor unions were essential to Fordism on a national scale, as functional elements for wage-price regulation (when inflation rose, union activism would signal to the bosses the need for a wage raise that would return to them in the form of bolstered consumption). Nevertheless, the history of the labor movement in the United States is rife with examples of unions that refused to organize Blacks and other minorities, most notoriously among the United Auto Workers in Detroit (Aronowitz 1973:192-196).

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same time, regardless of geographic extension – i.e., the same movie was experienced exactly in the same manner at 5 p.m. in Seattle and at 8 p.m. in Boston – a national public went to the movies together, regardless of time zones. However, insofar as some of these same theaters also accentuated differences – e.g., movie houses that were segregated for a given racial group, or theaters which showed exclusively American films, especially abroad (see below) – then the theater and its screen also served as fertile ground for discontent (see Chapter Five). The sheer business volume and the territorial scope of all kinds of movie theaters, even during the Depression,[11] nevertheless

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[11]May takes issue with the commonly held belief (e.g., Jowett 1976) that film markets declined by 25% between the golden era of the late 1920's to 1939. The figures were actually fictitiously boosted by the Hays Commission in order to secure credit and loans from banks and government agencies (*ibid.*, p. 121). Using tax receipts based on actual tickets sold yields a more accurate picture. Thus, weekly attendance in 1929 was 37.6 and not the "official" 110 million; although it inevitably dropped in 1933 with the Great Depression, by 1940 it had rise to 54.6 and to 70 million by 1945 (*ibid.*, p. 122). Similarly, the number of theaters did decline from 18,000 in 1929 to 12,000 in 1933, but then rose to 28,000; while theaters in France and Germany, with a comparable population to the US, rose only to 8,000 (*ibid.*, p. 123-125). The author bases this discrepancy between Europe and the US on the democratic nature of the American State as opposed to the totalitarian politics of Europe, where cultural policy was meant to accentuate difference rather than democratizing egalitarianism. So that the widespread presence of movie theaters in the rural are of the US is in direct contrast to the European experience, where theaters were found almost exclusively in urban areas

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indicates their widespread centrality to the hegemonic project of Regulatory Fordism.

IV

The screen of the Cinema of Attractions can be seen as unitary or undifferentiated, because it merely aims to just show (see Chapter Three). Even when the screen became subdivided, like when a phone call "here" required to be answered "there" (Williamson's *Are You There?*), or when a subjective state of mind needed to be objectively represented as a vision or dream from one of the characters in the scene (see below); the screen still maintained a relative unity of space by either privileging the lived space of conscious awareness (of ocular perception), or by theatricalizing separation with something as

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(*ibid.*, p. 124-27). May claims this penetration of the rural areas after the Depression as the true birth of a mass culture. As for the composition of the movie audience, it was already well known by the early 1910's that it seemed to be extremely popular among children. Jowett mentions a report from Seward, Nebraska with an attendance figure of 35% of the total audience for children of school age (*ibid.*, p. 46); since the mid-1950's it has been known that more than half the audience is made up of people younger than 20 and in the middle levels of the income range, and predominantly in the large cities as opposed to the small towns (*ibid.*, p. 375-77); this was confirmed by a study commissioned by Jack Valenti in 1972, which added a positive correlation between education and attendance and also showed an increase in attendance among non-whites (*ibid.*, p. 455-6).

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"unrealistic"[12] as a mere curtain or drape to indicate spatial separation *and* distance.

Melies's *Voyage to the Moon* (1902), is one of the first examples and a *locus classicus* of this type of narrative strategy. The opening scene, for instance, shows a raked stage with painted backdrops, a group of scientists comes in and is grouped to one side of the frame, while the main scientist is on the opposite side giving his demonstration. The entire center of the frame remains relatively empty, but the space remains integrated by the continuous wide-shot from a single camera placement which simulates the position of an average spectator in an average stage theater – with the sole exception of the scene where the rocket flies towards the moon, all scenes in this movie are made up of a static, single wide shot. A few scenes later, we see the scientists landing on the moon, getting out of their bullet-shaped rocket and walking along the lower portion of the frame, then deciding to lie down and go to sleep; the sky above them darkens (a cyclorama

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[12]Of course, the notion of something as being "unrealistic" is determined by convention; audiences during the era of the Cinema of Attractions did not consider the issue of realism while viewing those films.

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backdrop) and a series of cosmic figures (i.e., the moon, stars, etc.) appear above the scientists, it begins to snow and the scientists wake up while the figures disappear. The screen is divided either vertically (in the first scene) or horizontally (in the dream sequence), and the visual field does not shift (i.e., the camera angle does not change).[13] Another example, Porter's *Dream of a Rarebit Fiend* (1906), inspired on Pathé's *Rêve à la Lune*, which in turn was based on a cartoon by Windsor McKay (who made one of the first animated cartoon movies himself), already belongs to the bricolage strategies of the Nickelodeon Era. Nevertheless, this film also demonstrates the unitary sense of the subdivided screen during the dream sequence. In this film, the dream actually occurs in a space that evolves from "real" to "oneirically transformed" and, finally, to "oneirically separate" space: [14] the

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[13]This clearly is an aesthetic choice (Gunning in Elsaesser 1990:95-103). When Melies' wanted to do a visual trick, he was quite capable of changing the camera angle – e.g., the highly celebrated sequence in which the rocket flies and lands in the moon's eye, the camera "moves in" by quickly dissolving three or four shots that are successively closer to the moon.

[14]In a nutshell, we see the man eating his rarebit at a restaurant, then he walks through the streets and onto an obelisk-like monument which swings to one side and the other (i.e., superimposed pendular movements of the camera), he finally goes into his bedroom (an obvious theatrical set) and falls asleep. As he sleeps, his

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beginning of the drunken dream takes place in a set that remains unchanged, the separation of space begins when the dreamer goes up on his bed and floats through the sky; the trick is done optically, the action takes place along the upper half of the screen where the bed floats, the lower half is a static matte simulating a darkened urban skyline. Despite dealing with separate spaces, only one of them becomes narrativized, the other one is simply a sort of backdrop. This

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shoes move off to one side of the room, the bed begins to float and then rotate wildly, eventually it flies out of the bedroom and into the sky, while the man sits on it; he begins to ride the bed faking the driving motions of a flying automobile of sorts, then floating parallel to the mattress while holding on to the headrest; he flies past the quarter moon and the stars while the silhouetted rooftops of the town pass by on a band along the lower portion of the screen; eventually he drops down and gets stuck by the seat of his pajama pants on a weathervane. The final sequence shows him waking up in his room, he goes offstage to the left and comes back drying his face with a towel. The only difference in this example, from the point of view of unitary space within a subdivided one, is that rather than privileging the conscious physical experience, it is the imagination that is given a primary space; the more radical narrative move is the fact that the room shifts from reality to "dream-state" without any transitional signal other than through the trick of animation. A variant of this procedure is R. W. Paul's *The ? Motorist* (1905-06), in which a couple enters a car, they start speeding, a cop stands in front of them, they run him over and drag him for a few feet, after the car passes over him the cop picks up his pieces and continues chasing them, but the car goes over the side of a house, then over the clouds, then to the sun, then around the rings of Saturn, finally falling downwardly back towards earth where it descends into the Court where judges, policemen and other people chase them, but the car turns into a farmer's cart and the man and woman into farmers who start moving off until, at a safe distance, they turn back into the man and woman in their car which safely races away (Low and Manvell 1948:80).

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sense that only one space can be active holds in other examples: in Pathé's *Story of a Crime* (1901) or Ambrosio's *Nero or the Fall of Rome* (1909), the dream is superimposed on a wall and the situation elsewhere in the frame becomes almost like a still photograph.

The demands of Regulatory Fordism required that the space of the screen be also incorporated to its regime of calculability: vision had to be regulated in order to produce a standard code of signification. This meant that a differentiation of signifying value needed to be embedded within the space of the screen, so that not all depicted or represented objects would be equivalent. In order to control signification and interpretation, film needed to place emphasis on certain objects *above* others within the same frame – it needed to find an equivalent to linguistic adjectivation under conditions that do not normally permit this. Except for light and shadow, and at times an optically-rendered sense of greater proximity to the viewer, there is very little in the visual field of a black and white movie frame that can intrinsically privilege one object over another.

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The regulation of signification was achieved by reorganizing the production of space of the screen. The screen became subdivided as a matter of a sort of "narrative method" rather than for sheer visual display; and its areas of subdivision were turned into *places* with greater or lesser significance, depending on their relative *placement* within overall space of the screen. The Hollywood screen became a grid, like an imaginary tic-tac-toe placed over the projected image; the central area of this subdivision became the most powerful place of signification on the screen, the middle edges followed in importance, and the corners were the least important – the lower right hand corner being the weakest of all the screen subdivisions, given our Western tendency to write and read from upper left to lower right.

One of the earliest examples, Griffith's *Musketeers of Pig Alley* (1912) already demonstrates from the very opening shot that there is a clear sense of careful coordination between the camera angle, along with the disposition of actors and objects across the visual field of the shot in combination with the actions and movements of the actors (composition *and* mise en scene). The film opens with a musician

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standing to the right of frame, bidding farewell to his beautiful wife (standing to the left); the close proximity of furniture, surrounding walls and scant decor give a sense of poverty. The musician turns around and begins to move towards the door which is located behind him and to the extreme right of the frame, the wife moves across frame after him and that reveals an old lady sleeping in a rocking chair, she had been entirely blocked from view by the young woman. The old woman's head dominates the center of the frame while the young woman walks past her from left to right to stand behind her husband as he exits, both of them acknowledging the need to be quiet while the woman sleeps. The sleeping woman will dominate the center of the frame during that first sequence, except for some shots outside of their apartment door (even there, the haptic space is observed by allowing time lapses and cuts to match on the action).

After the musician has left (the scene is actually located on the hallway outside the apartment door), we move back inside the tenement room, this time the sleeping woman is in medium shot angled to the left of the set; in the background, the young wife gets ready to go out, but

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she takes care to lean over to check the breathing of the sleeping woman. She walks out and begins to close the door behind her, once again there is a match cut on the action of the closing door seen from the hallway outside. The composition of the next shot, back in the hallway, respects the geography of an adjoining space by having the apartment door on the upper left hand corner of the frame (in the background), while in the foreground we see the leader of the musketeers and his henchman standing on the lower right hand corner of the frame; they observe the beautiful young woman with great interest as she walks by (both the apartment and the musketeers are diminished in importance by being placed in the corners; as spectators, this allows us to have the pretty lady as the center of our attention, thus being put in the same subjective position as the musketeers – when we see the leader lewdly turn towards his mates, this reaction registers more emphatically in our minds). The next shot is back in the apartment room (same middle shot, but now angled to the right balancing out the leftward angle of the previous middle shot), the

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sleeping woman suddenly arches her torso upwards, seems to choke and sags to her lonely death moments later.

In just a few shots, the film has set up a few elements which will remain constant: 1) there is a clear importance to the center of the screen; 2) there is an alternation of represented spaces which are established a) within the frame, and b) from one shot to the next; 3) there is a specific connection between the spatial disposition of the set and the movement of the characters within the frame as well as from one shot to the next. Throughout the rest of the film there will be a consistent use of: 1) crucial objects, gestures, faces, and so on, deliberately staged to take place at or near the center of the frame; 2) the Musketeers slithering and slinking their way past people by moving along the walls (usually to the right of the frame); 3) tension suggested by cutting on identical or related actions between one location and the other – the mother who dies alone while both the young wife and the musician are "somewhere else" (i.e., unseen space), or the climactic sequence in which the Musketeers and a rival gang stalk each other throughout the neighborhood (moving past the same location in

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successive shots, etc.); and 4) the enhancement of melodrama through mise en scene – like in the opening shot, where the wife's movement from one side of the frame to the other is what reveals the presence of the mother (whose death is predictable for the audience through the conventions of melodrama already established in the stage theater and in literary texts). Added to this is the fact that the elements of signification set up in the first shot of the film become qualitatively enhanced by their relation to the subsequent shots; that is, the meaning of these elements develops further as the story moves along.[15]

In the Cinema of Attractions, this concept of development is hardly present; for example, Fitzhammon's *That Fatal Sneeze*, simply repeated it gag over and over (from one location to the other), the only

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[15]This production of meaning by connecting space to time in order to develop a narrative is the core issue in Deleuze's *Cinema* books. The transitional cinema of that time was self-aware on this issue, as exemplified by Durand's *Onesime Horloger* (1912) in which a young man finds out that he will inherit a large fortune after he reaches a certain age. So, he finds a way to speed up the clock at the central observatory and life begins to occur at an extraordinary pace (e.g., in about twenty seconds we see a couple get married, have a child; the father next sits in a rocking chair with the infant who grows into a full adult, the father continues rocking him while he grows larger and larger on his lap). Although still in the mold of the trick films of the Cinema of Attractions, this movie already shows an understanding of the connection between time-space (in this case, speed) and a narrative style (in this case, physical comedy).

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development is the "punchline" when the sneezer explodes. By contrast, in *The Musketeers of Pig Alley* there is a sheer affective connection that the audience can make with the whole issue of the "mother dying alone;" this affective level, however, had been already set up in the first shot by the fact that the mother is *discovered* in relation to the dutiful wife moving towards her husband, who moves away from both himself. His exit from frame is *enhanced* by the fact that the face of the sleeping mother is placed exactly in the center of the frame, facing the audience frontally while the other characters move towards the edges of the frame (i.e., they are displaced). This is precisely what a "centered" image entails: the fact that movement from Point A to Point B has meaning embedded in it, whereas in the Cinema of Attractions this movement simply displays the necessary motion of objects and beings through physical space.

The Musketeers of Pig Alley ends its first segment (i.e., the expository "Act One") with the musician coming back after having made a lot of money elsewhere. He walks (left to right) into a full shot of the alley adjacent to his tenement house, he stops when he meets a

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friend who is standing at the right of frame. As he talks, he opens the left flap of his jacket to reveal the inside pocket where he keeps all the money he just earned. The pocket with the money is exactly in the middle of the frame, while the leader of the Musketeers and his henchmen observe against the wall at the extreme right of frame. In the next shot the man goes into the hallway of his building (same angle as the earlier shot when the Musketeers ogled his young wife); the Musketeers follow behind, pouncing on him just before he reaches his door. The next shot shows the man walking into his room after being beaten up and explaining to his wife what happened; he leans towards her speaking in profile right in the middle of the frame, as his wife learns about their certain ruin she gestures in despair. The musician stops talking and sits down, looking despondent; as he sits down, he moves from center frame to the lower right hand corner – he sinks from the pinnacle of wealth and success to the edges of despair (from the center of the frame, where money and power were indicated by his pocket full of money, to the weakest area of the screen, where his fall from the center can be made most dramatic).

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This is how the Classic Hollywood Model (which we could easily call the Fordist Mode) began to "discover" a way to regulate vision, a way to set hierarchies of meaning by establishing where the spectator should look and how he or she should "interpret" (i.e., understand) the relative significance of the viewed object. The language "discovered" by Hollywood filmmakers was, in fact, a spatial practice that utilized the center of the screen as a privileged point of visual attraction to deploy a system of signification. For obvious reasons within the logic of Regulatory Fordism, this practice needed to be standardized

> Roddick[16] argues persuasively that the narrative film itself was a product of the economic system:
> "The classic Hollywood style, with its insistence on the unproblematic, seamless narrative whose advancement is controlled by the destiny of one or more individual characters, was determined by the economics of the production system. The need to mass-produce art necessitated a certain approach to storytelling. Studio practice required an economy of production method which in turn created an economy of narrative method. The studio system dictated, by its structure and its gradually established orthodoxies, the making of a particular kind of

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[16]Nick Roddick, *A new deal in entertainment: Warner Brothers in the 1930's* (London: British Film Institute, 1983)

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> movie. Formula it may have been, but it is formula which is now clearly established as the standard approach to movie making... It is simply, the archetypal form of cinema, the model for most films that have come after it..." (Izod 1988:85).

The Classic Hollywood Model achieved this sort of common denominator with two discrete but interrelated elements, camera placement and continuity editing. This system elaborated a standard way of telling a visual story – that is to say, it provided a predictable visual series through procedures which would mimic an everyday experience of time and space[17] (producing a sense of familiarity), while

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[17]This can be appreciated when considering an earlier "bricolage film" with some concern for realism but without a sense of shot continuity. The film is Zecca's *Policeman's Little Run* (1907), which is a standard comedy of bumbling policemen chasing after a bulldog that has stolen a huge ham from the butcher. In one sequence, the dog goes up the facade of a house and then over the two-water roof; the cops also climb up the walls. At some point, one of the cops stumbles and plummets, the dog returns and the cops in terror start climbing down (we already know how long it should take them to climb down based on how long it took them to climb up). The whole climbing scene is made up by a trick shot, the actors are crawling on an obviously painted floor with the camera suspended above them to simulate the visual effect of verticality; yet, there is a moment of realism during the cops' mad rush to climb back down, the producers actually took care of having one of the actors crawl over a real brick, crushing into a visible powder. However, there is no sense of "continuity realism:" a policeman had plummeted only moments before the brick was crushed, but in the next shot he is nowhere to be seen as the rest of his chums reach the ground, nor are the cops staged in the same order of descent from one shot to the next. During another sequence, there is a point where the cops retreat as the dog begins chasing after them through the streets; at some point the dog goes past a couple of the cops, who continue running in the same direction, despite the fact that they are clearly no longer under threat

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also resting on a commonly-held set of interpretations borne out of the repeated visual series from one film to the other (echoing the repeated experience of a well run movie theater discussed before). Like all narrative forms, this is a convention, akin to the standard "once upon a time" phrase in children's stories. The difference being that the strength of the Hollywood narrative was the approximation of lived experience – the haptic space – a claim that literature cannot attempt. Whether it is due to a particular strength of moving visuals as opposed to the aural realm of literature (even when read), or whether it is, as we claim, due to the particular practices of screen space; the fact of the matter is that cinematic images are part of life (or nature) and not part of the imagination (like the mental images produced by literature).[18]

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and in fact they are now running towards rather than away from the dog. The sheer joy of cartoonish pratfalls and mayhem are the sole concern of this film, explaining the story is not at the heart of the matter.

[18]There are, of course, literary-induced mental images of such strength that their screen adaptation always pales by comparison to the "original" – Don Quijote, even if played by Cherkassov, is one of those cases. The point is not about which is "better" or "stronger," but rather, which form is considered to be more like the common sense experience of everyday life. The strength of cinema's and television's claim is such that even the realistic theater, which could at least approximate the three dimensional reality domestic space (e.g., Ibsen's *A Doll's House*), has now completely eschewed any attempt to mimic reality and has opted

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As such, the Hollywood Model is an attempt to codify visual storytelling in the same way that the average human eye sees the "natural world."[19] Through convention, borne by regulation, modern audiences learn to identify the screen with the human ocular field, so that the camera becomes our surrogate.

Bordwell *et al.* (1985) do the most thorough job at describing and analyzing the various aspects[20] of the Hollywood mode of narrative and

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for abstract settings, like Grotowsky's "poor theater" – or the stage" pyrotechnics" of British musicals.

[19]Not necessarily a recent imperative, but certainly a modernizing one, as Panofsky (1991) explains with respect to the sociocultural context that gave rise to perspectival painting during the Renaissance.

[20]There is a whole arsenal of visual techniques to produce ocular realism – balancing angles during shot-reverse shot cuts (if shot 1 is of character A seen over the shoulder of character B, then the reverse shot should be a copy of shot 1 but of character B seen over A's shoulder); sightline precision in the shot-reverse shot relationship (if character A looks up with the camera in a high angle and the next shot is character B looking at A, then B has to be looking down from a low angle); sightline of point of view (shot 1 is character A looking, shot 2 must be the viewed object or person from an angle that approximates the position of character A's eyes in the previous shot); directionality of movement (we have already seen the importance of characters moving with the same direction in shots that are supposed to be continuous); and, foremost, the famous line (the 180 degree imaginary line running through two characters which face each other, the camera can stay on one side or the other but cannot "cross the line" unless there is a deliberate attempt to disorient the viewer because the screen orientation of the character in the new shot will be exactly opposite of what is expected). Editing involves match cuts on action, so that a move to, say, a closer shot is justified by the movement of a character or object, crosscutting or intercutting to establish simultaneous actions,

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little else should be added here. We will simply focus on the standard sequence used in the Classic Hollywood Model to establish the "geography" of a narrative space in order to show the specific techniques of information control and regulation. The norm is to run a progression of shots: establishing shot-medium shot-closeup. The first shot of this progression is usually a full shot in order to establish the entire spatial relationship between characters and their surroundings, the second shot brings the camera closer to the characters and actions that need to be singled out for that particular scene or segment (this could even be a mini-progression going from medium two-shot to isolated medium shots of each of the two characters); and the third shot is almost always a closeup that emphatically establishes for the audience the key moment or action on which to focus attention.

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and cutaways to reaction shots or neutral objects to smooth out a set of shots that do not necessarily match as they are spliced together. The storyline should be linear, and there should be some "psychological motivation" for the main characters behavior – e.g., Bruno's desire to kill his own father in Hitchcock's *Strangers on a Train* is explained by his "unnatural" (i.e., homosexual) attachment to his mother.

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There are, of course, all sorts of variations to this procedure, but they usually observe the same organizational principle even if the order is altered; thus, a scene may open in a close up but quickly move into a full shot to establish the spatial relationship between the viewed object or person and whatever else exists in the larger space. Thus, in *Birth of a Nation*, the scene in the state assembly during Reconstruction first shows closer shots of the ill behaved Negroes, sitting back with their bare feet on the tables or eating in the middle of a debate which becomes increasingly raucous; the full shot only comes at the end of the scene to show the general mayhem and anarchy in the congressional chamber. This inversion of the standard order serves to establish the fact that the mayhem results from or develops out of the attitude of the Negroes; such causality would have been inverted if the normal order had been observed. Put differently, aside from having one's attention directed towards the center of the screen by the composition of each

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shot, the viewer will also be directed towards the emphatic function of the close up in order to understand the signifying progression.[21]

In any case, the viewer's attention will always be overdetermined by codified rules for understanding the "proper meaning" of each sequence in the film.[22]

This regulation of narrative procedures puts filmgoing on a par with the Fordist assembly line. There is standardization and

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[21]The same "counter-order" of shots is used to great comic effect in Gutiérrez Alea's *Death of A Bureaucrat* (1966). The satyrical portrait of the helpful bureaucracy is accentuated in the scene when the Nephew and the Aunt go for the first time to request an exhumation permit. Instead of opening with the usual establishing shot of the two figures arriving at the building, searching for the office and entering the proper place; the scene opens up with a close up of a shocked clerk holding a paper in front of his face and exclaiming: "Buried!" The next shot is the requisite full shot of the clerk at his desk with his two petitioners before him; and the rest of the sequence will playfully move between the full shots of the various bureaucrats in the room discussing how to deal with this unusual request. The overall effect being that the clerk appears to be a pivot for the action (and the camera angles) and this reinforces the static nature of his incapacity to go beyond the strictures of his position; thus enhancing the critical commentary on the bureaucratic rigidity that existed during the "Experimental Period" of Cuba's Socialist regime.

[22]Overdetermination depends on processes which escape consciousness and awareness. Thus, the spectator is not conscious of being "forced" towards an interpretative conclusion. In fact, our modern upbringing is such that this process is not only absolutely familiar but often pleasurable, so that we are even willing accomplices in building our own "prison house of images." That is why film viewing is commonly thought of as a form of dreaming.

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interchangeability of signifying techniques and strategies, and the result of their repeated implementation is what we now call "narrative formulas." This standardization also makes up the genre-based narrative (and marketing) strategy of Hollywood; which allows for a whole economy of signifiers, like the black garb of the villain in Westerns, or the basic skeleton plot for romantic comedies: boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy gets girl again (part of the Fordist "common denominator" already discussed above). The Fordist convergence of film and industrial mass productions does not rest exclusively on the cinematic modes of production and consumption, it also rests on the Classic film form itself; that is, it rests on a setting of parameters for structural choices available within the narrative matrix of the Hollywood Model.[23]

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[23]Eventually, sound also became a key element for the Classic Hollywood Model. The audience is given emotional and sometimes diegetic cues from music or sound effects, most notoriously in horror films. The use of voiceovers is another way to control signification. There are also ways to overlap sound from one shot to the other, allowing sound to linger into the next shot or to start before the shot ends in order to smooth out a problematic cut. There are also stereo and quadraphonic uses of sound in order to further simulate the sensation that the viewer is within the space of the narrative action. Given the size and scope of the present work, we will have to leave aside this important part of the spatial practice of cinema.

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The narrative codes of the Classic Hollywood Model allowed for the "visual Esperanto" of the silent film (Stam 1989:68) to become a universal standard for storytelling. Having achieved this standard ahead of everyone else, Hollywood was in the most favorable position to become a major player in the world economy. This position has been solidified further by the fact that the United States has been the fortunate beneficiary of the two World Wars; which not only destroyed the competition, but paved the way for American supremacy by creating virtual periods of market monopoly at a time when its competitors were in the process of rebuilding their productive capacity – the rebuilding process itself constituting one of the most lucrative market opportunities for U.S. capital. World War I was, in fact, the crucial event for Hollywood's dominance in overseas markets; and the cinema itself played a key role in helping the U.S. economy as a whole to establish its own dominance over the European economy.

As Kristin Thompson demonstrates (1985:46), Fordist dynamism was already transforming the relations of trade between the US and the

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rest of the world. From 1900 to 1913, the U.S. was able to maintain a favorable balance of trade, even though it had a growth of 76% in exports, compared to 113% in imports. This is explained by the Fordist conversion of the economy, so that foodstuffs which had made 39.8% of exports in 1900, accounted for only 20.7 in 1913, while manufactured goods (which included film) went from 35.4% in 1900 to 48.8 in 1913. During that period, the US began to diversify its trade by opening up markets in other parts of the world (aided by the completion of the Panama Canal), thus becoming less dependent on Europe, especially England (exports to Europe were reduced from 75% of US export market in 1900 to 60% in 1913; *ibid.*, p. 47). The experience of the film industry was no exception, in 1908 Britain was still the main distributor of US films in Europe, sometimes being able to secure distribution rights in other parts of the world (like the Middle East) for a small fee; in many cases, US film companies would find themselves underpriced in those regions with their own films (*ibid.*, pp. 29-31).

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World War I meant the destruction of this British stronghold and gave U.S. enterprises an opportunity for "Cashing on the European Conflict," as an essay from the head of exports of the Nicholas Power Company put it (*ibid.*, p. 50 and p. 71). Film would also cash on this conflict: in mid-1916, the US sent about 80% of its film exports to Europe, but after that it decreased the amount by diversifying (*ibid.*, p. 91) – easing its own dependency on the single market of Europe (mostly Britain), and taking advantage of the conflict to capture other overseas markets no longer being served by European production. This period also brought the government into the film business

> Government involvement in the industry began in the fiscal year 1912-1913 when the US Commerce Department first began keeping records on the export of film, as it did for most commodities. In 1916, after NAMPI had formed [a US film cartel formed mostly to deal with the "morality issue"], the U.S. State Department sent instructions to U.S. consuls that they should report from their areas on the market for American pictures. Some of the information requested included the number of cinemas in the area, their size, admissions prices, who distributed films, rental rates, etc. It marked the beginning of a close relationship between the industry cartel and the federal government, particularly the Commerce and State Departments. As time passed, more and more help was extended by the government. A wealth of information was assembled and made freely available to the industry. The cost of the federal

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> government was paid by all U.S. citizens while the benefits were accrued to a wealthy few in the industry. It was the socialism function of North American capitalism — socialize the costs, privatize the profits (Segrave 1997:8).

There is no secret that Hollywood used every type of monopolistic procedure to eliminate any competition from independent or foreign producers, and to maximize profits at a fabulous rate.[24]

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[24]As Segrave summarizes: "the period from approximately 1914 to 1922 marked the "rationalization" of the U.S. film industry into a functioning, formidable cartel. Elements necessary for domination were being implemented: actor 'salaries soared due to the star system, pictures got longer and more expensive to make, cinemas became more elaborate and more expensive to build and block booking was established and imposed around the globe, closing down much of the market to those outside the cartel. The expensive Hollywood publicity machine was up and running. All of these items severely limited entry into the market for newcomers, particularly those with limited finances. Less affluent nations than America were hard pressed to compete as costs escalated.

Despite rising costs, actually because of rising costs since cartels were formed precisely to squeeze monopoly-sized profits out of the system, the industry was incredibly lucrative. Negative costs for a film in 1909 averaged $1,000, in 1915 it was $25,000, in 1920 the average cost was $150,000 for a film. The negative cost included all costs involved in producing the final negative — not included were such expenses as the cost of striking positive prints, advertising and distribution. On a typical 1915 film, the producer/distributor's share of the box office receipts averaged $100,000. Subtracting distribution fees of $35,000, print costs and advertising of $10,000 and the negative cost of $25,000 left the producer with a profit of $30,000. Turning out 52 such movies a year yielded annual profits of $1.5 million. Setting up distribution offices abroad gave a company greater control over the situation, and it eliminated the necessity of sharing profits with local distributors" (1997:11).

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But the most important factor in this period was the increased cooperation between the US Government and Hollywood in one specific area, film export. As World War I raged on, Congress set up the Committee on Public Information (known as the Creel Commission); which immediately linked forces with the film industry to open foreign markets, ostensibly to propagate American values and culture abroad. Agents worked very aggressively to exclude films from other nations, most notably Germany, from distribution in those countries; for example, Guy Crosswell Smith went to Scandinavia in 1918 and managed within one year to cut back German distribution from 50% to 3%, this region went immediately to U.S. films (about 90% of the market). The head of the Division of Film of the Creel Commission, Charles Hart, went in person to Switzerland and reported closing a deal to distribute American films with the type of financial arrangements that was able to satisfy the producers. The government acted as agent for Hollywood producers. When the Division of Films ceased activities in 1919, Hart claimed as one of its accomplishments

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the elimination of German films from all markets (Segrave 1997:14-16).

Towards the end of the War, an official of the U.S. Department of Commerce, C.J. North, wrote back commenting on the effectiveness of film in wetting the appetite of foreign customers for American goods; adding that the ideals, customs, and tradition of America being shown in film were undermining other countries, which explained why foreign governments tended to resort to quotas (Segrave 1997:58). According to Kristin Thompson, "Woodrow Wilson talked about how the cinema 'has come to rank as the very highest medium for the dissemination of public intelligence, and since it speaks a universal language, it lends itself importantly for the presentation of America's plans and purposes' (1985:94)." Despite these lofty ideological goals, at the heart of the matter lied naked commercial aggression

> *Collier's* observed, about trade to be won in Europe once the war ended, "Well, consider what the American moving picture is doing in other countries. It is familiarizing South America and Africa, Asia and Europe with American habits and customs. It is educating them up to the American standard of living. It is showing them American clothes and furniture, automobiles and houses. And it is subtly but surely creating a desire for these

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> American-made articles." Event the "educational" pictures sent abroad by the Creel Commission were often little more than ads for the products of the firm donating the film footage. ...
> Department of Commerce Assistant Trade Commissioner Bernard H. Noll reported in 1921 that Brazilians "follow closely American fashion and copy American styles of clothing, architecture, automobiles and interior decorations which are shown in films sent to Brazil from the United States."
> By 1924 the Commerce Department considered the film industry to be the fourth or fifth most important American Industry. ...
> U.S. Commercial Attaché in Berlin Douglas Miller reported to Commerce Secretary Herbert Hoover, "No one has yet been able to estimate the large amount of advertising for American goods that has come through the motion picture and the stage." British shoe manufacturers were said to have complained because they had to retool to produce American-style shoes then wanted in the Near East — from the influence of films. In Brazil a car featured in one American picture was suddenly in great demand. Citizens in an unnamed European country were reportedly demanding clothing like that seen in U.S. movies.
> In an unnamed European nation, a U.S. film representative took a journalist to a restaurant which then had nine U.S. cash registers. After seeing them in a film, the restaurant owner asked the exhibitor for information about them. The exhibitor took him to the movie representative who provided him with the business machine company's address (Segrave 1997:58-9).

Clearly, film was the battering ram that allowed the American business hordes to break down the fortifications of competing markets. This certainly justified the intervention of American trade officials to ensure that this process continued. The result was that the U.S.

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Government acted as an agent for the interests of a cartelized segment of the private industry at taxpayer expense, a courtesy not yet extended to any other form of cultural endeavor.[25] Film export was indeed a high stakes game in terms of volume of capital

> Growth in invested capital went from 1921: 9.7 million funded debt, 68.5 million capital stores, reserves and surplus, and 78.2 million total invested capital; to 1930: $305.6 million funded debt, $544.4 million capital stores, reserves and surplus, and $850 million total invested capital (Koszarski 1990:93).

This commanding lead actually helped to establish the favorable terms of trade for the American film industry – a fact which was already apparent by 1919, when Famous Players-Lasky (Paramount) brought British ire by increasing block booking from 8 films to 21, then 50, finally 104; meaning that theaters were booked up to a year in advance. Britain, with less than 4,000 theaters, sent back to the U.S. from £3,000

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[25]Richard Dyer McCann (1973) mentions the first efforts of the US Government to directly produce its own films, which were carried out through the Department of Agriculture. Eventually by 1940, almost every government agency had a promotional or educational film to distribute. This is infinitesimal when compared to what in many other countries has been a long tradition of direct government support for the arts and the cultural affairs of their nation – e.g., for a full account of the connection between government activity and the cinema in Britain, see Dickinson and Street 1985.

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to 15,000 for every American film screened; while the U.S., with about 20,000 cinemas, averaged about £800 on every British film screened there (Segrave 1997:19).

Despite later anti-trust action brought by the government against the Hollywood industry, which resulted in the decoupling of production from exhibition in the U.S., the export cartels have not only never been challenged, but have been actually strengthened. The formal organization of the cartel took place in the 1920s under Will H. Hays, somewhat prominent in the Republican Party and cabinet member under Warring Harding as Postmaster General (Segrave *loc. cit.*; Dickinson and Street 1985:11). He became the head of the newly created Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA) in 1921. This cartel succeeded because, unlike the MPPC (or Edison Trust), it had internal cohesion and kept foreign companies out, allowing Hays to speak for the entire American film industry (Segrave 1997:21), thereby setting itself up as almost part of the national foreign policy

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> The Foreign Department [of the MPPDA], under Major Frederick L. Herron, a former U.S. Military Attaché, was formed to assist the "majors" secure fair treatment in distributing American films abroad. This organisation had contacts in the U.S. State Department and in the U.S. Department of Commerce. The agency was also well served in its quest for foreign outlets by the Motion Picture Division of the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, formed in 1926. This agency claimed that each foot of film exported and exhibited abroad yielded one dollar in foreign purchases of American goods. ... In 1923 Hays visited Britain, and was reported to have said that the aim of the American film industry was to "Americanize the world." (Dickinson and Street 1985:11-12)

The cross-currents of nationalism and commerce, government intervention and cultural entrepreneurship (or cultural conquest) were indeed the business of America itself. And, as we explained before, a crucial aspect of the production of space of Fordism was the alignment between national production and a world consumer market, the local was projected unto the global. Film was positively instrumental in creating that projection.

The cartel changed its name in the 1940's to the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), and gained further strength since 1966 when its new president, Jack Valenti, secured further Congressional agreement to aid the industry in securing "free trade" for

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films; a crucial government initiative, given that Hollywood grosses 54% of its profits in the foreign market (Segrave 1997:145-6).

The US film export cartel has continued forcing the practices of blind and block booking as well as maintaining cinema ownership; it also continued forcing low or no taxation; and imposing advertising and publicity practices on foreign distributors, like forcing them to stage expensive and elaborate public acts and displays to advertise American blockbusters (Segrave 1997:21-28). The whole world has been stung by U.S. pressure when it attempts to protect its own industry from these practices. One example should suffice

> a 1946 *Business Week* article [..] noted Mexico would produce less movies in 1946 than in 1945. "The reason is not scarcity of capital but the fact that completed pictures are lying idle, unable to find a market. They represent an investment of about $5 million financed by the semi-governmental Banco Cinematográfico. Until those picture start to produce income, the bank will not be able to grant more credits to the particular producers concerned." According to Raul de Anda, chairman of the Mexican film producers association, native films could not get screened because exhibitors could get cheaper films. (From where was never explained.) Exhibitors argued they were not exhibited because they were poor quality films. [...]
> During the first six months of 1948, 35 Mexican films were produced but only six were exhibited. American movies held 90 percent of the screen time. Hollywood also flooded the market

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> with a large number of old movies which, of course were offered to exhibitors at cheap rates. The cartel cut off access to exhibitors with a deluge of old reissues at low rates, plus the old standby control device, block booking. [...]
> Gamely the Mexican government tried to fight back by enacting a law which required exhibitors to screen from 30 to 50 percent native product (depending on class of the house). [...] Predictably the majors threatened a boycott if the law was enforced. Also, they called on State to help fight against the law. [...] Mexican exhibitors fought the law in court. In August 1951, the Mexican Federal Court issued an injunction forbidding the government from putting the law into effect as unconstitutional. [...] The law was dead (Segrave 1997:155).

Even with all of this, the basis for the might of the American film industry resides in the providential connection between its internal market growth and the destruction of competing industries (due to the World War) which, nevertheless, still had their consumer bases intact. The overwhelming amount of U.S. screens in comparison to that of any other market is the backbone of Hollywood's global success

> [Foreign profits] constituted approximately 30 percent of the industry's world gross "which is far greater than average than for almost any other American product entering into foreign trade. The vital necessity to the motion picture of maintaining this source of revenue unimpaired can easily be realized." [C.J. North] Seventy percent of that revenue came from Europe, 14 percent from Latin America, 14 percent from the Far East and 2 percent from Africa.

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> Usually the reason given for Hollywood's dominance was that American films were the best and that was why they held screen control. [...] Journalist Charles Merz observed that America had 20,000 theaters with only five other nations having as much as one-tenth as many. "One result is the ability to spend money on production and to recoup it here at home which – rather than any technical excellence or genius in the matter of acting....gives the American pictures its commanding lead abroad" (Segrave 1997:68).

The Hollywood cartel did not build its internal market monopoly by spontaneous generation; just like it did with the overseas market, Hollywood utilized in the U.S. the same tricks of block and blind booking to monopolize almost all the national screens. One of the first global cartels was thus created (involving U.S.-based producers and foreign distributors, whose quest for profitability made them quite willing to align themselves with Hollywood and against their own national industry). Any superior technical quality that the American films may arguably have over their foreign and independent competitors[26] has to be understood as a legitimation strategy, it cannot

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[26]Hollywood poached and continues to poach all that foreign talent because of their capacity to make technically proficient and aesthetically superior films (e.g., the unique visual style of German Expressionism; the lyrical beauty of some of the *Réalisme Poetique*; the poignant simplicity of the composition in Renoir's *Grand Illusion* or any film by Ozu; or the studied intensity of each shot in a Bergman film

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be seen as an explanation. The cartel framework of the film industry still continues to be the main factor in a worldwide fight for screen space.

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or in Visconti's *Death in Venice*, and so on). It is hard, therefore, to argue that there is a technical superiority to American films over foreign films; surely there is enough evidence to show that they would have been able to catch up if that was the only cause. In fact, these claims of technical superiority in Hollywood come from films like *Sunrise* (1927), made for Fox Studios by an imported German crew under the direction of F. W. Murnau.

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"A MOST REMARKABLE ROOM THAT DID NOT EXIST BEFORE:" THE PRODUCTION OF SCREEN SPACE AND FORDIST MODERNITY

by

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Chapter Five
Regulation and Its Discontents: Hegemonic Space and Avant-Garde Fragmentation

I

It has now become commonplace to describe nations as "imagined communities" (Anderson 1983).[1] Nation-building is indeed a historically-specific creation that can be located at the onset of the project of the Enlightment,[2] most notably in Hegelian thought

> What counts is the common will. In thus being suppressed, the individual will retires unto itself. And this is the first condition necessary for the existence of the universal, the condition, namely, of knowledge, of thought – for it is thought that man has

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[1]This denotes a couple of contemporary quirks in the production of knowledge and culture. On the one hand, nations are no longer considered to be the unassailable entities of the recent past; on the other hand, there is the rapid diffusion and broadcast of labels rather than full ideas – most people only hear Anderson's title and fail to realize that he actually admires that capacity of nationalism to invent a community. The interest that this holds for us lies in the fact that this disbelief in the national project is part of the constant process of invention and reinvention of the community, now recast as something in between the "global village" and a new Empire with biopower and computerized multitude struggling under the weight of Breton Woods governance and regulation (Hardt and Negri 2000).

[2]The philosophical roots of modern State theory, though not necessarily of the nation, can be traced to British Empiricism: Hobbes' and Locke's notions of a social contract (notwithstanding their contrasts), followed by the French Enlightment's linkage between social contract and education. Kant, as the towering figure of the German Enlightment, extended the idea by treating states as individuals in the international arena, so that a social contract between states would guarantee a Perpetual Peace.

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> in common with the divine. It thus makes the appearance in the state. Only on this soil, that is, in the state, can art and religion exist. The object of our considerations are peoples that have organized themselves rationally (Hegel 1953:57).

Hegel begins with the idea of the social contract where the individual yields to the common will. But, unlike the previous political theorists, he understands this to be an expression of thought unfolding towards a state of divinity, since the process of the human mind (its phenomenology, so to speak) involves the refining of ideas – which is precisely what the unfolding of *Geist* entails. Thus, the social contract is not a means towards the establishment of law and order over a particular group of people, but a moment in the dialectical development towards a universal condition: the State as progression towards world government. Immediately, though, we return to the tangible: the State is a soil, a territory in which the cultural expression of that universal thought – i.e., religion and art – can exist. And this happens as people "organize themselves" rationally; that is, as they apply that universal knowledge to their own selves and soil: the *Volkgeist.*[3]

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[3]Ernest Renan's famous essay, "What is a nation?," takes up this point with its posture that "A nation is a spiritual principle the outcome of the profound

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Any work of fiction, in order to be realized into a practicable everyday reality, requires more than mere symbols and ideology, it requires a material grounding in equally material practices (i.e., it cannot be left to some sort of mental osmosis that results in a "collective need"). In the case of nationalism, this practice is eminently spatial

> Of course, the need for a "homeland," a national space of one's own, is a central tenet of nationalism. Indeed, nationalism is always, whatever other aims it may have, about the possession and retention of land; for it is only in and through such possession that the practical business of nation-building can be carried on. Only in and on a homeland, too, can ethnic members come to feel their political fraternity and social cohesion. Only in and on a homeland can states or elites mobilize "citizens;" so that a precondition of the nation is the acquisition of a homeland, as so many diaspora or divided and subordinated communities like Armenians, Kurds, Ewe and Somali have found.

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complications of history; it is a spiritual family, not a group determined by the shape of the earth" (in Bhabha 1990:18-19). Renan further qualifies this by stating that the two components of nationhood are a common legacy from the past and the present desire to live together: "A large aggregate of men, healthy in mind and warm in heart, creates the kind of moral conscience which we call a nation" (p. 20). Humans, not a metaphysical spirit, are the causal connection that makes a nation happen. The elevation of this process from material to spiritual, however, is closer to the Nitszchean sense of a superman – as a collective soul, at least – than to Hegel's understanding of a metaphysical movement of a Godly Spirit. Thus remystified, this conception can only lead as its ultimate consequence to the ritualized nationalism of the Nazis.

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> But homelands have other uses besides the political and symbolic. They afford bases for economic autarchy, the quest for self-sufficiency which has been an ideal of nationalists since Rousseau and List. (A. Smith 1987:162)

Lefebvre is more precise in detailing the spatial practices of the State

> Sovereignty implies "space," and what is more it implies a space against which violence, whether latent or overt, is directed – a space established and constituted by violence. [...]
> This violence originated in nature, as much with respect to the sources mobilized as with respect to the stakes – namely, wealth and land. At he same time it aggressed all of nature, imposing laws upon it and carving it up administratively according to criteria quite alien to the initial characteristics of either the land or its inhabitants. At the same time too, violence enthroned a specific rationality, that of accumulation, that of the bureaucracy and the army – a unitary, logistical, operational and quantifying rationality which would make economic growth possible and draw strength from that growth for its own expansion to the point where it would take possession of the whole planet. A founding violence, and continuous creation by violent means (by fire and blood, in Bismarck's phrase) – such are the hallmarks of the state. But the violence of the state must not be viewed in isolation: it cannot be separated from accumulation of capital or from the rational and political principle of *unification*, which subordinates and totalizes the various aspects of social practice – legislation, culture, knowledge, education – within a determinate space; namely, the space of the ruling class's hegemony over its people and over the nationhood that it has arrogated. Each state claims to produce a space wherein something is accomplished – a space, even, where something is brought to perfection: namely, a unified and hence homogenous society. In fact, and in practice,

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> what state and political action institutes, and consolidates by every available means, is a *balance of power* between classes and fractions of classes, as between the spaces they occupy (1991:281).

Schaffer explains the power of this territorial or spatial ideology in terms of the class and social relations of production of capitalism

> Workers became loyal not only because paternalistic governments gave them crumbs but also because they expected and received substantial benefits. That they *might have received greater assistance from an international organization* controlled by themselves is hardly relevant. The workers were no more farsighted than the bourgeoisie. The national form of government and society provided, at least in the minds of most trade unionists, *concrete benefits here and now*, not in some remote future. ...
> Instead of dividing workers and bourgeoisie, national economic interests tended to unite them within the national boundaries against the bourgeoisie and workers outside the boundaries. [...] Conservatives everywhere found an appeal to national patriotism an almost unfailing method of preventing the rise of radical groups, just as in Stalinist Russia national patriotism could be used to unite the proletariat against capitalist "encirclement." Though many would think labor duped, both labor and capital in the capitalist countries and labor and the state in the communist found in the "necessities of the fatherland" a motive for collaboration and agreement (Schaffer 1955:173-4, italics ours).

This is the mechanism that supports the invention of the community asserted by Anderson. Two hundred years later, it is quite possible to see the demographic and proletarian catastrophe resulting

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from this compromise between antagonistic classes (Hobsbawm 1990; N. Harris 1990; Paterson 1993). At any rate, given the historically determined forms of this social compromise (in a system of relations of production that required constant internal revolutions), the process of invention had to be also constantly renewed

> "[N]ation-building" is not simply a matter of establishing the appropriate institutions or generating a complex class structure around a communications infrastructure. Nor is it a once-and-for-all affair. Creating nations is a recurrent activity, which has to be renewed periodically. It is one that involves ceaseless re-interpretations, rediscoveries, and reconstructions; each generation must re-fashion national institutions and stratification systems in the light of the myths, memories, values and symbols of the "past," which can best minister to the needs and aspirations of its dominant social groups and institutions (A. Smith 1987:206).

We can say that the specific production of space of the capitalist mode of production is not exclusively the industrial city, but the articulation between this urban construct and the nation-state construct. The "foundational fictions" (Sommer 1991) that became the "initial" texts or artworks of a given national culture (e.g., the "English landscapes" of Constable or Gaisnborough, the "Spanish picaresque" literature, or

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the "Mexican novels" of Altamirano and Fernández de Lizardi)[4] had a particular strength not because of some mystically powerful narrative quality,[5] but because they were symbolic practices articulated within these specific practices of space – the more powerful when these practices of space were actually full fledged spaces of representation. hence the specific explanatory power (at least as a foundational idea) of the Elizabethan stage for English nation-making[6] and of the *Sturm und*

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[4]These examples are deliberately chosen from different historical periods to accentuate the arbitrary anachronism of these foundational texts (commonly held to be so). It should also be mentioned that Fernández de Lizardi's *El Periquillo Sarniento* (commonly held to be the "first Mexican novel") is actually also held to be an example of "late picaresque" in the Spanish language – the picaresque being considered, of course, a quintessentially Spanish style (further complicating the "original purity" of these foundational narratives; see Doris Sommer *op. cit.*).

[5]The idea of nation through narration is not exclusive to Sommer, it is now a staple of postcolonial theory (Bhabha 1990, Chaterjee 1993). We differ in that we locate power in the production of space, not of texts.

[6]England and Spain are exceptional cases of nation-building prior to the Enlightment. A partial explanation comes from the early strength of a mercantile bourgeoisie for a variety of reasons (e.g., the Mosaic kingdom in Spain, the necessary merchant marine activities of the British Isles). It should not be forgotten that Spain's mercantile adventures were financed by Sephardic bankers and carried out by Genoese entrepreneurs. England emerges as a modern parliamentary nation with Cromwell's revolution, while Shakespeare was still alive. The literary similarities between Elizabethan England and Golden Age Spain (theater, picaresque novels, poetry) are explained precisely by this socioeconomic dynamism, not to be found elsewhere in Europe (except Holland, which was at that time under the Spanish Hapsburg Crown).

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Drang and Romanticist theater for Germany (as both a foundational idea *and* a historical reality).

Fordism had anchored the Taylorist relations of production in its own paradigm of mass production for mass consumption; therefore, the problem for Regulatory Fordism became the creation of a world market, since the domestic market was intrinsically insufficient to support the massive growth of the new economies of scale. The articulation of space at the moment of bourgeois triumph and the onset of industrialization – the aforementioned articulation between industrial city and a territorialized nation-state – now had to be itself articulated with the new space of the world-wide market of mass consumption.[7] At this new juncture (Gramsci's articulation), the Hollywood model and its forms of representation emerge as the organically intellectual production of Fordism. The particular articulation of Fordist production and nationalist ideology – which

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[7]This world market is new and distinguishable from the much older market posited by world-system theory, because the latter is primarily a prime-goods extractive market under the colonial system, while the former is interested mostly in overseas sales and eschews, wherever possible, the expense and political complications of colonial conquest.

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occurred first in the U.S. and was particularly embedded in American society once the Hollywood Model was imposed – gave rise to a new cultural paradigm, which was projected onto the rest of the world with particular force

> The connection between film and America was not lost on early critics. "Our soil has no Roman coin or buried altar or Buddhist tope," wrote the poet Vachel Lindsey in 1915; film, he said, could stand in place of these things as a "new hieroglyphics" proper to America's democratic character. "It is natural that when a new art appears in the world it should choose a new people which has had hitherto no really personal art," pronounced the French critic Élie Faure in 1920, "especially when this new art is bound up, through the medium of human gesture, with the power, definiteness, and firmness of action." French film, Faure maintained, "is only a bastard form of a degenerate theater," whereas "the Americans are primitive and at the same time barbarous, which accounts for the strength and vitality which they infuse into their cinema." Film, such statements suggest, was like America itself: strong in its limitations, innovative in its artlessness (Cohen 2001:7-8).

It is curious to note how the cited statements run in the opposite direction from each other: for Lindsey, the ontology of America is unformed, but the ontological status of the film medium is fully defined and can have a formative function for the nation; for Faure, the ontology of art is too new to be fully formed, but the primitive and

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barbarous ontological status of the Americans is defined and formative. Given the preeminence of Hegel in the invention of the modern nation-state (admittedly, not all of it directly attributable to him or his thought), it is hardly surprising that we end with a Hegelian game of mirrors and reflections from one entity to the other. Here is an essentialist certainty which contends that a distinctive and peculiar character lies somewhere within a given group or cultural production, and that it is just a matter of allowing its spirit to flow through an equivalent other – its roots planted in the political ideology of the Enlightment (nationalism as, both, an ideal reflection and also a physical or tangible actualization of Reason).

Accordingly, Paula Marantz Cohen attempts to base the specific power of film by restating Kracauer's theory of film as a restorer of physical reality. Claiming the popularity of photography as a culturally accepted basis for authenticity ("a privileged relationship between truth and reality") in 19th Century U.S. social life[8] (*ibid.*, pp. 8-9), she goes

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[8]This part of her theory is faulty and perhaps tinged with American Exceptionalism. She takes the American fascination with daguerreotypes and glass plate photos as evidence of a specifically American tendency to erase "the

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on to place film at the forefront of Americanization, because it improves on the stillness of photography and begins to entertain with stories based upon three basic elements or operations: the body, the landscape, and the face, which

> constitute on some level, what Emerson referred to as the "nouns" of nature – those concrete facts of experience that make up our fundamental sense of reality. Psychoanalytic film theory has suggested that the cinematic representation of these elements causes the spectator to regress to earlier psychic states: film's representation of the body evokes a sense of physical invulnerability and wholeness; its representation of space, a sense of superhuman power and control; and its representation of the face, a sense of emotional intimacy with a monumental parental figure. In each case, the cinematic image is said to correspond to a fantasy that has its origin in the most primal stage of our development as sentient beings. Such claims, which may sound outlandish to those unfamiliar with psychoanalytic vocabulary,

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distinction between reality and image" (*ibid.*, p. 8). However, Daguerre was French, so was Niepce (Daguerre's assistant, who perfected the glass plate method). Moreover, the "official" integration of the French, in 1789, as a bourgeois nation is almost as lengthy as that of the U.S.; and the French already had a healthier pictorial tradition than the U.S., which they immediately associated with patriotic images (David, Corot, Delacroix). She adduces a sociocultural process of subject positioning before the image (i.e., the development of a visual public; p. 9). This happened in France ahead of the U.S. Going further, even if we also accept her notion that film became even more popular in America because it pushed authenticity further by adding movement (and, eventually, sound) to photography (pp. 9-10), we remain confounded by the fact that the cinema was partially developed by manufacturers of photographic materials and equipment in the city of Lyon, located then (as it is still now) in France. How did the American ability to conjoin authenticity and photography so elude the French?

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> find additional support in common sense. Even the simplest and most untutored film spectator lives in a world of bodies, landscapes, and faces and therefore brings highly charged, personal associations to bear on their images (*ibid.*, pp. 10).

We cannot help but stress the fact that, despite the currently fashionable armature of Foucaultian body theory and psychology,[9] the ultimate grounding of her film theory rests on old fashioned American Pragmatism (experience), which habilitates everyday practices (common sense) of space (landscape) and of the human self (body, face). From this Pragmatist platform, she goes on to elucidate the cinematic narrativization of the American Myth as a sociocultural process that connects to the economic imperatives of the era (Fordism)

> I should add that the three primary film genres of comedy, western, and melodrama can be understood in the same way as the film operations... Comedy was suited to showcasing the body; the western, to showcasing landscape; melodrama to showcasing the face (*ibid.*, p. 12).

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[9]This characterization is not at all harsh. There seems to be a thoughtlessness to her line of argumentation here, which prompts us to believe that she simply used early film analysis (e.g., Balazs on film and the human face) mixed with fashionable concepts from Cultural Studies as currency to force her argument through. Had she though about it, the circularity of her argument would have become evident: the cinema takes up elements that are within the basic psychology of human beings in order to create a sense of authenticity and subject positioning that was already there, because it belongs to the basic psychology of human beings in the first place.

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> Body, landscape, face – film took these "nouns of nature" that had been represented previously in scattered and relatively static forms and melded them into narratives about a new kind of self... there was no place, before the advent of narrative film, for the realistic embodiment of the American myth – for the portrayal of an American who was contending successfully with a dynamically changing world.
> Silent film did what earlier representational forms [vaudeville, burlesque] could not do. It gave realistic expression to the American myth and provided dynamic visual narratives that could serve as models for how to *be*. Film did away with the idea of the self as deeply conditioned, inherited or divinely imposed. It initiated a new trust in the value of surface meaning and in the possibility of constructing a self as the product of surfaces. [...] The great stars of the silent era were both self-made and audience made in a combination that reconciled two opposing strands of the American myth: individualism and democracy. On the one hand, they extended the concept of physical self-reliance and resourcefulness associated with the American frontiersman and applied them to the material of personality. On the other hand, their ability to shape themselves to the needs of their audience reflected a new kind of public, consensual process in the creation of the self that was in keeping with the democratic principles of the nation. This conjunction of individualism and democratic conformity was in turn adopted by audiences themselves through the exercise of their consumer power. Consumerism extended the notion of visual display, central to silent film, into the marketplace by allowing the public to imitate a star through the purchase of a sofa, a dress, a lipstick, or a hair tonic (*ibid.*, pp. 13-15).

This extended passage leaves the American Myth in an ambiguous position, sometimes it precedes the cinema which merely "embodies"

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it; at other times, it results from a capacity in cinematic representation to "do away with an old sense of self" and to "initiate the belief in a new self made of surfaces."[10] Perhaps this ambiguity is simply an expression of the dialectics embedded in any analysis of nationalism that follows, whether consciously or not, Hegel's scheme for the development of history along with the unfolding of the self-reflective mind; or perhaps this ambiguity is the product of the tension inherent in the Fordist path towards global regulation, which did indeed pit the individual against the social[11] (e.g., affects and emotions vs.

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[10]Jameson claims in his landmark essay on postmodernism, that a reality strictly made up of surfaces is particular to postmodernism (in Foster 1983). Cohen seems to revise this idea. It is possible to say that film has always been postmodern; but, Ingmar Bergman's work alone would negate this claim. A more interesting claim would be to trace the notion of the self produced through surfaces as a Modernist feature at least in American film, and then check it against Jameson's claim. Much as the notion of surface is itself spatial, this line of inquiry escapes our current work and will have to remain as a topic for further research.

[11]We take it for granted that these notions are themselves bourgeois constructs. The notion of the individual can only be traced to perhaps the Spanish Picaresque; but its presentation as a force for sociopolitical agency (i.e., radical individualism) can only be traced to the *Sturm und Drang* and the Romantic movements of the early 1800s. So, when Fordism pits individualism against society, all it is doing is to rearrange the priorities of bourgeois ideology by reimposing the notion of the social as a regulatory force. At the level of immanence – the "trenches" of lived reality, so to speak – there is no tangible separation between the individual and the social, just as there is no tangible separation between the economic and cultural.

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calculability and planning; cf. Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents*), or the local-regional against the national-international (e.g., labor peace in exchange for a New Deal for the good of the nation). At the same time, this passage also summarizes the extended chain of effects in the Hollywood Model, running from the representation on the screen (landscape, face, body), through the regimes of interpretation activated by the public sitting in the theater (nature and common sense, star system and genres, realistic embodiment and American myth), to the at-large social processes in the city or the nation (dynamic change and consumerism, individuality and consensual process, democracy and nation).

It would seem to us, that our contention about the sequencing of practices of space as the conduit for all the different forms of subjectivation *and* structuration that "link" film to society survives any methodological or ideological ambiguities about the ontological causality of film. Cohen can assert the primacy of the "three operations of the cinema," because the Fordist Regulation of vision had scrapped the eccentric, performance-based practice of the Cinema of Attractions

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and forged an institutional Hollywood Model with a sequence of spaces of representation working together to direct and re-center our attention on the screen and its representations.

The Hollywood Model as a mode of cinematic representation is, therefore, a practice of space, and its linkage with the Fordist Regulation of vision results in what Barbara Bowman calls master space

> [Master] filmmakers set out to ... heighten our awareness of space – not space as a mere container (what is contained or does the containing), but rather space as everything within the frame. They may exploit a landscape or even a face. Sternberg writes in this connection: "Monstrously enlarged as it is on the screen, the human face should be treated like a landscape. It is to be viewed as if the eyes were lakes, the nose a hill, the cheeks broad meadows, the mouth a flower patch, the forehead sky, and the hair clouds."
>
> A master filmmaker's goal is to make acute what has been neutral, to intensify the total look of the screen...
> It is often what we call the irrational activities in our lives that provide the clues to the spatial encounters that the directors create on film. How often, for instance, does the arrangement of spaces and furniture in a house reveal the relationships between those who occupy that space? Whose music is housed in the communal spaces and whose television in private space? ... Usually these relations are unconsciously ritualized until some discontent disrupts or challenges the status quo. Then this "habitual space" becomes visible. It becomes acute (1992:3).

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A chief rhetorical device of the Hollywood Model is the privileging of psychological motivation over any other source of meaning to explain the action and its outcome (diegesis and denouement). This psychological motivation is tied around the main character, with few exceptions.[12] This is created by a whole series of tricks and production techniques, involving specific color schemes tied to a character or to key moments in his or her development, the disposition of objects or characters in relation to the camera (depth of field and plains), musical cues, leitmotifs in the action or the dialogue, etc. Every shot is

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[12]Most of the work of Hitchcock can be seen as one of those exceptions. His classic films are usually about a dull, unsuspecting male protagonist who finds himself at the mercy of evildoers. The psychological motivation is then attached to the strong secondary characters (some could be called co-protagonists), and the straight arrow morality of the central character is allowed to speak for itself as an unquestioned guide for the central character. For example, in *Strangers in a Train*, it is Bruno's oedipal quirkiness and effeminate manner that colors not only the behavior of this character but the inadequacy of the other characters to cope with him, thus turning into bumbling and fumbling fools in a surrounding space that otherwise would be familiar and easy to navigate for them (e.g., Guy's first mistake, and what puts him at Bruno's mercy, is to hurriedly light a cigarette and then leave a train car even more hurriedly without his lighter). One of the few Hitchcock films with a strong male protagonist whose psychological motivation serves as the basis for the diegesis is *Rear Window*, which may account for its initial lack of popularity and its current critical acclaim – e.g., one essay from a critical feminist perspective is symptomatically called "The Master's Dollhouse: *Rear Window*" (Modleski 1988:73-85); mastery over space is a sharp signifier.

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designed and calculated so that the props, the composition, the mise en scene, etc., are indicative of the psychological motivation and the state of mind of the leading character in that particular scene. The camera angle (or set up) becomes a visual field, a totalized perspective within the optically rendered space. This totalization of optical space – the single-purposeness of everything depicted within the shot – comes together with the grid of the screen to implement the Fordist regulation of vision (which is actually a regulation of visual signification). This regulatory totalization of space in the Hollywood Model is what links the medium so strongly to the Fordist project of re-imagining the national community.

II

At the level of representation on the screen (i.e., film content and film form), the early films of the Cinema of Attractions and the bricolage forms of the Nickelodeon Era were usually free of any nationalist or local concerns. As we have already pointed out in previous chapters, there was almost a unified international culture – a "visual Esperanto" (Stam 1989:68) – that focused on sheer display of

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technology or everyday life, or on sight gags and relatively simple or well known stories. Even a Western like Porter's *The Great Train Robbery*, did not make much of its American setting, preferring to privilege the use of technology (phone calls and telegrams to alert the train engineers about the robbery, plus the thrill of the speedy train running down the track to return just in time to save the day). It was also Porter who directed *Dream of a Rarebit Fiend*, inspired by a French film which itself was based on an American comic strip. The fact that an *international film culture* preceded the forging of a national one certainly puts into question any historically linear sequencing that would place the national realm ahead of the international or the global (at least since the late 1890s).[13]

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[13]We stress that we are talking about film culture and about recent history; although our argument could possibly be stretched beyond this single medium and circumscribed time period. A counter argument could be made that film was in position to partake in a loose internationalist culture due to its lack of importance for the ruling elites at the time; theater, music and literature were far more central to their cultural and political hegemony, and much more clearly imbued by nationalist – even chauvinist – ideology. The staggering commercial success of the cinema soon allowed it to gain overall cultural centrality, and then we can see the cinema becoming just as chauvinistic as any literary or musical example.

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We see a clear attempt to create a national culture in film right at the moment that the Hollywood Model institutionalizes its mode of narrative (1912 and thereafter). One of the first examples, ironically, is directed by a French immigrant and the first notable female director and producer in the history of the modern screen, Alice Guy Blanché's *The Making of an American Citizen* (1912). The story is about Ivan Orloff, a recent immigrant and small farmer, who would drink too much and mistreat his wife. Finally, the authorities come and arrest him, and after six months he returns as a reformed man who will now learn to stay sober, say his prayers and be kind to his wife, thus ensuring the happiness of the household. Alice Guy had already been a highly successful filmmaker in Paris for Gaumont when she decided to move to New Jersey (the U.S. studio haven at the time) in order to start her own film company. Her entry into the rapidly industrializing mode of film production would explain why, despite her foreign origin, this movie would be already immersed in that puritanical chauvinism which somehow equates "civilized behavior" with the American way of life, while barbarism comes from abroad. The brutal behavior of the

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ethnicized peasant (the character's name is vaguely Russian, maybe even Jewish, Ivan Orloff – not, say, John Smith from Cardiff) also denotes a superiority of industrial cosmopolitanism over a rural ethos which is, by necessity, seen as unproductive due to its uncouth dissipation. That attempt to show a reform-minded portrayal of a benevolent authority (government) acting to correct the barbaric ways of foreigners and backward peasants is not only typical of the era but, more so, of Regulatory Fordism (e.g., Ford Motors' own Sociological Department and the obvious connection between "temperance movements" and, ultimately, Prohibition).

However, it was not until World War I that Hollywood began to systematically turn out films with patriotic or nationalist themes. Stars like Mary Pickford made movies like *The Little American* (1918), as an attempt to portray American heroism and resourcefulness against their hideous and degenerate German enemies. That same year, Griffith's own company released *The Hun Within* and *Hearts of the World*, both more memorable for the role of the cruel German soldier played by Erich Von Stroheim. Given the late release dates of these narrative

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pictures, it is clear that Hollywood joined the war effort rather late and with an eye on their profit margin (DeBauche 1997:35-56).

In addition, we have already mentioned some of the activities that took place in the actual movie theaters, these were more effectively connected to the propaganda effort than the star-made melodramas. The fact is that the War itself became a cinematic event, with weekly newsreels showing some of the action in the front, but primarily showing off some of the new war technology – artillery guns and the big explosions they caused, motorized land transport, and, most importantly, the airplanes and their capacity to maneuver in the air (some footage is taken from the airplane high above the ground). Ironically, this technology worship is closer to internationalist Modernism.

Nevertheless, the middle-class melodramas that emerged during the War warrant our attention, because it is in this genre where Hollywood sets the nationalist formula that dominates to this day. One of the first Hollywood hits in this genre was Cecil B. De Mille's *The*

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Cheat (1915),[14] in which Sessue Hayakawa, a Japanese-born classically trained stage actor, plays a Burmese prince living in Long Island. His line of work is import-export trade, and his manner of business is reflected in an early scene where we see him receiving some valuable parcel, he immediately takes a small branding iron and marks his new property. The prince is approached by a beautiful socialite, married to a well respected government stock broker. In an attempt to help her husband, the socialite had invested the money from the charity she headed; but she had gotten bad advise and her stock plummeted, putting her in debt. Rather than incurring her husband's wrath, she goes to the Prince for a loan. The Prince agrees and begins to befriend her more closely. The woman finds a certain attraction for the fine Asian man who keeps lavishing her with attention. The husband,

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[14]That, of course, is also the same year when Griffith makes *Birth of a Nation.* However, it is difficult to classify this film as part of a genre (although it does have clear melodramatic lines to its narrative), there are also the well known problems with its ideological positions. In any event, the "nation" of the title is not the United States but the Ku Klux Klan. The film was widely admired for its technical perfection, even by politically opposed filmmakers like Pudovkin and Eisenstein; moreover, because of its support for racist vigilantism, it did not get the widespread public acceptance that *The Cheat* managed to garner. Therefore, it is impossible to present this movie *per se* as nationalist or nation-making.

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meanwhile, has earned a bonus at his brokerage firm and goes back home to give the money as a present to his wife. The wife tells the Prince she no longer needs the loan, but he refuses to release her from the agreement and, to her horror, demands sexual favors in return for all the attention he has given her. When she refuses, the Prince tries to use the same branding iron to mark her on the shoulder as his property; and during the struggle, she shoots the Prince wounding him in the shoulder. The husband, who had followed her and was hiding in the garden, rushes into the crime scene and takes the blame for his wife when the police arrive. A tense trial ensues, in which the truth is discovered, the husband is acquitted and, instead, the Prince is taken away while the socialite and her husband embrace.

Filmed and released as the War had already started, this film is much more representative of Hollywood's output than any of the films directly related to the conflict; but, the war most likely accounts for the presence of the dangerous alien in this genre – previously circumscribed mostly to the Westerns, such as Griffith's *Battle of*

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Elderbush Gulch[15] (1912). This is hardly exceptional in the context of nationalism, a nation and its territory exist in order to keep non-nationals out; it is no surprise that nationalist fiction would attempt to imagine the community in relation to the ultimately undesirable alien.

Much more interesting is the spatially encoded necessity of a civil society. This is where the strategy of "acute space" is deployed not only within each specific scene but throughout the entire film. The branding iron becomes a cue in that sharpening of space that leads to the social and psychological perspective presented by the film. The room where the prince receives his merchandise is also the room where he receives his visitors, it is a room carefully decorated with Oriental objects, rugs, and sliding doors covered with rice paper typical of a Japanese home and not of a Long Island mansion. The act of receiving

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[15]As Daniel Bernardi shows, Griffith had already codified the danger of ethnicity in his early Biograph films (1908-1912) through three different storylines: the loyal servant, who sacrifices himself for his masters; the dark-skinned sexual fiend going always after the pretty white lady; and the vengeful darkie or greaser threatening a decent white family (1996:103-128). As the Hollywood Model and its mode of production became even more established, von Stroheim took on the production and direction of lavish movies about naive Americans traveling in Europe and falling pray to decadent and reprehensible Old World aristocrats – e.g., *Blind Husbands* (1919) and *Foolish Wives* (1922).

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and branding possessions is thus equated with an Asian context. When he visits or parties in other people's homes, the prince behaves with all the etiquette and circumspection expected in any formal situation. This sounds a cautionary note, the prince might be able to control his behavior and "pass" while he is in spaces where he does not belong, but a certain primitivism comes out when he is in his familiar surroundings, with his own kind of objects and people (i.e, his Oriental trinkets and Oriental servants). The space that surrounds him becomes "acute" precisely because it functions as a reflection, as an externalization (for the viewer) of the character's internal makeup. Thus, when Mrs. Hardy comes back under duress to pay her debt, the reappearance of the branding iron serves to embody a character type and to intensify the audience's disapproval for the representation of one type of character and its sympathy for the other (i.e., Mrs. Hardy is silly but well meaning in entering financial dealings to aid her husband, while the branding iron indicates that the Burmese Prince is just plain evil).

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The branding scene opens with a full shot of the Prince's office and receiving room (which is the only space we ever see of the Prince's Long Island mansion), Mrs. Hardy enters on the right and he goes over to embrace her, but she rejects his advances. A servant enters and is dismissed by the Prince, after the servant exits they cross the room from right to left and she tries to climb up a hearth in the background to escape him (the camera has panned and then tilted up following their movements). The Prince, with his back to the camera, wrestles her down and turns around grabbing her by the hair and forcing her face down on the desk. He reaches for his brand and jams it on her shoulder; in complete humiliation, she falls off to the bottom right hand corner of the frame (see Chapter Four). Cut to a full shot (the camera is slightly angled down over her) isolating her face down on the floor after falling down. After a few motionless moments, she takes her hand to her shoulder in obvious pain. Slowly, she rolls over to be almost face up. As she looks up, she grabs a revolver which was lying on the floor and, getting into a kneeling position, she points it to the left. We see a medium shot of the prince facing to the right and

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looking downward, he stands by the back wall where the hearth would be (below frame); at first he simply leers, then looks stern and finally in a reaction of panic he lurches forward. Cut back to the full shot of Mrs. Hardy kneeling, she extends her arm and the gun goes out of frame as she shoots. Cut back to the middle shot of the Prince who recoils as he is shot, taking his hand over to his left shoulder; a puff of smoke is seen on the right side of the frame. The Prince falls backwards from right to left. (The scene continues with servants coming in, then Mr. Hardy and finally the police; Mr. Hardy convinces the officers that he fired the shot.)

The "vocabulary" established in this type of scene is not only gestural (e.g., the ultimately virtuous married lady pushing off the undesirable suitor, while the leering and dismissive savage ultimately turns out to be a panicking coward), but also relational in spatial terms (i.e., camera angles in relation to objects and subjects). What the diverse camera angles do is to situate the character or object in the frame in relation to other characters or objects within a space that somehow comprehends them; at the same time, they are subjectively

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related to the spectator. A certain value or significance is attached to these objects or characters in the mind of the spectator, since he or she believes to be "standing" where the camera is[16] – if the camera is angled up, tricking the spectator into thinking that the object or person is taller or located higher than him or her, then the screen will transmit a "sense of inferiority" unto the spectator, and so on. It should also be noted that as the scene progresses, the camera shifts from a master shot, in which all the characters and a large portion of the set are seen, and instead begins to isolate and separate the spaces and activities of each

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[16]The convention equating camera with viewer already existed in the Cinema of Attractions, like those films that presented how it felt to be run over or shot, etc. The change with the Hollywood model was the narrativization of this convention, so that the point of view shot (cutting from an "objective" or omniscient camera placement to a camera placement simulating the visual angle of a particular character within a given scene) allowed filmmakers to literally put the spectator into a character's head. There are limitations to this "syntagm," however, as exemplified by noir films immediately after World War II: *The Lady in the Lake* and *Dark Passage* (both 1947) use the camera as a character, so that spectators see what the character sees or experience what happens to him (e.g., other characters speak directly to the camera as if they were addressing "you," or the punch the camera as if they were punching "you," etc). But, by making this approach a central narrative device, these films actually almost shift back to the Cinema of Attractions, demonstrating how contrived the "realism" of the camera is; the result almost always turns out to be dissatisfying to the spectator, because the narrative device begins to call attention to the "apparatus" and ends up enhancing, rather than suturing, the real separation between camera-eye and spectatorial-eye.

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character; moreover, the camera also moves closer at a crucial point – when the Prince leers, then panics and recoils from the shot – adding (semantic) importance to the actions and details in that segment.

These relationships are no different than the gestural aspects of face to face linguistic communication in any culture – if a speaker is positioned on higher ground than the listener, then that speaker almost always is in a relation of superiority to the listener; if an object or speaker is closer to the viewer or listener, it often receives more attention; etc. This is the "ideological" avenue opened up by the illusion of a haptic space – the spatial strategy defined by the imaginary grid upon the screen is turned into a naturalized situation of points of view within an optically rendered three dimensional space. In fact, in the above scene from *The Cheat*, the illusion of a haptic space is enhanced by the puff of smoke on the right of the frame as the Prince recoils from the shot; it implies that there is a contiguity of spaces, despite the fact that the kneeling woman with the revolver is no longer seen (spectators "imagine" her to be just offscreen, to the right) – thus, the represented space gains autonomy, it no longer depends on what the

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camera depicts, since it retains a "realism" *beyond* what the angle of the lens allows *in reality*.

The note of Fordist nationalism in relation to civil society emerges with the scene of the trial that follows immediately afterwards. From a technical standpoint, the scene is rather clumsy, the geography of the room is not properly rendered and the relations between the different characters gets lost in the medium and close shots. What matters here is the spatial presentation that gives its support to the ideological representation. The courtroom marks, in fact, the transfer of the diegesis from the private to the public sphere, from the rarefied space of the socialite to the institutional space that serves the collective interest of the entire nation. During the entire trial scene, the dramatic conflict is constructed by the contrast between centered and decentered characters, rendered as such through the composition of the frame and the activity assigned to the character.

When we first see the Prince in that scene, he sits exactly in the middle of the frame, flanked by two associates on either side; he sits in a position of power, rendered stereotypically inscrutable by his near

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lack of expression, and rendered troubling if not threatening by the fact that he sits among others like him – this is not an individual menace, it is an organized group menace. Meanwhile, the Hardy's sit alone, and when the husband goes to the witness stand, Mrs. Hardy literally becomes isolated. She initially sits in the middle of the frame with a flat white wall as background, but she can hardly stay centered in the middle of the shot, especially when her husband is found guilty. In her isolation she simply begins to break down and loses her composure, she has been framed on a full shot (angled down, since she is seated); when she finally cannot bear it any longer and heaves herself forth blurting out the truth, she has stood up and is no longer in a position of inferiority to the high angle of the camera. She has regained her stature by allowing her love for her husband to guide her actions, her recompense minutes later is to be reunited with him. Meanwhile, the Prince is mobbed by the public and we last see him being rushed off by the guards, he can no longer dominate the center of the frame; he must be removed from civilized society, as he is apparently possessed by a congenital cruelty proper to his breed.

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By presenting the discovery of truth in an institutionalized public setting – as opposed to, say, having the police untangle the truth right after the shooting scene in the private space of the Prince's mansion – the film can push a nationalist conception about the collective importance of justice (especially as a form of protection against predatory outsiders), regardless of the class-based origin of the problem or issue at hand.

William C. De Mille's *The Spy Game* (1919), made by Cecil's older brother, is one of the earliest exemplars of the homefront melodrama. Hayakawa also stars, this time as a sympathetic Japanese diplomat, Nara-Nara, drafted by his government to unmask a German spy planted in a small office of the U.S. military. He sets up a phony import-export business next door to the office in question, and begins to befriend a young, naive secretary who works there. When she takes interest in his Samurai sword hanging from a wall, he explains that it has been passed down in his family for generations, and that his dream is to bring it back to this father after gaining honor for his overseas achievement on behalf of his nation. Despite his honorable intentions,

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the Japanese man begins to lust after the beautiful secretary, who turns out to be the reluctant spy. Her family ancestry is German, and her own brother had gone back to the Old Country to collaborate with the German military; he has been sending her mundane letters about his experiences there, with instructions to also let their family doctor look at the letters. The doctor is the real spy, who decodes messages from these letters; he also happens to be the physician for the Major in charge of the military office under suspicion. The doctor learns that the girl is to intercept a communique on naval shipments from her office. She, however, has become racked by guilt, since she now sees herself as a traitor to her own country based on a "misguided" loyalty to her ancestral Fatherland (her brother eventually confirms her feelings in his last letter, full of disillusionment about the nature of his German adventure). The Japanese man, who has skillfully set up the display case for his sword to cover the listening devices placed on the wall that separates his office from the room next door (where the girl works and uses the phone to communicate with the doctor), discovers who she really is at the same time that the Germans discover who he is. As they

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break into his office to try to kill him, the girl leaves for the doctor's mansion with the communique. The Japanese man manages to elude the Germans and starts following the girl, with his pursuers right behind. They all converge at the doctor's house, but the Japanese man reaches the doctor's room first and kills him. The girl, who in fact had already confessed to the Major, and was actually doing her patriotic duty by taking fake information to the doctor, is now at the mercy of Nara-Nara, who is blackmailing her into leaving with him to be his wife. She stops him by decrying the way he is dishonoring his father and the tradition of the Samurai sword; in shock, Nara Nara runs towards the doctor's corpse, knowing that he will be shot by one of the Germans who had been hiding there. As he gets shot, the police and the Major arrive, they arrest the shooter and the girl falls into the arms of the gallant Major. The dying Nara-Nara sees himself as a ghost, dressed in the full ceremonial robes of the old Japanese tradition (throughout the movie, he has been wearing Western business suits), bringing the Samurai sword back to his father and depositing it at his feet.

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The spatial situation in this movie maintains a separation between Nara-Nara and everyone else. People can enter each other's office space, especially during business hours; but there is always that wall separating him from his business neighbors, especially the girl. This difference is remarkable, because the Germans are the evil characters, but they do have access to the same space as the others – the doctor does visit the Major in his office, the girl actually can stay after hours by herself under pretense of having work to finish. The spatial separation does not serve to distinguish between good and evil, but between Western and Oriental. Thus, the discourse of identity is operational when Nara-Nara begins to covet the girl – this amounts to a physical impossibility, a literal divide he is not supposed to transgress. When they all converge in the doctor's mansion, they are all transgressing a private space; but, the Americans are literally backed by their official investiture as Army personnel or they come in with police backing – the state apparatus. Nara-Nara, however, is transgressing in the double sense of the term, he is transgressing with backing from his own government, and so he is given the chance to eliminate the real

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evil; at the same time, he has also transgressed the line between civilization and savagery by attempting to blackmail a girl he cannot attain, so he must also die.[17]

Lary May (1980:200-38) looks at the development of Cecil B. De Mille's melodramas after the War – such as, *Why Change Your Wife* (1920) and *Forbidden Fruit* (1921)[18] – as part of an attempt to push

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[17]These movies are some of the first examples of the formula-plot as the method of mass production that still characterizes Hollywood's output to this day. This particular formula of the "enemy within" was resuscitated during the Cold War – e.g., *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962), or as allegory in *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956); and it continues to be used today in American and British political speeches and journalism about sleeper cells and inside collaborators with "international" (i.e., Arab) terrorism. This is worth noting, since the second most dangerous terrorist attack to ever have occurred in the United States was carried out by domestic terrorists with no connection to international organizations. No Office of Homeland Security was created after their attack; confirming the survival of Hollywood's distinction between "our" villains (who nevertheless have full access to all of our space), and "their" villains (marked by racial and ethnic differences, which must be excluded or even eliminated).

[18]The first film is about a businessman who, bored with his dowdy wife, falls in love with a partying flapper. The wife gets a divorce and, recognizing the shortcomings of her appearance, she transforms herself into a beauty (the role was played by Gloria Swanson). The husband, meanwhile, bored with the energetic but superficial nightclub flapper, goes to a resort where he meets with his ex-wife. They fall in love again and decide to reunite, and the flapper finds someone else, as well. The other movie is about a maid working in the mansion of a rich entrepreneur. The tycoon needs to find a date for a businessman he is taking to dinner in order to seal a deal, so the maid is recruited and dressed up for the purpose. She looks beautiful in her new dress (the role was played by Agnes Ayres, better known as the love interest of Valentino in *The Sheik*), and the young businessman she is escorting falls for her. Her husband, however, abuses her and

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back some of the liberation in sexual and social mores that marked the Post-Victorian worldview of the Progressive Era. The De Mille formula usually involved a bored husband who looked for an outlet to his sense of fun, but eventually discovered that his true calling was to go back to his wife; the wife, meanwhile, had learnt how to loosen up enough to satisfy her husband and yet not to fall into the sinful and decadent traps of the loose women he had initially sought. The Hollywood system began to set up that formula beyond the screen by building up the lives of their stars through fan magazines and other "news" outlets

> ... the screen player set up models for the consumption economy. For the twenties saw a much higher degree of personal cultivation as players took on what can only be called a slim, pasted down look. The effect was to stylize even further the playful and erotic appearance of the stars, in order to legitimize what was seen as the potential anarchy in their foreign and formerly lower-class activities. Hence unlike the heroes of old, male stars were not producers who helped build the society, but figures heavily oriented toward spending. Even that great symbol of American manhood, the cowboy, experienced this change. ...

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plots a blackmail scheme; but, during a robbery he is killed, which frees the maid to marry the businessman. These were average plots for melodrama at that time.

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> Female players who showed viewers how to attract the modern man also consumed extravagantly (*ibid.*, pp 232-33).

Sexuality and consumption, in true Fordist fashion, were to come together; sexuality could thus be regulated, consumption could thus be enabled. In order for this to happen, the space of the "private sphere" needed to become a new type of "public sphere of conspicuous consumption"

> The consumption ideal overlapped with the Hollywood home, which during the twenties became even more lavish and exotic than the teens. Throughout the decade, fan magazines, films, newspapers and radio portrayed it as the place where the stars might enjoy a thoroughly romantic marriage. In contrast to the ascetic family of the past, it was not tied to the socializing institutions of production, religion, or the state. As a private ideal, it was a place where stars could bring passion, fun, and pleasure into their formerly restrained lives. ... As the stars appeared as "commoners" rising to success, they signaled that people should work for new rewards: money to buy private fulfillment.
>
> Whatever tension existed in the ideal was resolved in the ever present youth cult. Amid the leisure and fun, the Hollywood star would presumably stay young. When this model became the key the consumption that fans brought to their free time in the twenties, it became a greater concern than previously. Like adolescents who were increasingly removed from the economy and filling colleges, stars and their fans were exhorted to make leisure a place for sexual mutuality and more physical attractiveness. Yet no matter how great the egalitarian potential, it was a revolution limited to the private realm (*ibid.*, pp. 234-5).

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These films were made at the historical turning point in the development of Fordism. World War I was ushering a reassertion of the national question, and the cycles of mass production and mass consumption needed to be reinscribed within that paradigm. The solution was to reconcile the individual with the social by totalizing space, this is the basis for the transformation from habitual to acute space (which centers all the disparate elements around the single figure of the star). But this totalization needs to encompass more than the circumscribed space of the individual, it has to become normative of national, if not worldwide behavior. So, the virtual space on the screen is brought to reality in the living quarters of the stars themselves; space is, thus, not only socially totalized but psychologically intensified, since it now serves as the basis of consumer desire for the readers of fan magazines, entertainment and society pages, and so on. Thus, Fordism finds a way to regulate society through the everyday practice of the associated spaces of the screen.

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III

World War I forced a new formulation of the national question over and against what had been a century of international peace sustained by macroeconomic stability and a carefully worked out international balance of power. As that stability hit a pricing crisis and European nations resorted to colonialism in search of cheaper raw materials and overseas market monopolies, the control of these new territories took on a new form of competition between European nations, destroying the international balance that had characterized the Hundred Years Peace. World War I helped push forth a renewal of nationalistic ideologies combined with the racist and ethnocentric attitudes required for Europe to venture deeper into its new colonial order. Fordism, on the other hand, was based on international cooperation, and the "value-free scientific" development of technology and export-led mass production; the cinema being a pre-eminent example. These tendencies needed to be reconciled, if Fordism was going to develop a successful strategy to regulate mass production and mass consumption on both a national and an international scale.

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In spatial terms, the problem for Regulatory Fordism was the imposition of a double spatial hegemony: on the one hand, a given nation had to impose its productive and commercial supremacy over all other nations; on the other hand, each nation and its citizens had to be given some type of room to maneuver in order to acquire at least enough consumer capital. This was precisely the double difficulty that President Woodrow Wilson encountered in his attempt to replace the old Concert of Europe with a League of Nations: the idea of "concert" accepts opposition between parties and merely aims at creating a mechanism to solve friction without resorting to armed conflict; the idea of a League, by contrast, calls on national altruism to cooperate towards an international good above and beyond the interests of any given individual nation. This required the reconstruction of a civil society at the internal level of each nation and, at the same time, it required the construction of a civil society at the international level to which these internal civil societies would be coupled. Now, the imagined community has to re-imagine itself and additionally insert

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itself into another imagined community of larger magnitude: just like the cinema, the nation becomes an assemblage of associated spaces.

This Fordist assemblage of spaces accelerated the conversion from agricultural to urban centrality that had started already with the first wave of the industrial revolution. As the institutions that form civil society (state apparatus plus public sphere) became either city-based or centered around urban life, the ideologies of nationalism which originally based their logic on rural mores and customs (folklore) now had to be reconstructed around the new metropolitan regions. This process was rife with contradictions, not only along the lines of the new political alignments which resulted in loss of power and social agency for the countryside, but also along the lines of the psychological and cultural tension between the "national tradition" of the countryside and the anarchy of the "universal technology" of the city.

No single film made before the Depression, perhaps no single work of Modernist fiction, exemplifies and expresses all the conflicts found within Fordist nationalism as clearly as Murnau's *Sunrise*

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(1927). *Sunrise* is imbued with the same spirit that opposed the innocence of rural life to the evil avarice of the city in the novels of Dreiser and Frank Norris.[19] *Sunrise* reverses and yet preserves the narrative of *Sister Carrie*, by turning the predatory city dweller into a vamp who goes to the countryside and attracts a young farmer with her sophistication and allure. The man is easily impressed by the vamp's descriptions of the riches and magnificence of the city, which he pictures on the darkened sky above them as they lie together on the grass; so, he decides to kill his wife by drowning her in the lake where they live (echoing Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*). The man cannot go through with his intentions, however, and confesses the ploy to his horrified wife, who manages to escape to the shore of the lake and to run through the woods, eventually reaching a trolley that goes to the

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[19]This narrative strategy, of course, is also found in films such as Griffith's *Intolerance* (1917) and von Stroheim's *Greed* (1925), the latter based on Norris' *McTeague*; although both Norris and the films tend to place blame for these faults on the individual psychology of the characters, whereas Dreisser finds greater fault in a social system that induces such behaviors in characters who lack the discernment to act differently. *Sunrise* itself is based on *Die Reise Nach Tilsit*, a novel by Hermann Sudermann, who wrote plays of mores and manners and historical novels at the end of the 1800s.

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city. He manages to catch up to the trolley, as well, sitting besides her; they both go down a hill and into the bustling streets. Inconsolable, the wife runs into a church where the man, touched by the entire setting, kneels down and renews his vows to her. Suddenly bursting with happiness, the couple runs out and begin to enjoy the shopping windows, a large amusement park, and a café where they end up regaling the city folk with one of their own peasant dances. As it gets dark, they decide to go back to their simple farm life by the lake; however, as they are joyfully rowing back farmhouse a storm overtakes, throwing them off the boat in opposite directions. The man is able to swim to shore and the townspeople help him regain consciousness and tell him that his wife is not to be found. Believing she is dead, the man goes after the vamp in a rage, but a call lets him know that his wife was found caught in some floating reeds – which, ironically, are the same reeds he had put in his boat to "save himself" after faking her drowning. The vamp, in defeat, runs off towards the city, and the reunited couple embrace as the sun rises over the lakeshore.

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In a nutshell, the movie has set up the city as the "park of attractions," very much in the manner of the cinema of the Primitive Mode; while the countryside is the place of true values, rooted in the virtues of tradition and hard work. All the ingredients of the cinema of attractions are there: the superimposition of the image of desire (the city) on an empty area of the frame over people's heads, the rapidly moving railway car that reaches the city, the fast moving automobile traffic and the shopping windows, and, finally, an amusement park full of attractions in and of themselves. Meanwhile, the town is characterized by beautiful landscape and simple and trusting folk (even the husband is more gullible than greedy, and the beauty and trusting simplicity of his wife ends up not only returning him to his rightful place, but strengthening his commitment to that lifestyle).

The passage from allegedly ancient beliefs attributed to natural surroundings (absolute space in Lefebvre) to modern amorality based on commerce and technology (abstract space) is *both* fraught with danger and evil, and also full of thrills and fascination. Given this double edged sword, people would do well to be content with staying

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in the place where they belong: the vamp can presumably find her match among city dandies, the loving peasant couple can raise a family and nurture each other by their lake. Unlike the early nationalist ideologies presented at the beginning of the chapter, this nationalist portrayal can no longer rely on simple landscape and folklore to establish an "imagined sense" of the nation. In effect, what is happening here is that the city is rapidly taking over as the socioeconomic and ethico-political center of the entire nation, so that there can no longer be an imagined community that does not include the urban.

That is when it becomes imperative to have a regulated vision that not only establishes the proper place for the ones or the others to be, but which can also mediate between the dynamic pull of the city and the stasis of the country. The people themselves cannot do it, something goes awry when they move into each other's spaces; therefore, a larger force – similar to the storm – must take over and set people straight in order for the sun to rise over a reconciled nation. In other words, films like *Sunrise* or *The City* recast questions about the

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connection between personal ethics and civil order with the same urgency and consternation that Le Bon, Freud, and Lippman sounded with respect to the psychology of the mob. Lang's *M* is similar to Murnau's *Sunrise* in this respect, but this may have less to do with the fact that both filmmakers emerged from the same avant-garde film circles in Germany, and more to do with the fact that the production years for these movies bracket the Crash of 29.

André Bazin turned *Sunrise* into a theoretical marker by counterposing its technique of long takes to the films based on montage (1967:23-52). Bazin saw an essential evolution of the language of cinema in which montage played an early role and now was being superceded by a realistic approach which discarded the input of the filmmaker through editing techniques in favor of long takes (*plan-séquence*) or deep focus shots that allowed for reality to come through[20]

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[20]Bazin's theories have been strongly criticized and to a large extent discarded by contemporary film theorists for whom realism is a constructed rhetorical strategy no longer to be seen as equivalent to reality as such (see, Carroll 1996). Bazin's notion of evolution is, of course, also seriously compromised by the fact that some of his antinomial films – e.g., Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* (1922) – predate any of the examples of Soviet Montage and could only be included in one of the dialectical moments if one pulls montage backwards to the films of Griffith and De

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> The camera cannot see everything but it makes sure not to lose any part of what it chooses to see. What matters to Flaherty, confronted with the Nanook hunting the seal, is the relationship between Nanook and the animal; the actual length of the waiting period. [...]
>
> Murnau is interested not so much in time as in the reality of dramatic space. Montage plays no more of a decisive part in *Nosferatu* than in *Sunrise*. One might be inclined to think that the plastics of his image are impressionistic. But this would be a superficial view. The composition of his image is in no sense pictorial. It adds nothing to the reality, it does not deform it, it forces it to reveal its structural depth, to bring out the preexisting relations which become constitutive of the drama (Bazin 1967:27).

To this he adds the belief that, in contrast to montage, the non-expressionistic film style based on the long sequence and depth of focus: a) creates a relationship between spectator and image that is "closer to that which he enjoys with reality (p. 35);" b) implies a more active mental participation from the spectator (pp. 35-6); and c) reintroduces "ambiguity into the structure of the image (p. 36)." Bazin sees reality and spectator's psychology as merging upon the screen

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Mille. However, any evolutionary trend still remains dubious. In any case, it is not our intent to carry out a critique of film theory, we merely aim to note Bazin's attempt to tie together the long sequence and the unity of space as a statement about representational ideology in film.

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> In the admirable final episode [from Rossellini's *Paisà*] of the partisans surrounded in the marshlands, the muddy waters of the Po Delta, the reeds stretching away to the horizon, just sufficiently tall to hide the man crouching down in the little flat-bottomed boat, the lapping of the waves against the wood, all occupy a place of equal importance with the men. The dramatic role played by the marsh is due in great measure to the deliberately intended qualities in the photography. This is why the horizon is always at the same height. Maintaining the same proportions between water and sky in every shot brings out the basic characteristics of this landscape. It is the exact equivalent, under conditions imposed by the screen, of the inner feeling men experience who are living between the sky and the water and the horizon. This shows how much subtlety of expression can be go on exteriors from a camera in the hands of the man who photographed *Paisà*.
>
> The unit of cinematic narrative in *Paisà* is not the "shot," an abstract view of a reality which is being analyzed, but the "fact." A fragment of concrete reality in itself multiple and full of ambiguity, whose meaning emerges only after the fact, thanks to other imposed facts between which the mind establishes certain relationships. ...
>
> But the nature of the "image facts" is not only to maintain with the other image facts the relationships invented by the mind. These are in a sense the centrifugal properties of the images – those which make the narrative possible. Each image being on its own just a fragment of reality existing before any meanings, the entire surface of the scene should manifest an equally concrete density (Bazin 1971:37).

No longer adhering to the old Positivist notion of a transcendental mind that "discovers" the exact laws and logical order of the outside world, Bazin accepts the agency of the viewing subject in

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choosing what facts to interpret, very much in the same manner of a person crossing a river and choosing to step on one rock instead of another (1971:35).[21] Yet, he also clings to the objective primacy of that external world, despite allowing for the viewing subject to have some agency in choosing which facts he or she attends to during the viewing. Thus, much like Durkheim had to do for the sociological method, Bazin has to posit the "fact" as the indisputable center of the inquiry. The fact, and its systematization within images endowed with "centrifugal properties," basically gives the scene a homogeneity of structural density that parallels the everyday world that surrounds the viewing subject; so that, as he said of Sternberg's films, reality is

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[21]Quite possibly imbued by the emerging Phenomenological Existentialism of the time, Bazin in fact affirms the notion that existence precedes essence when he claims that: "Actually it is not of the essence of a stone to allow people to cross rivers without wetting their feet any more than the divisions of the melon exist to allow the head of the family to divide it equally. Facts are facts, our imagination makes use of them, but they do not exist inherently for that purpose" (1971:35). Anchored on a rigidly posited objectivism (or "factual" realism), Bazin's film theory aims to uncover, and thus set and codify, the regulatory mechanism (laws) of signification in the cinema; while noting, almost in passing, that these meanings are always negotiated between an *auteur* and a spectator. Like Phenomenology itself, Bazin's theory is really a discussion of the relationship between the mind and the things themselves; his objectivism anchors him in Modernism and Enlightment thought, but he is just one step removed from the greater emphasis on subjectivism of some Post-Structuralist theories (e.g., Derrida, Ricoeur, Dufrenne).

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forced through in all its structural complexity, revealing preexisting relationships that are constitutive of the drama. Re-establishing, thus, a linkage between High Modernism and Humanism, Bazin attempts to reconnect the formal aspects of the long sequence with everyday, lived reality. Unlike the Formalists, Bazin is allowing for a logically autonomous relationship between viewing subject and the film image in an experiential way: we experience the ambiguity of the long sequence in the same way that we experience the ambiguity of lived reality. But in doing so, Bazin leaves film theory with a relatively unexplained tension between structures of meaning (in the shot) and perception (in the viewer), which can only be solved by giving all the primacy to the "facts," "structures," and "centrifugal forces" of the image. That is why, despite all contentions about an untouched reality in this kind of filmmaking, the rational theorist must, in the final analysis, point to the centrality of the author's authority – the filmmaker has made the horizon to be of the exact same size in every shot, thus giving the viewer a Rosetta Stone to decipher the scene (not unlike the *montagistes*). Vision becomes re-centered, and this is done

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as part of a strategy of representation of space (horizon, landscape) in connection to the space of representation (it is of the same size upon the screen).

This spatial re-centering of visual subjectivity around an objectified image – understood by the general public as an object or a "fact" contained in its own reality – is nothing more than the bourgeois illusion (Caudwell [1937]1955) of a virtual space that contains the nationalist ideology conveyed through the Classic Hollywood Model. If the initial wave of nationalism in the Hollywood Model came in response to the military action of World War I (otherwise allowing silent cinema to retain a more or less internationalized discourse); the second wave of such nationalism would respond to what no longer was an identifiable enemy: the ravages of the Great Depression, the collapse of the colonial order that began with World War I, and the massive social transformation characterized by large scale migration to urban centers – all three seemingly caused by hidden and inexplicable forces. Since film was already a quintessentially Fordist enterprise by

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the early 1920's, it behooves us to understand these economic developments.

IV

The world experienced what we could call, paraphrasing Arrighi (1994), a "long decade" from 1927 to 1942 , which was crucial in linking Fordism to the renewal of nationalism emerging with World War I, and complicated further by the Great Depression. This fifteen year period bears some similarities to our contemporary juncture in that it resulted from a classic technological bubble (inordinate stock market growth, based on projected earnings by firms and enterprises engaged in production and sales driven by recent technological innovation). The swell of stock option investment from 1926 to 1929 was followed by an equally rapid withdrawal of financing, resulting in the drastic devalorization of capital[22] (unleashing a true panic as people rushed to

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[22]The Gross Capital Formation in the private, non-farm sector of the U.S. economy rose from slightly less than 80 billion dollars (measured in 1929 dollars) to 160 million dollars from 1921 to 1926, to then fall below 40 billion dollars by 1932. An effect of this was the drop in infrastructure as a percentage of private gross capital formation – one of the functions overtaken by U.S. government even under Hoover (i.e., Hoover Damn), this amounts to a continuing "subsidy" to private enterprise by the U.S. public sector. (See, Aglietta 1987:104-6, Diagrams 6 and 7).

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withdraw bank savings, etc). This crisis affected mostly the working class, as salaries were seriously reduced or totally disappeared with unemployment and layoffs; this in effect was a net loss of purchasing power and a reduction of consumer markets, which further exacerbated devalorization and forced a next round of layoffs, and so on. From 1929 to 1933, the world economy went from Crash to outright Depression, with an unstoppable downward spiral; pointing to the fact that the old mode of regulation imposed under the first phases of Taylorism had finally collapsed, creating turmoil in every aspect of social, political and economic life.

That "old order" came out of the pre-Fordist regulation of mass production, which began to lose its grip on the regime of accumulation as soon as the contradictions inherent in the system overwhelmed any capacity to maintain a rate of profit.[23] From 1880 through the 1920s,

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[23]This is, of course, a Marxist contention disputed by conservative economists. In any case, the period under discussion, 1929-42, was not exclusively shaped by the tendency of the rate of profit to fall but, rather, by a "realization crisis" in which capitalists were not able to convert their cycle of production because of barriers to circulation and consumption (Sweezy 1970:147-189; which includes a fuller discussion on Classical Economics *vis a vis* the Marxist analyses of crises). A more radical reading of Marx actually argues that the root causes of crises lie in

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European capitalism had maintained a growing rate of profit through geographic expansion (neocolonialism, including the U.S. "frontier," and imperialism). Additionally, industry in general began to convert to assembly line production based on the fantastic growth shown by the automobile manufacturing firms. This process was anchored by the type of speculative finance capital that Hilferding (*op. cit.*) had analyzed, and which, in effect, consisted of nothing more than the same type of technological bubble exemplified by the "dot com" rash of the late 1990's.

The Crash of 1929 resulted from the lack of investor confidence in the capacity to provide profitable returns on their investment, and signaled the end of the geographic expansion mode of consumer market "regulation" (in essence, capitalism ran out of *lucrative* overseas space – i.e., markets – to conquer, yet it would still take over half a century for a "postcolonial order" to emerge). The domino effect produced by

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the very composition of the relations of labor and class dynamics of the capitalist system: "Marx places the *fundamental cause of the crisis in the relation between necessary labor and surplus labor*, that is in the relation between the constitutive parts of the working day and in the class relation which constitutes it" (Negri 1991:72, italics in the original).

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this situation is well known: panic and rush to withdraw bank savings, collapse of consumer demand resulting in massive layoffs, mounting debt and foreclosures for both individuals and firms, disappearance of accumulated capital; and, finally, the abrupt loss of metal reserves in the national treasuries of the weaker economies, leading to a shakeup of the international monetary system as country after country pulled out of the gold standard.

The downward spiral in which capitalism was mired, seemed to result from an unexplainable but tangible incapacity to sell off existing inventories due to an equally unexplainable shortfall in consumer demand.[24] The economic policies of the Hoover Administration proved

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[24]This is based on the "underconsumptionist" explanation of the Depression; which, despite its wide acceptance, still has not satisfactorily answered the question as to why consumption wanes. Mandel, by contrast, argues for a "long wave" explanation of the cycles of crisis (1975); but this remains perplexing, since he claims to take the U.S. as the basis for dating long waves after World War I (p. 122 fn. 28), showing that the wave that runs from 1914 to 1939 is of "decelerated growth" (p. 122); yet, at least until the bust of 1929, this is one of the eras of fastest and greatest industrial growth for this specific country. Baran and Sweezy argue against a particularist explanation to the crisis of the 1930s, adducing instead a normal tendency towards stagnation in what they call "monopoly capitalism," which had begun in 1907 but was attenuated by the rise of the automobile industry (precisely the factor that Mandel ignores in his long wave explanation). In explaining the steepness of the 1929 crisis, they accept Schumpeter's assessment of an overexpansion of agriculture coupled with weaknesses in the banking and

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that it was impossible to have this happen by simply waiting for the "self-corrective" mechanisms of purported self-reliant free enterprises to kick in; in fact, inaction seemed to lead deeper and deeper into economic depression. Government intervention in the economy was not only desirable but indispensable; in effect, this was the end of laissez-faire, as Keynes (1991) had already noted in 1926. Keynes position, basically, required a strong structure of governance; and this meant that the way out of this crisis had to be provided and maintained by the State, since it was the only social agent with enough power to command over all the other groups acting within the socioeconomic arena.

In the absence of a specifically Fordist structure of governance – e.g., an international set of regulatory agencies[25] – the only entity with

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credit system along with the financial crisis of 1931; but they reject his explanation of troughs in the cycles of capitalism and of a depressionary effect of the allegedly anti-capitalist bias of the New Deal (1966:238-44).

[25]This Fordist structure would eventually emerge from the Breton Woods Conference, shortly after World War II. In this respect, one can see Woodrow Wilson's attempt to build his League of Nations as an early, albeit failed, attempt to arrive at a "true" or "macronationalist" form of Fordist regulation.

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any capacity to do this were the old national States. This complicated matters, since the State still maintained and represented interests that rivaled Fordism, despite the fact that the State itself was rapidly heading in the direction of Fordist "modernization." Such was the case of the "New Deal" – a new social contract between business, labor and the State – that the Roosevelt Administration was finally able to put together in an effort to reorganize the social order and bolster the economy (Lash and Urry 1987:67 ff., esp. 76-82). The policies and activities are well known: the National Industry Recover Act (NIRA), the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the unemployment insurance provisions, the bank rescue through Federal Deposit Insurance, and so on. The New Deal actually became the template for Fordist regulation and socioeconomic rationalization: labor was regulated through the institutionalization of union activism (i.e., formal mechanisms for wage negotiation, which helped control the cost of labor through the National Labor Relations Board); industry and business were regulated primarily at the level of the financial sector (not only with all the banking legislation but also with the tighter

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government control of the Federal Reserve Board); and the rest of the socioeconomic sphere was regulated through greater government intervention in two areas, 1) the construction and control of infrastructure and utilities (roads, hydroelectric damning and power grid administration; and other forms of public works, including public art), and 2) the creation and maintenance of a federal social "safety net," the so-called welfare state, which regulated the business cycle by guaranteeing a given level of consumption regardless of employment levels – this could be termed the "demand-side economics," (countered in the 1980's, at the onset of an entirely different mode of regulation, by "supply-side Reaganomics").

Fordist regulation, in a nutshell, meant that the State needed to account – usually through direct government policy, sometimes through indirect political persuassion – for what Keynes (1953) saw as the twin problems of employment (including money wages) and effective demand. It is easy to see, in this respect, how the New Deal matched Keynes intent to rationalize the turnover cycle – carefully paving the way for a level of employment that would correspond to the

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marginal utilization of capital, given knowledgeable expectation of the corresponding margins in consumer demand (this is the gist of the problem tackled by Keynes' *General Theory*; it is also what Lash and Urry understand as "organized capitalism").

It was this need for Fordism to rely on the State in order to work a way out of the Depression that forced a "nationalist" turn upon what really was already a globalizing form of capitalism. Fordism did not rely exclusively on the export of products, it relied just as intensely on the export and overseas adoption of its core technical and social relations of labor; the interests of Fordism and the interests of the nation or the State did not coincide in a natural way. Regulation, as understood by Aglietta and others, emerges as a compromise between the State and Fordist business enterprises; the interests of business capital would have to be imposed and implemented through the existing structures of local governments and would have to pay some obeisance to the interests and ideological forms of every given nation-state. In brief, this meant that the internationalist project of Fordism and its concomitant Modernist ideology would find themselves in

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tension with both the internal and the external interests of the State and its concomitant Nationalism (which became extremely problematic when the external relations of a given nation-state took place under conditions of economic dependency).

In a nutshell, the confluence of Fordist regulatory needs and State interests meant that the national community needed to be re-imagined as a business enterprise. This can be seen quite clearly when one examines the political history of the United States from just before World War I to the period of the Great Depression. At the level of Constitutional Legislation, for example, one can see the clear markers of Regulatory Fordism: in 1913, the government regulates its own revenue making and law making functions with the 16th Amendment establishing an income tax and the 17th Amendment on the election and vacancy-replacement of Senators; in 1919, the 18th Amendment imposes Prohibition and, in 1920, the 19th Amendment gives women the right to vote; in 1933, the 20th Amendment clarifies Presidential election and succession and the 21st Amendment repeals Prohibition. It is no coincidence that the government concentrates on taxes and

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Senatorial elections (i.e., capital accumulation and standardization) at the exact same year that Ford intensifies Model T production at Highland Park and the film industry begins its massive move to Hollywood; and that the voter base is enlarged with the inclusion of women at the same time that consumer market expansion is happening after the World War. Viewed from this angle, it seems that the State became modernized in the fashion of a Fordist business enterprise. By 1933, the path of the nation-state and the path of Fordist business was one and the same; we can see shared concern with reigning in civil behavior as a condition for economic recovery, if not all out stability, in the socially regulatory policies of the United States, Germany, Italy, and Stalin's Soviet Union alike.

At the same time, there are clear differences between all these nation-states, most markedly between the United States and the rest of the world; this would account for the specificities that Aglietta and other Regulation School theorists see in the "American approach" to Depression-era regulation. It should not be forgotten that the United States had only recently reconfigured its entire national formation, not

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only by destroying internally competitive modes of production (e.g., "Southern" slavery versus "Northeastern" free labor) as a result of the Civil War, but by even more recently completing its own "internal" expansion – the "frontier push" (which, of course, was never empty space, therefore hardly a frontier), which had come to a close only forty years before with the Wounded Knee Massacre on December 29, 1890. In contrast to the Old World, the full production of space of a European-type of nation state in North America[26] was consummated only at the turn of the 20th Century. This meant that, in the United States, Taylorist and Fordist industrialization and modernization would take place in an open expanse of territory with developing "internal" markets – this is what allowed the U.S. to aggressively seek to attract displaced European peasants (whose territories and internal markets were exhausted), while also attracting Southern sharecroppers (Black and White alike) to the Northeastern factory towns. This explains, at

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[26]Of course, Mexico, Canada and a few Caribbean islands can be considered North American nation states distinct from the United States. This appropriation by synecdoche of an entire subcontinent forms part of an ideological effect of the production of space that we are describing.

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least in part, why the most fiercely expansionist nation of the last two centuries did not choose a militaristic ideology to justify forcing its way out of a crisis through territorial conquest;[27] whereas Germany and Japan were forced in the direction of territorial "mergers and acquisitions," mirroring the cartelization and monopolistic practices of any large business enterprise at that time.

Regulation is, by definition, a top heavy affair, that is why the State or some such structure of governance is necessary. It became, thus, the job of the new Fordist state, to find means of persuasion for its regulatory policies. This meant not only a short-term propaganda campaign, but a long term push for the re-imagination of the national community which we had already mentioned. Having already gone through the failure of Prohibition, the Unites States did not choose the same path as most of the other nations, which featured stronger forms of the corporatist state (possibly because of the historic reasons

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[27]This contention is partially borne by the fact that the myth of the frontier was erected as a nationally iconic type of cinematic discourse with the classic Western, which emerges in the late 1930s as the world is once more heading towards war.

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outlined above) and tended to impose harsher forms of social regulation.

At any rate, one of the effects of Regulatory Fordism was the creation of a "mass culture." In some cases the concrete need to regulate production and consumption could be directly found in the self-sacrificing asceticism of the Stakhanovists; in other cases, the regulatory focus was turned towards social behavior or even social composition, like Prohibition in the United States (one of the earliest forms) or the like the Nazi doctrine of racial purity.[28] The terrible experience that the United States underwent with Prohibition certainly added to the other elements of its historic background to prevent the occurrence of a sociopolitically totalitarian corporatist State during the

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[28]It could be objected that there is no inherent connection between Fordism and Nazism. On the other hand, it should be remembered that more than one American entrepreneur was sympathetic to Nazi Germany, foremost amongst them being Henry Ford himself; it should also be remembered that the racial doctrines of Nazi Germany were not only laden with every form of Modernist scientific discourse, but were also intended as a way to regularize a malfunctioning society by means of standardization and specialization – with the understanding that the Master race would direct over a society that resembled assembly line factories, where everybody had a proper place and proper function (and unproductive or counterproductive undesirables were eliminated: hence the persecution, initially, of Communists, then Jews, Gypsies and Gays).

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Depression. Nevertheless, the American State did exhibit some corporatist features, like the New Deal's attempt to foster labor-management alliances under the governmental structure; these efforts failed because the business sector rebuked them, but labor and its representatives (usually Unions) became nearly subsumed under the State.

In fact, it was the awakened militancy of the labor movement (relatively dormant in the United States since the turn of the century) that had become the real nightmare for the new regulatory efforts of Fordism. The spiraling Depression of the 1930's exposed the flip side of the top heavy Fordist effort at regulation, an overburdened labor force that was essentially forced into subsistence levels by the devalorization of capital. Extended to its breaking point, the working class (which had been dormant for about thirty years in the United States) exploded in various forms of popular dissent. One of the most notorious cases was the set of Hoovervilles that sprung up all over the country. The best known of these Hoovervilles was erected in the Anacostia section of Washington, D.C. by the Bonus Marchers – World

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War I veterans intent on collecting a bonus promised to them for their service to the nation. The shanty town was as much an embodiment of their economically destitute condition, as it was an effort to present an embarrassment to the Hoover Administration. In essence, the Anacostia Hooverville was a veritable production of space, not only because it staked some land and attached a specific form of signification to it, but also because it created physical room for a contesting version of the national order. In attempting to reappropriate a part of the nation's capital as "their" rightful territory, despite the wishes and claims of a Head of State, the Bonus Marchers were actually attempting to rework the terms of the social contract that makes up the United States. The effectivity of this demand was provided precisely by this space of contestation that they had produced; so, it is no surprise that the President dispatched General Mac Arthur to dismantle this particular Hooverville at gunpoint, under the pretext that it was organized and led by the Communist Party.

Given this framework, it is almost a forgone conclusion that one of the chief "cultural" motifs of Regulatory Fordism had to be the

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imposition of law and order against the many dark forces that threatened the well being of society. Perhaps the most massive and spectacular example of this being the Nüremberg Rallies of 1936 and 1937, but the Hollywood cinema and many other forms of everyday entertainment also fulfilled this function (as we will see below).

Even with the defeat of the Bonus Marchers and the solutions offered later on by the New Deal, the economic as well as the psychological recovery from the Depression remained uncertain. Baran and Sweezy (1966) present solid evidence about the economic stagnation created by the underutilization of labor and of productive capacity; even in 1937, at the peak of the recovery, about one fifth of the labor force and of the utilization capacity remained idle. In fact, surplus value rose that year for the first time since the Crash of 29, but this precipitated a sharp recession immediately because there were no investment outlets for that surplus (p. 243). It is Baran and Sweezy's contention, therefore, that the Great Depression never ended, it merely vanished into World War II, which helped solve the crisis by forcing up demand, thereby increasing production and gainful employment,

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while at the same time withdrawing large amounts of male workers from the job market (lowering the labor supply pool).

Saved by the war, Fordist capitalism would indeed set up its key regulatory mechanisms for international governance (the U.N. and its various agencies, the Breton Woods institutions, NATO, the OECD, etc.) and it also would, for the time being, deal with the problem of employment and effective demand by setting up a worldwide mosaic of interventionist governments (ranging from Scandinavian "socialism" to the U.S. "Welfare State), aided and abetted by a state of permanent Cold War, which would continue a process of "artificial demand" even if it came at the cost of skewing society towards a military-industrial complex.

Under that framework, nationalism began to slowly and imperceptibly wither away (a process still ongoing). The Cold War order, in fact, began to feature blocks of nations opposing other blocks (as opposed to, say, a Concert of Europe made up of individual states playing as free agents in the international arena); but, most importantly, it began to feature transnational enterprises that no longer had an

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exclusive connection to a single nation-state. Moreover, as the spatial expansion of capitalism reached its material limit (leading to the collapse of colonialism), Fordist intensification moved in the direction of technologically accelerated communication and transportation in order to facilitate movement of capitals as well as cycles of production and consumption – this is essentially the reason behind the time-space compressions that characterize Fordism and post-Fordist Flexible Accumulation (see Harvey 1990). At the same time, the spatially uneven development of capitalism (Neil Smith 1990)[29] would lead to

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[29]The theories of space and uneven development in that work are more complex than the position taken in this work. Smith, for example, sees an internally oppositional quality to capitalism that leads to alternating tendencies to differentiation and equalization (within diverse scales – local, national, global), as well as to a "seesaw" movement between developed and underdeveloped areas. Though the points on spatial development under capitalism are well taken, these theories fail to explain the development of the national scale or developed area in contrast to the other scales or to the underdeveloped world – i.e., if capital needs to seesaw, and if there are underdeveloped areas within the national scale, why would capitalism need to move beyond borders? For us, the contradiction is not of a national capitalism that needs to develop underdevelopment "elsewhere," but of an already internationalizing form of capitalism (Fordism) being forced to rely on the remaining structures of a previous modality (artisanal industrialization, which did rely on the primacy of the national scale). Thus, the seesawing movement is not one of capitalism but strictly of Fordism; and, in fact, we see that even the axis of development-underdevelopment is making less and less sense as the JIT system takes over (e.g., populist-nationalist governments like Mexico agreeing to withdraw their legislative reach from "free enterprise zones," like the maquiladora belt of the border area, or altering their immigration law to accept dual citizenship

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centralization in urban centers which, connected as they were to the transnational dynamic of Fordist development, would very often develop interests which were at odds with the rest of the country; further eroding the imagined community of the nation (the resentment that exists in the United States towards New York is symptomatic of this process).

The dynamics of what is now called Globalization were, thus, already implanted in the very mechanisms of Regulatory Post-War Fordism. The key to understanding the cultural switch from the large screen to the smaller television and computer screen is found in the transformation towards this paradigmatic innovation in the capitalist system – which emerged in the early 1970s and became hegemonic in the early 1980s, and is characterized by flexible accumulation (the JIT system and the diversification of manufacturing through subcontracting across national boundaries, etc) along with supranational regulation

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arising from the realization that their second largest city in terms of population is beyond their borders in Los Angeles; or the hybridization of places like Taipei, or Los Angeles, New York and Miami to the point where their economic or cultural placement is uncertain: is Taipei still the Third World?; are New York, Miami and Los Angeles exclusively part of the First World?).

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(the revamping of Breton Woods institutions to serve as economic adjustment policy makers and enforcers). That important part of the story, however, falls outside of the scope of the present analysis. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind both the historical progression of capitalism from the Depression to the early 1980's, as well as the conversion to other productions of screen space as we move on to look at the connection between nationalism and, both, the Hollywood Cinema of the 1930's and the avant-garde cinema of the same period.

V

Just as for the United States, the long decade from 1927 to 1942 is a turning point for Hollywood film. Despite the Depression – or, perhaps because of it – the film business boomed, and the innovations during the technological bubble of the late-1920's (especially synchronized sound, but also color and optical effects) led to the era of national cinema.[30] Film, of course, is not intrinsically a nationalist

[30]Stam implies that nationalism entered film when sound determined that characters in a given film would speak in a particular language (1989:68). It does seem that the earliest films were closer to comic strips without words, and could be adapted by filmmakers anywhere (e.g., Windsor McKay's comic strip filmed by Pathé as *Rêve a la lune*, then remade by Porter as *The Dream of a Rarebit Fiend*).

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medium, but it was in an unsurpassed position to become the medium of late capitalist nationalism *par excellence*, because of its technological capacity to combine narrative with physical space (the Western, for example, combined the features of the epic with the pictorial aspects of the landscape). In effect, as successful as Hollywood had been in the 1920s, it was the 1930s of the Depression Era when the studios hit their true peak, and the films they produced were the great "American" genres of the musical and the Western.[31] Of course, crime films (gangster and noir), comedies, melodramas and "serious literary adaptations" were also made by Hollywood Studios at the time,[32] and were being exported massively to overseas markets (see Chapter 4). The "American specificity" of these genres, however, is

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[31]Clearly, the Western and the musical were not the only American-made film genres, the *noir* and gangster genres were also "invented" in the U.S.; but the latter were appropriated everywhere, whereas the former remained tied almost exclusively to the output of the U.S film industry until well after the collapse of the studio system – Clair's *Le Million* (1931) being an exceptional case.

[32]There is no need to detail the history and the formal characteristics of Hollywood film, which have already been exhausted by many authors. We shall limit ourselves to making our points on the connection between representational spaces, everyday life, and the rise of a hegemonic nationalist ideology in mainstream film.

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open to argument, beginning with the fact that the name for the *noir* genre is French.

At the same time, the cinema was also a business, and at the outset of World War II, it was actually a prime example of the most modernized forms of industrial production. By the time of the sound era, Hollywood had already been set up as a Fordist factory system for over a decade. From a business standpoint, the massive boom of the 1930s is indicative of the tremendous productive capacity of the Fordist system (in every branch of the economy, even in the production of "culture and entertainment"). Being part of the economy of scale, the American film industry required the expanses of land that took their production branch out to California for all that cheap real estate in Hollywood. Producers were not only interested in space for backlots and large soundstages with lavish living quarters for the stars, which could have been easily built in New York and New Jersey. The Hollywood studios were actually assembly plants analogous to Ford's own River Rouge, with buildings to house writers and preproduction staff, other buildings for production and executive offices, other

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buildings for editing and postproduction, and so on. The diverse teams involved in a particular production all had to exist in their own areas within the same studio, often requiring double the space in order to involve separate teams working on simultaneous productions under the same producer and director. Additionally, given that intensified production presumes intensified consumption, the studios also began to control theatrical spaces, with each studio owning its chain of moviehouses to give primacy, if not exclusivity, to their own films – this combined very nicely with the block booking practices used on independent and foreign exhibitors to turn the cartel of the 1920s into a huge and a very lucrative business monopoly

> Growth in invested capital went from 1921: 9.7 million funded debt, 68.5 million capital stores, reserves and surplus, and 78.2 million total invested capital; to 1930: $305.6 million funded debt, $544.4 million capital stores, reserves and surplus, and $850 million total invested capital (Koszarsky 1990:93).

Attendance rose dramatically from the early 1920's to the 1930's. According to Mervin Le Fleur, the average weekly attendance in 1922 came to approximately 40 million, and the average weekly attendance per household to 1.56; in 1930 it went to 90 million and 3.00,

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respectively; and in 1936 it declined only slightly to 88 million and 2.7[33] (quoted in Jowett 1976:192). Le Fleur also reported that the amount of radio sets per household rose steadily during the same period of time (from 400,000 in 1922 to 35,000,000 in 1935); it was not just the rise of the movies but the emergence of the mass media as a fact of everyday life.

As the crisis of the early 1930s took hold, film emerged as one of the biggest participants in the Fordist relations of production: on the one hand, it was one of the few business ventures that continued its upward growth and prosperity; on the other hand, it also was a mass

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[33]In the previous chapter, we discussed how the Hays Office deliberately distorted these figures to maintain the industry's anti-trust exemption. However, there seems to be some confirmation to these figures. The *Film Daily* had already reported the following figures in January 16, 1923: Theaters in the US 15,000; Seating capacity (one show) 7,605,000; Average weekly attendance 50,000,000; Admissions paid annually $520,000,000; Permanent employees in all branches of the industry 3000,000; Investment in the industry $1,250,000,000; Approximate cost of pictures produced annually $200,000,000; Salaries and wages paid annually at studios in production $75,000,000; Average number of features produced annually 700; Average number of short reel subjects, excluding newsreels, annually 1,500; Taxable motion picture property in the United States $720,000,000; Foreign made pictures sent here for sale (1922) 425; Foreign made pictures sold and released for exhibition 6; Theaters running six to seven days per week 9,000; Theaters running four to five days per week 1,500; Percentage of American film used in foreign countries 90% (quoted in Jowett 1976:140).

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medium of enormous demographic reach and appeal, integral to the construction and reconstruction of modern life (social production and regulation). The great unprecedented volume of business in the film industry had to inevitably fall in line with Fordist regulation and its specific constraints. Two aspects of the mode of regulation were crucial to the long decade of boom-to-bust Depression: the policy-driven control of business practices, and the further standardization of visual content.

The regulation of business practices became part of the cartel structure, directly involving Hays and his office through several self-imposed measures intended to forestall anti-trust legislation and government intervention – e.g., the NRA code of 1933-35, which became a self-regulatory measure by setting up "a series of intraindustry courts" to oversee operations, including prohibitions of immoral content known as the Hays Code (Jowett 1976:244-6); and the Consent Decree of 1940, where the cartel agreed to limit block booking to five films a year and a halt to further theater ownership for the major studios, in exchange for a waiver on the Sherman Anti Trust Act (*ibid.*,

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pp. 275-81). The regulation of vision consisted of further refinements to cinematic realism (e.g., synchronized dialogue and sound effects; the Bazinian *plan-séquence*) intended to close the gap between spectator and spectacle. This was simply a continuation of the Classic Model strategy, which had already begun around the time of World War I with the grid-like subdivision of the screen, the visual continuity techniques, and the transformation of the movie theater itself.

What began under Taylorism became crystal clear under the crisis of the Fordist regime: the Depression was not only the first major crisis of the late capitalist economy, it was also the first sociocultural crisis of mass society. Consequently, the integration of any given demographic aggregate (for instance, national populations) would have to depend on the mass media instead of the more circumscribed and class-oriented old public sphere of lending bookstores and politically factional journals (Habermas 1991). In this respect, the mass medium of the cinema had a spatial advantage over the other mass media of print news and radio, since it could reach an audience of equal or greater size than both, and yet its mode of

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exhibition called for the undivided attention of a group audience gathered together in a public space. Cinema was capable of creating a collective population as opposed to the scattering of privatized spectatorship created by journals and radio.

In many ways, the experience of collective life moved from the street and the town square into the movieplace, film became a substitute for public discourse. As Fordist nationalism strengthened its grip later in the decade, film also became a substitute for the monuments and public art that once were part of the construction of power within a given imagined community (i.e., Ancient Rome or Renaissance Florence). As Malcolm Miles sums up

> Monuments stand in a complex relationship to time: they state a past or its imitation, but are erected to impress contemporary publics with the relation to history of those who hold power and the durability of that relation expressed in stone or bronze. One past out many possible constructions is represented as the past just as one concept of the city is represented as a dominant concept in its planning, as though history might be consistent whilst everything else, like our own lives, is mutable and temporary (1997:59-60).

Time is contained in space, as well. As successive stages of human activity are embodied in the diverse features of a given production of

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space, this space also becomes an embodiment of the successive moment of human-lived time (history) that went along with those stages of human activity (congealed labor). It is then possible to see the layers of history in a given space like the rings inside a tree trunk: this is quite evident in downtown Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania where the Modernist and Postmodernist corporate office buildings sit side by side, or sometimes even encase the old industrial structures from the steel mill days. If skyscraper architecture is a patent demonstration of power, a monument is an even clearer form of spatial signification (ideology), to wit all the contestations of historical ideology that have recently taken place around so many toppled statues.

Nevertheless, film has been able to achieve a contemporary form of monumental ideology better than almost any single statue or structure (with the arguable exceptions of the Statue of Liberty and the Eiffel Tower) precisely because of its technological capacity to reproduce a monumental experience throughout a greater expanse of territory. People in Omaha could simply go to their local theater to see *Wings*, *The Sands of Iwo Jima*, or *Lawrence of Arabia* (nowadays,

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Saving Private Ryan or *Die Hard*) without having to travel to New York or Paris to experience the full hegemonic weight of the monumental ideology. At the same time, the technological capacity of screen media (this includes television, video and computers) offers a certain permanence or repetition of the viewing experience that cannot be achieved with any other narrative medium, like the performance arts with their one-time uniqueness to each performance of the show.

We have already discussed the fact that this technological mediation of ideology is really part of an extended practice of space which creates a chain of signifying areas (from the screen to the viewing room, then to the lobby of the theater, followed by the street and the neighborhood, and so on). This practice of coextensive spaces, along with the capacity to mechanically reproduce the viewing experience over time and over large territories, helps to explain, at least in part, why the cinema took over as the central cultural form of Fordist nationalism; the novel, the theater or even the symphony orchestra had been fully capable of embodying the nationalist ideology, but they were not necessarily capable of regulating the social relations of production

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for a spatially extended demographic aggregate (nor could they produce this through technological mediation).

At the level of "social geography" in the United States, the fact was that the new forms of regional integration that Fordist manufacture forced and inscribed upon the Northeast were now being transferred to the entire nation by the New Deal Administration. Already by the end of World War I, the dominance of the Eastern seabord – with its "North-South" configuration, which only fifty years before had been the cause of the worst war the country had seen – was giving way to a Westward type of integration that eventually would shift the national demographics to California. By the time of the Great Depression, this form of Western integration became more urgent, because the Northeast market was exhausted and the only domestic possibility for a way out of the economic downturn lied in modernizing a previously marginalized "frontier." In essence, the Work Project Administration was a developer of consumer markets for industrial Fordism at taxpayer's expense, carrying out the equivalent of Polanyi's great transformation for the continental United States. The irrigation works

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of the Tennessee Valley Authority (recorded in the famous Pare Lorentz documentary, *The Plow that Broke the Plain*), or Hoover Dam (begun prior to the New Deal but finished by the Roosevelt Administration), or the federal highway system – all those were projects meant to electrify and connect the whole country for purposes of interstate commerce (i.e., the production of consumption, or, better yet, the production of modern consumer space, itself subject to much regulatory legislation).

The transformation of Western territories into Fordist consumer markets was the culmination of the frontier expansion of the United States, and it was clear that, under this scenario, the cowboy sagas would be a perfect match to the neo-nationalist ideology of the Depression-era United States. However, the classic forms of the Western did not really emerge until the end of the decade and had more to do with the circumstances that eventually led the country towards the Second World War.

Actually, when we examine the development of the Hollywood genres, we quickly see that they are directly related to the economic

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history of the long decade from 1927 to 1942. From 1927 to 1929, we have the technical transformations related to the technological bubble. Then, as the Depression reaches its lowest depths in 1931, the first gangster films emerge with Wellman's *Public Enemy* and Le Roy's *Little Caesar*; the following year, Le Roy also released one of the earliest prototypes of the film noir, *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang*. In fact, with the imposition of the Production Code, the brutish gangster would disappear, giving way to the sophisticated detective of the *Thin Man* series, or eventually to the hardboiled sleuth of the noir genre (which really does not develop until 1941, with Huston's *The Maltese Falcon*). The tough drama with sometimes cynical situations (e.g., Green's *Baby Face*, about a beautiful woman who sleeps her way to the top of the ladder of wealth and success) gave way to the melodrama where the woman must always make a sacrifice for her daughter or be punished (Vidor's *Stella Dallas* from 1937, Wyler's *Jezebel* from 1938 or *The Letter* from 1941). The musical would transform itself from the sexually charged revue full of ribald dialogue to the worldly and lavish spectacles directed by people like the versatile

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Le Roy, *The Golddiggers of 1933*, with choreography by Busby Berkeley. That, in fact, was the banner year for the lavish musical of the Classic Era, with the additional release of Freeland's *Flying Down to Rio* and Bacon's *Footlight Parade* and *42nd Street*; the latter two also choreographed by Berkeley. Cooper and Schoedsack's *King Kong*, also came from that bumper year of 1933, with the scary monster becoming a Production Code alternative to the gangster. In an odd way, the Code also revitalized comedy, which moved away from the vaudeville-based acts of Mae West or the early Marx Brothers, to the more verbal situation comedies of the screwball sub-genre (McCarey's *The Awful Truth* from 1936, and Hawks' *Bringing Up Baby* from 1938), the populist work of Capra and others (e.g., La Cava's *My Man Godfrey* from 1936 or Wood's *The Devil and Miss Jones* from 1941), the fast paced verbal romps (Hawks' *Twentieth Century* from 1934, and *His Girl Friday* from 1940), and the elegant farces of Lubitsh (*Ninotschka* from 1939, and *To Be or Not To Be* from 1942) and Cukor (*Dinner at Eight* from 1933, and *The Philadelphia Story* from 1941). The late thirties offered a contrast, with 1939 as a turning point. That

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year, with the Nazis advancing all over Europe and the threat of a new world war, John Ford releases *Young Mr. Lincoln*, *Drums Along the Mohawk*, and *Stagecoach*, and the era of the classic Western[34] arrives; while Victor Flemming, is asked that same year to take over two productions, *The Wizard of Oz* and *Gone With the Wind*, both done in the new color process of the Technicolor Labs. That is also the year when the Academy institutes separate awards for Black and White and for Color Cinematography, the award for color cinematography went to *Gone With the Wind.*

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[34]The American film industry had been making Westerns on a steady basis since Porter's aforementioned *The Great Train Robbery*; and Griffith, among many, directed several Westerns during his early Biograph period. Fenin and Everson argue that the Western fared better than the other genres at the beginning of the sound era (1973:175-8). Walsh's *In Old Arizona* (1929), for example, created great excitement when audiences were able to hear the sound of bacon frying; and another Walsh Western, *The Big Trail* (1931), kept the camera free and mobile over the vast landscape, showing the covered-wagon convoy going through desert and river, as opposed to the static scenes of the pre-blimp days (the noisy camera had to be placed in a booth, curtailing movement). In 1929, one of those early sound Westerns, Flemming's *The Virginian,* proved to be a successful star-turn for Gary Cooper. Nevertheless, the epic Western – with sweeping vistas of the landscape and iconic figures like John Wayne (as counterparts to Cagney and Bogart for the gangster film) really begins with the release of *Stagecoach*; which, in fact, was Ford's first sound-era Western.

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Hollywood, in effect, was subject to the same "timeline" of development as other Fordist business enterprises. The long decade began with all the technical innovations of the bubble-era: sound, improved camera equipment, and so on. When the technological intensification of the bubble turned to the bust of the Depression, Hollywood adjusted and responded with regulatory measures like the imposition of genres for a precise classification of both production and exhibition, and the NRA or Hays Code (established in 1933, the same year that Prohibition was repealed, the musical had its bumper crop, and Fritz Lang directed his last film in Nazi Germany before fleeing to France and, subsequently, the U.S.). After the adjustment, came the stagnation of the late 1930s, and the Hollywood industry – following the late capitalist tenets of technological intensification and innovation in product redesign towards "market renewal" – turned to color processing and new forms of spectacle (e.g., "authentic exteriors" like Ford's Monument Valley).

The passage from economic downturn to adjustment and recovery is embodied by the shift from the gangster genre to the

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Western.[35] The other genres prevalent at the time – the musical, the dramas and the comedies – were really technologically enhanced versions of the cinematic forms of Fordist subjectivation (i.e, creation of a consumer ethos) already started in the silent film era. The discourse of law and order in the gangster and the Western is what makes those genres specific to that neo-nationalist era. The gangster and crime films of the early 1910's (e.g., Walsh's *Regeneration* or Griffith's *The Musketeers of Pig Alley*) were concerned with the acculturation of a marginal population; the gangs and their milieu were either made up of recent immigrants from abroad or farm boys now living in the slums, and the problem they posed could be solved by instilling "civilized behavior" on these people (see, Brownlow 1990). The classic gangster film of the 1930's, by contrast, no longer saw the problem as coming from outside. The new gangsters were the American-born children of immigrants, who willfully rejected all the

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[35]This passage is an *ex post facto* result of analysis and should not be understood to be a teleologically predetermined outcome – i.e., at the level of everyday lived reality, nobody was aware or "planning" these developments beyond the usual attempt to find what would sell the most tickets.

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civilized modes of behavior at their disposal, thus going against both the traditional values espoused by their families and the example of siblings or friends who did choose to follow an honest path. The sound-era gangster film essentially recycled the narrative formula of the "enemy within," already exploited in the homefront melodramas of World War I.

The other narrative practice borrowed from preexisting forms – and this applies not only to the gangster film but to all the other Hollywood genres advanced to prominence in the 1930's – is the Manichean moral and social perspective of the 19th Century melodrama. This dovetailed perfectly with the reconfigured nationalism of the era: the social turmoil that resulted from a total economic collapse was a serious threat to the organization of the capitalist system, and the threat had to be external (lest the ideologues admit that the problems were internal and inherent to the system). Add to this, the fact that the external-internal dynamics of bourgeois space have taken the form of national territory, as discussed above. Despite all the cliches of America as a "melting pot," immigrants and "aliens"

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had always been resented in the United States, and the aftermath of World War I had already led to the Immigrant Quota Act and other measures. However, the early years of the Great Depression saw an even greater deal of isolationist fervor and nativist injustice – to the point where some 500,000 Mexicans were deported, and many of these "repatriations" were actual expulsions of U.S. born citizens (McKay 2002). This was an openly hostile way to curtail internal competition for jobs and living necessities under conditions of economic scarcity; it, in essence, pitted the insiders, with their territorial sense of entitlement, against the outsider. But, given the tremendous influx of recent immigrants, the outsider was difficult to define, let alone, represent. Enter the gangster.

The representation of space in the gangster film observes the most marked distinction between the private space of the home and the public spaces of the street and the nightclub. The nightclub itself is subdivided into the front and backspaces that Goffman talks about, and the backspace is almost always the private office of the head gangster. In an assemblage of spaces similar to that of the associated spaces of

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the screen, the gangster leaves his own home (and the traditional family values represented by the Italian momma he leaves behind), to go into the evil and chaotic street where he makes his mark in order to be allowed into the nightclub, only to connive his way into the private office as a confidant of the mob boss in order to, eventually, betray his mentor and take over. The private spaces serve as bookends to the public space, which finds itself caught in the extremes of personal ambition. In Kracauerian fashion, the metaphor becomes physicalized in the cinema, and the specificity of the sound film – the spoken dialogue – brings these films closer to the theater and to the other forms of earlier nationalist narrative, like the novel. But the presence of a physical reality is what actually anchors and in most cases supercedes the spoken (or literary) language as the hallmark of the best films.[36]

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[36]This point should be beyond any discussion, let one example suffice as evidence. There is scarcely a more literary film than Renoir's *La Grand Illusion*, which deals with the disaster of rampant nationalism in World War I. The literary level of the film is even accentuated when one of the prisoners has a notebook confiscated, he has been doing a translation of Pindar from the Ancient Greek. The stern but kind commander of the prison, who himself is a victim of the war and wear a neck brace (memorably played by Von Stroheim, the same "Dirty Hun" of American World War I movies), allows the prisoner to keep it; accentuating the broken down and receding universalist humanism of the Old Europe, now being lost by

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Scarface, one of the earliest gangster films of the sound era, offers the most interesting examples of the combination between the spoken language and the spatial physicalization of metaphor and symbolism. The connection between image and sound is first established in the opening scene.[37] The owner of a big nightclub sits at a table, bragging to his friends about how he had achieved all he wanted. After saying goodbye to his cronies, he walks into a hallways towards his back-office. A figure enters through a side door, we can only see his shadow silhouetted on a brightly lit glass partition that separates the viewer from the hallway where the action occurs – the entire scene will take place in this manner, as if this was a gigantic

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the stupidly officious bureaucracy of sectarian nationalism: the old commander exclaims, as he tosses the book back to his prisoner, "Le pauvre vieux Pindar!" The old commander has found some sort of human solidarity with his prisoners, but he is, like them, living in a marginal space. Eventually one of the prisoners attempts to escape and is shot by the guards. Silently, the old commander goes over to his window and, grabbing a pair of scissors, snips off a beautiful flower. The purely physical (soundless) representation of this bitter and willful act of destruction of his only element of joy and hope is one of the most devastating moment of the film, and probably the most effective visual commentary on the European sorrows present in the aftermath of World War I.

[37]Along with my personal viewings of each film, the synopses of the gangster and Western films that follow have been greatly aided by Tim Dirks' own synopses in the website "The Greatest Films" (filmsite.org).

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shadow puppet show. At some point, we hear a sharp melody being whistled, and we see the shadow of the nightclub owner rounding the corner into the hallway where the man stands; he stops abruptly as the man pulls out a gun, shoots him and calmly walks out through the same side door. This shot is also emblematic of the Modernist aesthetic, an intertextual reference to the shadowy stylistics of German Expressionist classics like *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), and also a self-referential allusion to the screen itself and to the projection of light and shadow upon a flat plain.

But this connection between sound and image gains a more important dimension a couple of scenes later, when Tony (a.k.a. "Scarface") rides in a car with one of his friends after getting paid for the rubout by his boss, who had received Tony in his fancy apartment complete with voluptuous blonde. Tony sits on the backseat, his buddy sits next to him (to the right of the screen); Tony first talks about how easy it was to get paid and then goes on to mention how he can take things much further than their boss wants. When his friend expresses doubts about this scheme, Tony simply shapes his fingers like a gun

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and talks about how in their business that is the only thing that rules: "Do it first, do it yourself, and keep on doin' it!" The street of the city can be seen through the car window behind them, receding as they ride along. The dialogue, spoken with a lower class accent and poor grammar, is framed by both the automobile and the city streets themselves – a reminder that the city itself is both cause *and* consequence of the gangster's reckless ambition. The film moves from the individual level of the character, to the contextual level of the space in which the character moves and operates; thus, the discourse shifts from character study to sociological commentary.

In the next scene, we see Tony in his home with his mother whose clothes are vaguely like those of an Italian peasant, with a shawl and a long single braid to accentuate her contrast to the sophisticated flappers of the outside world. When Tony asks about his sister, the mother responds by excoriating him and his attitude because it is reflecting on his sister who now goes out to party with young men. Tony bursts out of the dining room and finds the sister kissing some man in the entrance hallway, he chases the man away and acting more

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like a jealous husband he yells and physically shakes her. Then he calms down and gives some money to keep her happy, much to the disgust of the mother who witnesses this "bribe" and expresses her disapproval to the daughter in her heavily accented English. Tony is an incestuous psychopath, and his inclination towards crime and violence has nothing to do with his environment or his family traditions. Simply put, Tony is a deviant and social legitimacy cannot be his reward.

Both *Little Caesar* and *The Public Enemy* also stressed the contrast between home and street, and attached some sort of psychopathology to the character. A pattern is created in this genre, where the home environment will serve to separate the evil gangster from the normal world; this separation is nothing else than a production of space. *The Public Enemy* even harkens back to the silent era gangster, with introductory scenes of the gangster's childhood when the rowdy streets were more welcoming than the brutal home environment and the mob boss at the local saloon was more nurturing. However, background and environment are not sufficient causes, the gangster does grow up to be a violent and irrational character (one

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memorable scene has him slap a grapefruit on his girlfriend's face), while his adoring mother continues to baby him and believe that he is a successful businessman, even when he brings a keg of beer home during Prohibition. Meanwhile, his brother, who obviously grew up in the same environment, chooses to serve in the war and comes back to an honest job and night classes to get a college degree. In a key scene, the gangster comes home with money to give to his mother, the brother barges in and rejects his dirty money, punches him in the face and orders him to get out of the house; the gangster leaves, kicking the door and the furniture.

Little Caesar does not offer a social explanation, it simply shows the ascendency of the gangster, from small time but murderous hoodlum holding up gas stations to head of one of the city's biggest crime syndicates. The gangster's home becomes important after his visit to the head of the mob organizations for the entire city; it is during that visit that the gangster is appointed to be head of his own syndicate. Shortly afterwards, we see him in his new home, which is decorated exactly in the same lavish style as the head boss', whose gestures and

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gait he now imitates. At the same time, the gangster lives there all by himself, while his sidekick from the early crime days has now become a legitimate dancer, with a lucrative career and a caring, honest girl whom he loves. The jealous gangster attempts to lure his friend back into the gang, and meets his refusal with all sorts of invective against the girlfriend; he seems to have a homosexual attraction, a homologous "deviance" to the incestuous feelings of Tony, the public enemy. Enraged, the gangster chases his friend into the girlfriend's apartment, but he cannot bring himself to shoot; this pushes the friend's girl to finally call the police and to offer them the evidence of past crimes, which helps to bring down the mobster. There is a similar situation in *Scarface*, where the final outcome is precipitated by the fact that the gangster shoots his best friend for being with his sister, without knowing that they had just gotten legally married; that is what pushes the sister to finally call the police, even if it is against her brother.

In contrast with the silent era, the gangsters of the sound era are overdetermined by psychosis. Their household environments are an attempt to legitimize and normalize their way of being, but their

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irrationality is always manifested by the fact that they do not fit within that space (the normal brother or friend, who does achieve a happy home life accentuates this). The sociopathological deviance of the gangster is manifested by an inversion of space – he must get thrown out of the household, his real home is the street; but this is not a *normal* domestic space, and so it is that he must meet his death (the only destiny that a gangster can possibly expect) in this inverted space of the street.

This final destiny of the gangster is not like the *deus ex machina* fatalism of Greek Tragedy, for the Greek defiance to the dictates of the gods carries an ultimate recognition of a human will that may be flawed but is also heroic. Hollywood attempts to show that there is nothing heroic in the figure of the gangster, by having an intermediate space hang in the balance between the home and the street. This is the space of the business establishments, opened to the consuming public but at the same time owned and dominated by a singular entity (either an individual or a mob syndicate). All gangster films include a sequence where the ambitious gangster goes around strongarming restaurant and

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nightclub owners to buy not only exclusively from their own organization, but also at far higher prices and quantities than needed; inevitably, this violence begins to spill into the street. This is where Fordism weighs in: the problem with the gangster is that he disrupts the *normal* way of doing business and, consequently, also disrupts the *normal functioning* of the whole society. "Normal," then, becomes equivalent to the optimization of socioeconomic regulatory functions. The gangster forces his way into the world of business through anticompetitive practices that serve to benefit only him, this is the root of his unethical behavior – similar to that of the voracious business trusts or the predatory speculators targeted by New Deal legislation.

It is imperative for the gangster narrative to maintain such a separation of space at the level of representation. It is the same reason that the representation of space marks a specific separation in, for example, Cooper and Schoedsack's *King Kong*, also from that bumper year of 1933. King Kong clearly belongs to one space, so does the gangster. The tragedy in King Kong is that the "monster" is brought into the other space against his will; the gangster, by contrast, moves

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into the other space against everybody else's will. In fact, it could be argued that these are two interrelated discourses of Fordism: a vaguely anti-colonialist discourse[38] (not out of any sense of social justice, but out of mere self-interest in global economic growth), and a discourse of law and order (social regulation). The social *order* behind the discourse of *law*, then, dictates the separation of space; and the separation of space is the "receptacle" that makes this discourse possible and meaningful, just as the continuous passage through space by Charles Foster Kane offers a completely different meaning. Kane is essentially the same character as the gangster, an upstart whose lack of ethics and overwhelming ambition lead to a path of destruction and self-destruction. However disgraceful, Kane's actions are legal and validated by his sheer power; his presence in the various spaces he inhabits is actually marked by the fact that he produced most of them – space *belongs* to him, and ultimately he is left to be alone in it; in

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[38]Once Regulatory Fordism established and defined itself as the worldwide economic norm with the Marshall Plan and the Military Administration of Japan, it took less than a decade for decolonization to begin and rapidly gain strength. Fordism seeks external markets, a captive economy (neo-colonialism) is an expensive administrative burden and an unreliable quasi-internal market.

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opposition to the gangster, who must be expelled from someone else's private space.

But *Citizen Kane* differs from the gangster film in that it was a critique and not a validation of Fordist capitalism (although the critique of the greedy mogul certainly had its prototypes, such as Selwyn's *Skyscraper Souls* from 1932). Kane, after all, was the ultimate late capitalist, a mass media mogul whose ambition was measured on a global scale. By contrast, he gangster's ambition was sheer personal aggrandizement through ill-begotten material gain, a moral tale on "how not to do." Kane's ambition has a specificity to it: it is his quest for "Rosebud," the one notion left of a lost childhood. In the middle of the film there is a scene of Kane's childhood past, where a banker comes to take him away from his family with his mother's consent; as he is almost forcibly taken away, the sled that he was riding is left behind to be covered by snow. At the very beginning of the film (and in other scenes throughout), we see Kane dying alone, his last word is "Rosebud," and with that he lets go of a clear glass ball with a scene inside of a house in the snow – the house is similar to his childhood

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home. Rosebud is both object and verbal expression, mater and idea; and, insofar as its meaning is exclusively held by an individual whose last word is uttered in complete isolation, it is a particular singularity, like the sign-without-referent (i.e., "Postmodern schizophrenic speech," Jameson in Foster 1983:118 ff.).

But, inasmuch as the story depends on a biographer or historian trying to reconstruct the past, it is also a universal totality. In fact, it is spatially physicalized memory at two levels, at the first level of signification it involves the physical space of a real front yard with real snow or a real glass ball with a real miniature scene inside; at the second level of signification, it is a space that congeals the passage of time, increasing in metaphoric meaning as Kane gets older. It is precisely because there is a double physicalization or spatialization of ideas that the multiple layers of signification are so effective in this film – had Kane simply pronounced Rosebud without having the glass ball in his hand, or had it been a simple sign-referent relationship (such as the "x" leitmotif in *Scarface* for every scene where there is a death

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or murder), *Citizen Kane* would have been a good, but ordinary biopic (e.g., Dieterle's *Juarez*, made two years before).[39]

It should be emphasized that space becomes fully realized in this film because it also involves time. That is to say, it becomes more and more significant as time passes, because it allows for the sum of meanings at different stages of time. Space is not separable from time, it contains history; but it is also part of history, and its meaning is never static. This is one of the "deficiencies" in mainstream Hollywood film, history is always evoked as a static entity, as a single and immutable referent to an equally singular and immutable signifier. Thus, "the public enemy" can simply be explained through a pat Freudianism arising from a childhood in the streets – the childhood never becomes

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[39]To a certain degree, it is somewhat misleading to compare *Citizen Kane* to the gangster or any of the mainstream Hollywood genres – the former was one of the first "High Art" films made in the United States and comes closer to the work of the European avant-garde, which in effect created a separate space from that of mainstream filmmaking and film going (to be discussed below). Welles' incapacity to create an alternative space of production and exhibition for his films, which subverted narrative norms to present a critical view of U.S. society, is a partial explanation for how he became a marginal Hollywood figure while others continued with success – e.g., Ford (*The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* or *Cheyenne Autumn)* and Hawks (*His Girl Friday*), who also inserted their own critical views but within the narrative norms of the Hollywood Model.

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meaningful to the gangster himself, it simply is a rationale for the character's psychological makeup (a standard requirement of the Hollywood Model), expressed to the audience as an overdetermining logic of the narrative. Kane is also overdetermined by his own past, but he reflects upon it, he "recovers a memory." In Bergsonian-Deleuzian fashion, this memory exists in the present, where it gains meaning by reactivating the past (or differing from it, if one considers the narrator to be unreliable). Given the multiplicity of narrators and the fragmentation of time flows in that movie, it is impossible to ascertain whether "Rosebud" is cause or effect – does Kane behave like he does because he misses "Rosebud," or does Kane simply begin to psychologically project his sense of adult loss towards a past?[40]

Citizen Kane makes a problematic thing out of the past and its reconstruction exactly at the same time that there is an intense reconfiguration of the national self-imagination. Given the stagnation

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[40]He never mentions Rosebud while forcing his way to prominence as a brash young newspaper tycoon; in fact, the first chronological moment (diegetically, it is the second time) in which he utters this word happens when his second wife abandons him and he is left to spend the rest of his life alone with his servants and possessions.

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of the mid-1930's and the expansionist hardening of the corporatist state of the first Fordist Regulatory phase, it was no surprise that the Hollywood mainstream would respond with a sudden burst of "Classic Westerns." It was precisely because Fordism was having trouble imposing its will upon the remains of the old "historic block," that it began to seek a new production of space upon which to set its new regulatory praxis (i.e., an articulation of ideology and practice). In the Western, Fordism found a rhetorical form to territorialize and, thereby, nationalize its regulatory discourse of "law and order," which was thus extended in both time (a "historic" past, in contrast to the pure present of the gangster film) and space (the rural "frontier region," in contrast to the urban setting of both noir and gangster drama). In tying a particular authority to an equally particular landscape, the Western had nothing new to add to the "foundational narratives" of the first phase of bourgeois nationalism; the Fordist innovation came in adding the discourse of progress and historic renewal to what previously had been an ideology of static essentialism (which had been based on the Romantic Hegelianiasm that sought the "self -discovery" of an already

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intrinsic national *Geist*). What the Western presents, instead, is the process and the reasons for preferring the institution and institutionalization of a social contract ("civilization") over territories where violence and fear were the ruling norm ("barbarism"); even when that institutionalization (civil society) is brought in by an external authority, and becomes the very force that ends up exterminating the Western way of life (wildness). This becomes the formula plot of the classic Western, repeated in countless films throughout the two and half decades of the genre's golden era.

Will Wright (1975) points out that this repetitiveness is in fact the constitutive element of the "mythic function" of the Western[41] – it is not only the fact that the story replicates our experience, but that its repeated nature imposes a "sense" of how that reality goes and what it means to us in the audience. The "classic plot" of the Western (Wright 1975:32-59) actually pressed the national interest to its furthest point by establishing a progression of events in which a given community

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[41]This is standard inquiry applied by Russian Formalists to the folktale (e.g., Propp 1977).

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would be endangered and ultimately rescued by a hero (usually a loner who would ride into town or join the covered wagon train). The hero, however, would belong too closely to the world that endangered the community in the first place; and, understanding the inevitability of his own obsolescence in the wake of a new community of law and order, he would leave along the same road in which he first arrived.

There is no essential quality to the people or to the land that can serve to justify them as rulers and authority figures. It is, in fact, an external power that comes to victory at the end of every Western. This power is tacitly understood as the Eastern government with its socioeconomic designs, and it is embodied or implemented by such staples of the genre as the army that rescues the settlers and scares off the "Wild Indians," the sheriff (or deputized gunslinger) who captures the bandits or desperadoes, or the hanging judge who eliminates them. Equally important is the technological infrastructure – telegraphs, railways – that guarantees the efficiency and timeliness of these civilizing factors.

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The Western served to reinforce the myth of manifest destiny that placed the "American" as the rightful master and ruler of the land, not by essence but through merit. However, this was no longer the old manifest destiny based on race or superior culture, this was the new manifest destiny of technocratic progress – the rule of those who simply had a greater "know how." The arrival of the cavalry or the final shootout with the "bad guys" marked the culmination of a process in which the rule of law would be imposed over a town, surely to bring peace and prosperity (economic stabilization through regulation). Unlike the space created by the nationalism of old, a landscape with either "empty" nature (non-human) or mythical ancestors (*Volk*), what the Western proposed was a revised history of the frontier that justified the consolidation of the American nation as a "business takeover." At the same time, both the bad guy and the gunslinger-turned-hero (occasionally, also the prostitute with the heart of gold) do not stay; only the grateful residents of the cleansed community are left *in place*, presumably to go about their work chores peacefully and productively. The moral of the story is actually specified as such in Kurosawa's

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Seven Samurai (1954), well known for having adapted the Western to Japanese tradition[42] – as the peasants go on with their chants at the rice paddy, the two surviving *ronin* comment on how the only ones who won were "them" (i.e., the lowly, but collectively self-sufficient peasant community). Unlike Classic Tragedy – e.g., the *Oedipus Cycle* – which ends up following the fallen hero out of Thebes; the cliched final shot of a Western is usually a stationary camera at the edge of the town watching The Man ride off into the distance (the final point of view is anchored not in the hero, but within the stable society that the hero must leave behind).

Stevens' *Shane* (1953) is the film that most readily fits this type of "classic plot;" but, in fact, all these elements were already present in

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[42]It is also well known that Kurosawa subsequently influenced American action film: John Sturges' *Magnificent Seven* (1960) is based on *Seven Samurai*, Lucas' *Star Wars* (1977) on *The Hidden Fortress*(1957) and Walter Hill's *Last Man Standing* (1996) on *Yojimbo* (1961). Kurosawa's films are samurai tales, but the last two American films are, respectively, a science fiction and a gangster film. There are several arguments to be made here about the death of the pure Western and its transmutation to other forms after the 1960's. Suffice it to say, at this juncture, that this phenomenon has much in common with the gradual death of Fordist nationalism and the emergence of globalist transnationalism.

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Stagecoach.[43] The story, in brief, is about a collection of misfits (a drunken doctor, a Southern aristocrat with a gambling habit and a prostitute being expelled from the town) and some "respectable" people (a pregnant Eastern lady married to the cavalry commander, a whiskey salesman, and a banker secretly fleeing with embezzled funds); along with the stagecoach driver and the sheriff, who is accompanying them on the ride since the cavalry detachment that would normally escort the stagecoach has been recalled to fight Geronimo (whose people have cut the telegraph wires, adding further complication to that voyage).

The ride will be full of adventure. Somewhere down the road, they are joined by an escaped convict, known to (and trusted by) the sheriff. Then they get the news about Geronimo during a lunch time

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[43]Fenin and Everson, the great historians and first analysts of the genre, decry the way European critics have overestimated the importance of this film (1973:239-40). They even quote William S. Hart's criticism of the long chase during Geronimo's attack, since the Indians would have been smart enough to shoot the horses first. Indeed, Lewis Jacobs ([1939]1967), wrote at the time about Ford and Nichols' first collaboration, *The Informer* (1935), and only mentioned *Stagecoach* in passing (pp. 479-486) or as part of an enumeration of patriotic films in the wake of Nazism (p. 531). However, the relative influence or popularity of this film at the time of its release is beside the point four our work, we are simply interested in pointing out the catalog of archetypal narrative functions already contained therein.

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stop and have to collectively decide whether to go ahead or turn back. After deciding to go all the way to their destination, they have to stop for the night at an outpost, because the Eastern lady goes into labor. This predicament exposes what had gradually begun to emerge during the trip: the selfishness and duplicity of the "respectable" characters, as it also makes apparent the altruism and helpfulness of the "misfits" – the drunken doctor, in particular, makes every effort to sobber up and deliver the baby. The problems increase, when an Apache woman, married to the Mexican who runs the outpost, mysteriously disappears with a couple of horses during the night. Meanwhile, the convict, Ringo, is smitten with the prostitute, not knowing who she really is; his desire for her is sealed when her nurturing instincts are made evident while taking care of the lady's newborn (the lady, too, gains respect for her). The problem is that Ringo is now torn between escaping to his ranch just across the Mexican border, or heading to the same town as the stagecoach, for he seeks to duel the bad guys who killed his father and brother – the sheriff is bent on returning him to prison for his own protection. As he attempts to escape, Ringo realizes that he cannot run

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away from his destiny, and allows the sheriff to capture him and bring him along for the rest of the ride. This is fortunate, because Geronimo and his men do attack the stagecoach as it is riding along a desolate road (Ford's first use of Monument Valley). Ringo proves his valor by not only helping to keep the Indians at bay, but by jumping over the horses of the driving team in order to stop the stagecoach after the driver lost control. Just as the Indians are about to overtake the stagecoach and its passengers, the bugle of the cavalry is heard, forcing the attackers to retreat hastily as the soldiers appear in the distance. The stagecoach finally arrives to its destination, and Ringo has his crucial confrontation with the three men who killed his father. He triumphs and, while the sheriff purposely turns his back, he rides off with the prostitute to begin his new life. The one who gets captured, instead, is the banker, because the wires had already been repaired and his crime had been communicated to the authorities of the new town. With this final denouement, the sheriff offers to buy the doctor a drink before heading back with their new prisoner, the doctor accepts on

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condition that it be only one – Ringo's carriage, heading off to Mexico, is seen in the distance.

This is totally archetypal. There is the flawed hero who must kill, but in doing so cleanses the town; thus he must go away, literally "off limits." Then, the Eastern-educated lady who comes to the wilderness to bear a child who will, at least potentially, combine the best of both worlds. And, of course, the rule of law is imposed over Indians and embezzlers alike, thus ensuring that the renewed life of the region (the "return trip" of the stagecoach) will go according to expectations. More importantly, though banished, the hero's legacy will be felt the most, because he accomplishes what the law cannot do, the elimination of treacherous evil – that is, simultaneously, the last event of the *Wild* West and the first step towards a society of law. The institutionalized government (the sheriff, the army) cannot bring justice without established proof (even if guilt is well recognized), the gunfighter simply expedites the process (cf., recent U.S. campaigns encouraging Iraqis to kill Hussein themselves). But civil society must triumph, in the end: the victorious shooter – the last wild man standing –

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recognizes himself to be "outside" of the law, and voluntarily moves off into the distance, actualizing the metaphor by means of space. Thus pacified and civilized, the renewed community is finally ready to be part of the nation. At the same time, this is a community already imbued with democratic values (the passengers knew how to deliberate and vote, and how to abide by the majority decision), and there is also a valuing of personal achievement (the prostitute proves by her actions to be socially productive and, thus, worthy of a second chance, whereas the gambling aristocrat set in his ways and opinions gets killed).

At the same time, this is not a discourse of sheer nationalism, this is also a discourse of Fordism. The first rhetorical component is the valorization of technology. Though casually mentioned, the telegraph is a key element in precipitating as well as solving the story – Geronimo cuts the wires, thus the army has to go off and stop him, leaving the stagecoach and its passengers to its own devices. This is why the crooked banker chooses precisely that moment and that direction to escape, and in foolishly thinking that the wires could not be repaired, he walks into the hands of the law. This has metaphoric

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semblance to the regulatory measures implemented by the "New Deal" in response to the social imperilment caused by the Depression.

A further privileging of technology is centered around the gun, most obviously in the scene where Geronimo's band chases the stagecoach. The most remarkable moment in that scene is a stunt where an Indian jumps on the horses to halt the speeding coach, Ringo is able to shoot the warrior a couple of times – he first falls between the horses, holding on to an axel, then drops to the ground as the carriage passes over him (all this is done on continuous takes to show that the action is real).[44] This is the opposite of Keaton's balletic negotiation of the storm in *Steamboat Bill, Jr.* In the new Fordist order, the physical ability of the body even at its maximum, is still only a natural element which can be overcome by technology – there is also a coding of racial superiority[45] in that, along with gun technology, Ringo demonstrates his own natural prowess (his steady shooting hand aboard a speeding

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[44]It is, of course, a choreographed stunt; but these techniques of Realism are staples of Fordist nationalism.

[45]This aspect of nationalist ideology had already been established in silent film (see, Bernardi 1996).

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wagon, his own capacity to match the Indian's way of jumping over the horses).

This is coupled with a commonly held understanding on how to divide tasks and coordinate activities when difficult situations arise. During the delivery scene, for example, the doctor (professional labor) needs to be sobered up and two people take on that chore, while other people begin to prepare a makeshift delivery room, and so on. During the Indian attack, there is a similar division of labor, with the driver (skilled labor) speeding up the wagon, while the men handle the guns and some women try to calm down the rest. The sheriff (middle management) is in relative charge of both situations, but there is almost a tacit understanding on what and who needs to do the different chores. There is, in short, managerial supervision, breakdown of specialized tasks, and a certain standardization of work behavior – as if people naturally fell into an assembly line formation.

Technology, however, is not enough by itself, it must be combined with the ethics of civil law. In a certain way, this echoes the beginning of the film, when a group of severe and puritanical ladies

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literally drive the drunken doctor and the prostitute out of town. Significantly, it is the drunken doctor who, finding himself in the new town, registers the highest level of regulatory awareness. The first time happens when he stands by the saloon door – a spatial threshold, if there ever was one – and requires that the bad guys leave their rifle behind before going out to face Ringo: he is threatened with his life, and he responds by threatening court action. The second time happens at the very end, when the doctor accepts a drink, but only one; no doubt aided and abetted by the respect he gained for being able to deliver a baby and to help keep Indians at bay once he had sobered up. This is the internalization of Regulatory Fordism – always fight against unfair advantage in competition (i.e., market regulation), and observe temperance and self-restraint for the sake of productivity and social reward (i.e., behavioral regulation). The new town allows for the redemption of those characters expelled by the first town; in this new space, the American ideals of opportunity and fair chance triumph over the rigidity of olden ways or the crookedness and violence of the wilderness.

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It is important to bear in mind that the main part of the narrative actually takes place on the road between the two towns. At the most obvious level of signification, this intermediary space is a mere setting for a narrative of development and change, for an odyssey of personal growth and redemption on the part of several characters.[46] At another level, however, the space serves to accentuate the nation-building ideology of the frontier myth. According to this ideology, it was the manifest destiny of the Americans to take over and rule the Western territories all the way to the Pacific shore, thus the making of the United States consists of connecting one coast to the other. The epics of the Classic Western that followed after *Stagecoach* would deal at length with the building of the railways and with the dust trails traversed by covered wagon caravans, as well as with the homesteads and the conflicts and obstacles involved in this process of pioneer settlements. Seen in this context, *Stagecoach* is not only the archetypal template for the Classic Western, it also serves as the miniature model

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[46]In this respect, *Stagecoach* also serves as an archetype for another genre, the "road movie."

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of America's myth about its own history. The stagecoach departs from the town of Tonto (rife with semantic and intertextual referentiality), which is already well organized and patrolled by civic organizations, like the "league of ladies" that escorts undesirables out of town; in that respect, the town resembles the "civilized" colonies to the East. In the process of traveling from one town to the other, the group (composed of people from almost every walk of life, minorities and workers are obviously excluded) will confront the same hardships and events that any other group of settlers confronted during the westward expansion: they are held up by an outlaw (although his purpose is not to rob them), they have to deliver a baby in the most desolate area and under precarious conditions, they have to survive an Indian attack, and eventually have to find their place in the new town (or leave again). The destination point, Lordsburg (rife with colonialist referentiality), does have a sheriff and is already reached by the telegraph, but it also is still a little wild, at the mercy of treacherous villains who profit from their criminal ways with total impunity – it is not yet fully civilized.

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This is a tale of interstitial space,[47] and this fact reinforces the character transformation and growth that occurs during the narrative; and, by foregrounding the margins, it also accentuates the core belief system. One of the chief elements of this marginal space is, of course, the landscape – a staple of bourgeois nationalism. As Virginia Wright

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[47]This "analytic category," could serve to classify an entire body of film. This body of work would range from other John Ford classics such as *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940), which also depicts the trials and tribulations of a displaced group traveling from Dustbowl Oklahoma to Souther California, as it could be applied to the Poetic Realism of Vigo's *L'Atalante* or the Samurai Retainer and the Princess who has been deposed from her rightful throne in Kurosawa's *The Hidden Fortress* (1948) and its direct "descendent," Lucas' *Star Wars* (1977), as well as much of "interplanetary" science fiction. In all these cases of "interstitial space," the discourse will revolve around who or what to include in the group formation (i.e., nation, federation, etc) and what will the modes and conditions of inclusion be. Thus, despite the existence of a "promised land" – Lordsburg, fertile Southern California, Thunderdome (for "Mad Max"), etc – these movies will also be marked by a sense of struggle for inclusion (notably coded in Tom Joad's "I'll be there" speech at the end of *The Grapes of Wrath*); and this will be contrasted with those who are either kept out or not allowed to make it to the promised land (e.g., the two peasants drafted to help the Princess in *The Hidden Fortress*, or the two bikers killed by the red necks in *Easy Rider* from 1969). There is, perhaps, a connection between moments of social, cultural or economic crisis and this type of representation: *The Grapes of Wrath* is, of course, about Depression Era rural migrations, *The Hidden Fortress* is made as Japan is reformulating its national-cultural identity less than a decade after the U.S. Administration under Mac Arthur, and *Easy Rider* and *Star Wars* bracket the period that marks the final crisis of Regulatory Fordism and the inception of Globalization, as the nation state begins to wane and a new transnational order is being imposed.

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Wexman points out, the elements of nationalist ideology had already been inscribed in the Western landscape era

> In William S. Hart's 1916 production *The Return of Draw Egan,* the hero courts the heroine by taking her to the top of a hill to view the "beautiful scenery." Such a moment offered up as an innocuous respite form the serious concerns of the film's action-filled plot, is actually central to the project of this film, as of all other Westerns. Far from constituting an empty space around which significant issues are gathered, the romantic couple in these films is saturated with meaning, for the couple forms the cornerstone of the genre's image of the family on the land. This image, in turn, is built up out of myriad discourses concerning the body, the landscape, and the law (in Bernardi 1996:162).

Thus, audiences were already well versed in the strategies that encode the message at the end of *Stagecoach*: with the drinking buddies going off in one direction, while the couple (and, soon to be, family with children) literally becomes one with the landscape.[48]

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[48]It has been our contention all along that part of the production of space of Taylorism/Fordism involved the hegemonic displacement of the rural in favor of the technological city of every region. Part of this implied that film producers would recuperate their investment through ticket sales in the cities and towns, the isolated rural areas simply did not have too many cinemas. Therefore, both Western landscape as well as action and plot were meant largely for urban consumption. This further facilitated the overly romanticized and aestheticized depiction of the landscape – e.g., Ford's own Monument Valley.

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At the same time, it would seem rather contradictory that they are actually going off to a different country to fulfill that potential. But that contradiction is solved precisely by the representation of interstitial space. The outpost where they stop for the night and where the baby is delivered – significantly named Apache Wells – is owned by a Mexican, and is staffed by his Apache wife (whom he bosses around in Spanish) and a crew of Mexican *vaqueros*. He agrees with some of the passengers that his squaw wife is a bit of a savage, but this is handy because Geronimo leaves him alone. Meanwhile, she steps out of the station house and begins to sing a song in Spanish about longing for the land where she was born, and suddenly gives the signal for the *vaqueros* to steal the horses. The next day the Mexican man alerts his guests that his wife and the *vaqueros* have taken off, and laments that she left because she was so strong and such hard worker, like a good horse. He, in fact, is an interstitial man, stationed at mid-point between the civilization of the town and the barbarism of the nomads. His status, too, is interstitial, a servant to the White groups of soldiers or stagecoach travelers and a boss to the Indian. He shares

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with the savage a common bond of marriage and the language of former colonial rulers; but at the end, he finds himself alone, explaining his affairs to the English-speaking sheriff, a new authority figure whose language he has not yet mastered, if ever he will. He is also stationed at mid point between the point of origin and the point of destination – the stuffy but civilized old town and the wild but hopeful new town; he, thus, becomes doubly symbolic of a stage in history and an ambiguous ethos. He, like the natives, is part of what the "Anglo" settlers found when they got there, too close to the natives and to the wilderness; at the same time, he is neither a savage nor, for that matter, a villain, like the murderers who await in the new town or the banker who seeks escape there. He, like the Anglos, is a proprietor and a master, but he views his charges like beasts and lacks the humanity and comprehension to grow and advance any further than the mid-point. It is no wonder, then, that the newly formed White couple could simply move its way of life so easily into this man's "land of origin." That couple was also made of marginalized beings, but their newly found respectability is matched by their desire to settle down in a ranch

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(productivity) and have a family (reproductivity). This is the progressive (i.e., Fordist) American way, and it is destined to take over for the natives (Indian and Mexican alike) whose backwardness prevented them from going further than a vague historical midpoint. In the wake of Nazi Germany's annexation of Austria, the American film industry responds with its own confident expansionism: the American does not have to make a territorial claim upon its neighbors, he can simply move in with his bride to be and spread his superior social, cultural and technical "know how" over what essentially is a nearly empty frontier, scarcely inhabited by savages whom he is destined to rule and civilize. This is no longer the ancestral blood claim legitimized by some origination narrative or even Scriptural hermeneutics. This is now the ideology of modern sellers and producers, who boldly project the acquisition of an increasingly greater share of the world consumer market, based upon their claim to have a better product than their competitors.

This claim contains an implicit contradiction, however. Liah Greenfeld (1992:480-84) points out that the difference between

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European nations and the United States resides in the very consolidation of the latter as a dual organism which allowed for the primacy of individuality in the form of a strong loyalty to one's state, while at the same time creating collective cohesion in the form of a federated nation. At the same time, there is an inherent tension between the idealistic adherence to the principles of liberty and equality to all, and the seemingly unavoidable fact that neither full liberty nor full equality are available in the same measure to all groups or individuals. After the Civil War foreclosed the possibility of secession, the plurality of individuals and groups with their particular thoughts and circumstances turned inwardly towards the society, which became the "next frontier" – internal reform has been slow and laborious, but the country is more inclusive at present than it was before.

These ideas echo the liberal apology for the nation-building process that emerged with the New Deal and the golden era of the Hollywood sound film. Whether aware or not of the contradictions implicit in the national formation (class, race, gender, ethnicity, etc), the Hollywood producers simply presented a framework in which this

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plurality of voices was either subsumed into a homogeneous mainstream discourse[49] or excluded. In the case of the Western, the strategy was mostly one of exclusion

> The visual imagery of the Western movies, for the most part, represents the family farm as the goal toward which the story moves. However, the modest, egalitarian implications of this ideal are typically countered by the genre's predilection for grandiose views of scenic panoramas and expansive vistas – the wide open spaces associated with the cowboy protagonist.... if the grandeur of the Western landscape offers itself up as a seductive spectacle bespeaking dominion and superiority, it may also imply the view of an other (the Indian) who may read the same topography quite differently. The Western's rendering of the

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[49]It precisely in this spirit of internal reform that Capra's "populist" comedies emerge. The self-consciousness of his "lessons from the little man from the little town" are actually based on the tried and true formula of the love story – so that the dichotomy between rural town and big city is embodied by the conflict between man (good and pure) and woman (good but misled). The love story dictates that the boy gets the girl in the end, which turns into a metaphoric reconciliation between small town workers and big city business – a reassuring formula which comforts the audience from the very beginning of the film and explains the mainstream popularity of his movies. Compare this to the much more cynical and sanguine work of Preston Sturges, which does not have the same mainstream adulation – especially, *The Great McGinty* (1940), but also his "small town" comedies, like *Miracle at Morgan's Creek* and *Hail the Conquering Hero* (both 1944). The Postwar decline of these two giant auteurs of early sound comedy is, in our opinion, best explained in conjunction with the internationalist transformation of Regulatory Fordism once American hegemony throughout the world was imposed with the Marshall Plan, the military administration of Japan, and the Cold War. Comedy, of course, also opened a carnivalesque opportunity for the repressed to speak out, but only up to a certain point – e.g., ethnic (e.g., Marx Brothers) or sexual "subversions" (e.g., screwball, including Wilder's gleefully deviant *Some Like It Hot* from 1959).

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> modest and idealized image of the family farm is continually undermined by those competing visions (Wright Wexman in Bernardi 1996:142).

Even when included, the members of minority groups were inevitably represented as either silent or clownish servants and sidekicks of little importance to the central aspects of the narrative.

It is impossible, however, to establish marginal zones or boundaries of exclusion without establishing an equally strong and well defined center. This is the very function that the monumental space of representation plays in the society at large and in the cinema in particular. It is by no means a coincidence that the sequence in Monument Valley, when Geronimo's attacks the stagecoach, happens very shortly after the lengthy segment in the Apache Wells outpost. Astré and Horau make a concerted effort to present the importance of scenery and sets in the Western, advancing the notion that the landscape is an attempt to present human beings in tune with the surrounding topography, in order to give at least a temporary feeling that eliminates the gap between the spectator and a modern world that increasingly appears to be beyond any human measure (1976:93). In

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fact, the operation of spectatorial subjectivation that is taking place in all the hegemonic genres (gangster, musical, Western) is far more complicated than this pat humanism. What the Western is trying to do in a large scale is to relocate subjectivity away from the individualized rapport that each spectator thought to have with the star (or main character) of the film, proposing instead a collective solidarity with the embodiment of concepts – that is why the antiheroes of the Western are such ciphers, devoid of clear origins and even destination. The monumental landscape, thus, centers the character within the geographic context, allowing the spectator to understand that the individual stories of the characters and the individual narrative of the film in question are only a spec in a totalized whole. This is what also explains the "centrifugal forces of the shot" that Bazin posits, since the monumental screen is an attempt to center the viewing subject within a historical myth that expresses relations of power (cf. Miles, quoted above). As Darrell William Davis states in relation to the monumental form in the Japanese film

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> The first step towards defining the monumental style is to ask, is it unified? Films in the monumental style share a characteristic action or gesture that marks their apparent manner of creation: a gesture of appropriation....
> The gesture of appropriation mobilizes Japanese tradition through a canonization of the past, an exaltation of native aesthetics, and a celebration of feudal social structures.... But [unlike any other *jidai geki* or genre of the traditional past] the monumental style rehabilitates [the] indigenous elements, [the] furniture that makes jidai geki what it is and makes them the real center of interest....
> The connection between the gesture of appropriation and the articulation of a national identity is made by appeal to the sacred. In the monumental style a strong mythologizing impulse operates not only on the traditional forms appropriated from the cultural heritage but also on the film techniques – narrative, stylistic, thematic – that constitute the form of the individual film.... [It] is also the quality that gives them a strong pull towards the mythic, the nativist, and the ultranationalistic (1996:43-44).

Allowing for some difference in degree, this definition fits the Western just as well. This only serves to put into evidence the global nature of Fordist nationalism and its inextricable link to film as the most dynamic vehicle for its ideological presentation.

In the Monument Valley sequence, the first thing that becomes spectacularized is the relationship between camera angle, camera movement and the sweep of the landscape. There is a production of visual space when the camera is placed on an extreme top shot (of the

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advancing stagecoach) which turns into a panning shot towards Geronimo's group perched atop a cliff, watching the carriage go by. At that moment, the spectator is placed in an "objective" narrative perspective, not only being able to have more information than the passengers of the stagecoach, but being placed in an altogether different vantage point from them. The spectator ceases to be "personally" identified with the characters in the manner of melodrama or even comedy, and is now placed before an epic, witnessing the process in which the mere passage of time (story) turns into history. The sweeping vistas are given a territorialized extension (which connotes appropriation, nationalization) right at the turning point of the scene, which is signified by the off camera sound of the bugle announcing the approaching cavalry, even when they are still unseen. It is not the presence of law enforcement, but the mere hint of that presence that serves to normalize and regulate the progress of the stagecoach; the unseen but necessary institutions of a national government thereby join the representation of History. Thus framed by landscape and guided by camera and sound techniques, the gaze finds

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itself fixed upon a singular object without the possibility of alternative interpretations (i.e., it becomes a form of hegemony).

This is a first moment of spatial articulation, centered upon the screen but "placing" the viewer – seated in the auditorium – as a subject not of mere story but of National History. However, that moment of articulation would not be possible without a second moment (which in practice actually happens first); this second moment is what Lary May already described as the Depression Era transformation of the space of the movie theater into a paean of regional representation upon the walls and facade, as well as in the lobby (see Chapter 4). The final articulation would consist of the multitude of regions that would simultaneously watch the same film and use that experience to form a sense of collective belonging: an imagined community.[50]

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[50]Needless to say, this is the hardest articulation to subsume under a hegemonic strategy, since the regional public enters into a ready made contradiction with the nation-building process. Hegemony will rest on the capacity of the organic intellectuals of the Fordist bourgeoisie to articulate or "orchestrate" the patchwork of regional receptions (regulation of space by a hegemonic center). Claudio Lomnitz-Adler (1992) offers an interesting illustration of this process in Mexico, which is applicable here despite its marked differences with the United States. What he presents is a series of regional centers that group people under an "intimate culture" which serves as filter and defense against the dominant

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VI

If nation-building had its big internal contradiction involving liberty vs. conformity, individuality vs. collectivity, equality vs. hierarchical authority; then, the internal contradiction in Regulatory Fordism between nation-building and globalizing expansionism was – and continues to be – of overwhelming proportions. We have already seen how World War I provided an opportunity for the United States to bolster its international outlook and outwards expansionism through trade (spearheaded by film exports), while at the same time developing rather shrill forms of nationalism combined with isolationism and nativism. This same contradiction was the basis for the interwar divide in Modernist art and culture between an institutionalized mainstream and a combative avant-garde.

(centralized, urban, modernized) bourgeois culture of the federal capital (Mexico City). The national space can be seen as a web of intimate cultures that have at the same time a type of synergy and a mutually exclusive set of tensions; thus, national hegemony could be seen as "poles of cultural coherence" (pp. 130-2). If this is so, the pole of regional reception would be just as necessary (or inevitable) as the pole of central enunciation. Some notoriously localized or semi-localized phenomena of cultural hegemony attest to the applicability of this theory to the United States – e.g., the "New York Intellectuals," "the Chicago Boys, or even the "Kentucky Colonels."

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The problem of classifying and placing the avant-garde within the larger context of art or cultural history has been variously treated as a question of the alienated artist (Poggioli 1981), of a wholly triumphant anti-institutionalist stance which only succeeded within the realm of high art (Bürger 1985), or of a strategy of placing upon the formal aspects of the individual work the responsibility to allude to the "unpresentable" within the Kantian sublime (Lyotard 1985). The avant-garde is thus consigned to a "cultural sphere" which accepts the separation between socioeconomic base and cultural superstructure, and also accepts the special status of the artist (we seldom worry about the stamping of alienation onto a mass produced radio or coffee pot, but we seem heartbroken by the fact that "our" artists are no longer able to connect to their reality as they did in a presumably wholesome past). Upper class elitism aside, the problem rests on the fact that much of the analysis takes at face value the terms imposed by the avant-garde movements themselves: if these artists position themselves *avant [les autres]* it must be because they know where they really stand.

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In fact, the only way to see the avant-garde artists as being in any way ahead of everyone else in the cultural field would be to see them as the first group to accept and begin to rationalize the dilemmas presented by regulatory Fordism. In Lyotard's assessment, the two strategies of High Modernism consisted of retaining the unity of inner consciousness and classic formalism by paying the price of either showing the unpresentable through a hypertrophy of time (Proust), or by discarding the formal strictures of art-making at the cost of hypertophying the signifier (Joyce). At this point, the confluence of time and space ceases to be an integral part of the unity of the artwork, which now floats in a Heraclitian river of time or becomes locked in a signifying space – which can only be activated by the nominalism of the viewer's first hand experience of the work of art in its own terms (compare this to David Harvey's explanation of Fordist/Modernist "time-space compressions," 1990:260-83).

Actually, one can already account for the Modernist separation of time and space in commodity production, stemming from the Taylorist methods of specialization with their discrete shop spaces according to

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specialty and a physically higher supervisory floor precisely for the *oversight* of the entire labor process, conducted *under* "scientific management." All of this is connected to an entirely new discipline (in both senses of the word) of time-motion efficiency. As we have already seen, this separation of specialties into discrete spatialized units began to migrate from the manufacturing plant to other types of economic activity (departmentalization of stores, cinemas, even universities), eventually permeating the entire sociocultural process of the modern world. The "forward look," then, was not so much the result of the avant-garde artists being ahead of anybody, as it was the result of a tendency to overvalorize their own productive activity (symbolic work) in a society that had stripped all other direct producers of their control and participation in the process of production. High culture, then, became a terrain occupied only by artists and intellectuals, thus allowing for experimentation and innovation to seem like a singular achievement ahead of all social proportion. The avant-gardists were not "ahead," everyone else had been kept behind; and in Neo-Platonic fashion, these innovators and revolutionaries conceived

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of their own position as the only way to guide their contemporaries, especially the masses, out of their cave (cf., Lenin's vanguard of the proletariat). Fordist regulators emerged from such a vanguard – Keynes, in fact, was part of the Bloomsbury Circle, one of those avant-garde groups.

Bürger's understanding of the avant-garde movements of the 1920's is closer to their intended praxis than to their real one, in the sense that he accepts the avant-garde's attempts to reconcile "art production" and "real life," while noting that the critical stance implicit in this attitude seems to merely produce a cultural opposition to "art as an institution," while completely failing to reach the everyday world – bestsellers and interior decorations in commercial establishments may have shared the avant-gardist wish for art-with-practical-value, but not in order to fulfill the other key wish of the avant-garde: emancipation. Under these circumstances, Bürger asks this crucial question

> whether a sublation of the autonomy status can be desirable at all, whether the distance between art and the praxis of life is not

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> requisite for that free space within which alternatives to what exists become conceivable (1985:54).

It may seem somewhat dubious to demonstrate the failure of the avant-garde by comparing it to the success of mass entertainment. However, under the Modernist strain that still characterized all the avant-garde movements of the 1920s and 30s, it seems reasonable to inquire about the effects of "practicability" upon art itself, given that the practical application of any form of knowledge was by necessity confronted and usually coopted by the capitalist commodification of the economy. It would appear, therefore, that maintaining the "autonomy of the sphere" in any type of intellectual activity would help preserve any emancipatory gains, however meager, made under bourgeois Modernism. This would not be the same as the art for art's sake position, since artistic practice would still be a socially engaged attempt to achieve economic change and democratic justice. That is, contrary to Gramsci's praxis which seeks to articulate intellectual activity with revolutionary action, this attitude would withdraw from the social world any possibility of action – an emancipatory possibility

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could only be initiated in the art world, which would then lead the rest of the lifeworld towards freedom (hence their position as avant-garde, a self-appointed troop of "forward looking" scouts).

This position is untenable, basically because the purported autonomy of art is simply a product of bourgeois illusion (cf., Caudwell 1955; Sánchez Vázquez 1974), created by the extension of Taylorist specialization and departmentalization in the universities (where aesthetics, art history, and criticism become separate "disciplines") as well as in the realm of art itself (separating "High Art" from "Popular or Lesser Art" – i.e., commercial or decorative forms). The result is an isolation and social marginalization of the artist, who believes his or her work to then be part of a superior spiritual or psychological sphere of human endeavor, while paradoxically being relegated in the esteem of the general public to the level of a pleasant but socioeconomically superfluous luxury.

Poggioli would consider the avant-garde's break with classic figurativism and unitary systematization to be the result of this isolation and social alienation, a dogmatically Marxist position which

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ends up coinciding with the ultraconservative concerns of Ortega y Gasset's *Dehumanization of Art.* Alienated or not, the fact is that avant-garde movements did attempt to engage the social world in an actively political manner; some, like the Futurists, tending towards fascism, most others tending towards socialist or communist affiliations, especially the Surrealists and the Russian Constructivists but also some of the German Expressionists and the Bauhaus, and even some of the British Edwardians like the Duncans, Rebecca West, and, for a brief period, even Keynes. Bürger, following the theories of Adorno and the Frankfurt School, considers these political inclinations of the avant-garde as evidence of the transformative possibilities opened up to artists, precisely because of their segregation from the other socially productive realms. However, he somewhat bitterly concludes that these artists were only able to revolutionize the world of art, losing the revolution in all other fronts of the social world.

It is our contention, however, that the forward-looking social engagement of all these avant-garde movements, despite their revolutionary aspirations of the moment, were part and parcel of the

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same liberal utopian impulse of early socialists like William Morris – or even earlier rationalists like Nicolas Ledoux, the Crown's Architect, who designed the Royal Salt Works (*Saline Royale*) at Arc et Senans as the center of an ideal town in which design would help harmonize the lives of workers and administrators. These utopian movements considered formal innovation and psychological transformation to be directly correlated and to further impact upon a socially unified and universalized whole; and this social whole would best be contained and represented by urbanized industrial spaces where design, city planning and machinery would all be idealized as revolutionary forces in the advancement of civilization and freedom.

The utopian impulse becomes encoded in the space of the city, which now offers poetic possibilities out of its constitutive elements: the streets, the shape of its buildings, and the everyday landmarks of an ordinary life (a café, a little park, a simple ornament) all serve as evocative triggers that map out the ego's awareness of its own

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construction.[51] Furthermore, because of its combination of architectural and demographic density, the urban space is inscribed with layers of history (especially of the recent past) in ways unique to the specific conjunctions of capitalist development. As epochal changes occur (for instance, the transition from the First to the Second Industrial Revolution), a residue of the utopian optimism involved in that transformation will be imprinted in the objects and landmarks of the time (Benjamin's concept of the *ur*, see Buck-Morss 1991 and 2002). One such utopian form will be the faith placed by most avant-garde movements (the Futurists, the Dadaists, the Russian Constructivists and even the Mexican Muralists) in the perfectibility of human perception through a symbiotic unification with the machine – no longer humans conceived as machines typical of the 19th Century (e.g., La Metterie), but humans utilizing machines and sometimes incorporating them into their organic functioning[52]. The city *and* the

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[51]For example, Breton's *Nadia* and *Crazy Love*, or Benjamin's "A Berlin Chronicle" in *Reflections* 1986.

[52]This utopian notion is embryonic in Vertov's "camera eye" or in the central figure of Diego Rivera's *Man at the Crossroads* mural (originally to be at

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new technology that emerges from its productive-creative capacity are the major motifs of the avant-garde movements specifically active in cinematographic production: French Dada and Surrealiasm, and Russian Constructivism.

We shall set aside any conceptual consideration of the French movements given the length of this project and the focus on nation-building and representational space in this chapter. Some important aspects need to be considered, however, since the French avant-garde was undoubtedly a key factor in the production of Modernist spaces of representation[53] under late capitalism.

First, Dada certainly brought a new form of critical approach to, both, the very space of representation *and* the represented space. The

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Rockefeller Center, now in the Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City). Its most extreme representation will actually reemerge decades later in mainstream entertainment, especially the *Star Trek: Next Generation* series of television programs, which include humanoids with robotic and cybernetic implants, the Borg; and an android with the capacity to develop emotions and therefore evolve into a fully formed human, Data. But perhaps the most extreme form is the unrepresented new life being conceived at the end of *Star Trek, The Movie*, when one of the crew members literally couples with the Voyager satellite, which has returned to Earth precisely for that purpose.

[53]These brief remarks are based on Benjamin 1986, Shattuck in Nadeau 1965, as well as Nadeau's own text.

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placement of urinals or everyday objects that were never given any regard (let alone an aesthetic regard) allowed for a sort of ecological questioning of modern life; simultaneously, the Dada event also forced a questioning of the separation between that space of the everyday world and the spaces of the gallery as well as the artwork itself (the status of the canvasses, where found objects were mounted, became itself an object of inquiry). Additionally, the Dada valorization of the machine almost for its own sake, which was echoed in their film of "animated objects," allowed for the legitimation of a Taylorist-Fordist subjectivity within the hollowed halls of High Art. There is a clear skepticism as to how really shocking and effective was their attitude to "*épater les bourgeois*," but there is little to dispute in the fact that the antics of the Dada movement permanently changed the spaces of the "fine arts."

The Surrealists, in a much more programmatic fashion, attempted to merge everyday living with a new subjectivity. They created a new practice of urban space in their quest for the unexpected among the discarded objects in the flea markets, the echoes of past glories in the

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aging train stations, and the sublimely inferior in theatrical representations by marginal companies, mock trials for writers they detested, etc. This new subjectivity of the urban space, however, came at a price, the Surrealists were never able to bridge the gap between their oneiric theories and a collectively transformative praxis. Their work – despite its political agenda – privileged the individual gesture and the solipsistic acts of enlightment (profane revelations, according to Benjamin). At the same time, it also continues to exert a tremendous influence even now, especially given the current popularity of Walter Benjamin's writings on cities (it was in Paris that he actually thought of mapping his biography over a map of the city streets where he had lived and grown up); and, it also had undoubted influence on Lefebvre, whose early contact with Surrealism must have been the source of his attentiveness to the urban environment and his special focus on the grassroots struggles to resist the late capitalist homogenization of urban space and everyday life.

Just as importantly, in their writings and in their films, the Surrealists actually reterritorialized Modernism. If the Paris of

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Baudelaire was a setting for the musings of the *flâneur* and the curse of the modern *spleen*, the same city acquires life for the Surrealists, it becomes one more character in their narratives (perhaps the main character). The streets and cafes in *Nadja* or the park in *Paris Peasant* are in a true dialogic interaction with the human characters of the book; it is as if the city allowed itself to whisper its unexpected revelations into the ear of the narrator. Neither Hitchcock's *Rear Window*, nor Malle's *Fire Within* (based on a novel by the one Surrealist who became an official Fascist, Drieu la Rochelle) or Martin and Jackson's *L.A. Story* could be thinkable without the Surrealists. From the point of view of nation building, this Surrealist reterritorialization of subjectivity was the main, almost the sole, influence in Carpentier's theories of *lo real maravilloso* (inadequately translated as "magic realism"); in which he tried to create a new Latin American subjectivity by revisiting that moment of first contact between the natives, with their overwhelming natural and urban-cultural surroundings, and the 16th century Europeans, whose only recourse was to rely on magical explanations for a land that eluded

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their best rational explanations or even the most extensive vocabulary at their disposal. Carpentier invokes the Surrealist painting of Delvaux and the art criticism of Franz Roh (who actually coined the term), he could just as easily have mentioned Clair's *That Crazy Ray* (1923) or, of course, Buñuel's *Land Without Bread* (1933).

The Dada films are well known for their experimental nature both with narrative and non-narrative representation, as well as with the physical aspects of film itself (A. Williams 1992:140-44) – for example, Hans Richter's exploration of the photographic qualities of pure movement (ocean waves, shadows), or Man Ray's objects placed directly onto the film strip which was then exposed (years later, two very different filmmakers, Stan Brackage and Malcolm McLaren, would work directly on the filmstrip, as well). As Elsaesser reminds us, though, the Dada aspect of film was the event itself (in Kuenzli 1996:19-20). Of course, the two best known examples are Clair's *Entr'acte* and Leger's *Ballet Mecanique*. The former was supposed to play during the intermission of a modern dance performance, while the latter was intended for the famous Dada events. Thus, the Dada film is

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a practice of space unto itself: the point of the film was for it to be part of the space-environment in which people moved around, talked to each other, and cavorted in general without necessarily sitting down to watch "The Film." It is with this "distracted look" in mind, which prefigures Fiske's (1988) description of television spectatorship, that Leger inserted the famous sequence of the washerwoman walking up a staircase – a single take in long shot, which is repeated over and over again. At one point, the repetition cuts to a close shot of machine gears (the movie had already shown closeups of animated gears and machine parts moving in a circular motion), only to return to the same endless "loop" of the woman going up again and again. As Alan Williams points out (1992:143), the sequence is funny and poignant at the same time, as if the woman trapped in the Sysyphian mechanisms of everyday life was about to say "so what?" when she is about to reach the top, only to repeat the same mechanically induced process – self-consciously so. Jean Epstein echoes this mechanical and rhythmic world view in his own experimental writings on the cinema, claiming the close up as "soul of cinema" (1974:93), and repetitively demanding

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"gros plan, gros plan, gros plan"[54] (p. 95), like an impatient child calling for dessert.

It is imperative to understand that the film practices of the avant-garde actually produced their own space, resonating with the Dada attempts to create a Dada space. The avant-garde film scene became incredibly vital, involving filmmakers and writers, journalists exclusively dedicated to film reportage and criticism, and sheer cinephiles. One example of an avant-garde production of cinema-related space was the *Club des amis de sepetiéme art* (CASA), which would meet regularly at the Café Napolitain. CASA, at first, consisted mostly of dinner and discussions; but little by little, it began to develop lecture series, publish manifestoes, and eventually hold yearly screenings at the prestigious Salon D'Automne (Abel 1984:252-7). This first effort led to the formation of other groups, some of which began to merge and to find further spaces for film shows, such as the

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[54]In that passage, he also talks about feeling or touching (*je palpe*) the world through his closeups, going not for the visual perspective of the "touring club" but for the "*photogenie*" of objects to be discovered by the close lens. There is much in common here with Vertov's *kino glaz*, as it will become evident below.

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Maison des Artistes, where films like *Entr'acte* and Epstein's *L'Affiche* would be followed by public discussions and debates (*ibid.*, p. 257). Soon, the new cine-club movement gained some strength, and eventually moved into the Vieux Colombier, where mixed screenings of mainstream and avant-garde films would be programmed (*ibid.*, pp. 257-75) – this is where Clair first attempted to screen *That Crazy Ray* (A. Williams 1992). Programs such as these began to gain public appeal beyond the avant-garde circles

> Paul la Borie reported on one of the summer programs [of the Ciné-Latin]:
> Seated side by side, intellectuals and workers fraternize in front of the screen. I cannot say that the films they are watching produce the same impression on one and the other. They are not, evidently, the same state of receptivity. The comic film preceding the *piéce de resistance* provokes among the common people of the audience a hilarious outburst in which the university students do not share. Instead, the students amuse themselves over the naive delight of their neighbors. But the second part of the program begins, and soon there is a silence that is absolute. The entire audience follows the unfolding of the images and the development of ideas with unfailing attention. But, in general, the common people applaud very little. They are trying too hard to understand. And the fact is that they do understand for they don't get annoyed... And they come back for more (Abel 1984:265).

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These successful events soon began to move beyond French territory, and the exhibitors soon became distributors of avant-garde films, which were shipped to Belgium and Switzerland (*ibid.*, 269-72). But, as it was reaching its peak, the avant-garde film movement collapsed in the wake of the sound era, the filmmakers needed studio support for the increasingly complicated technical aspects of film production and the mode of exhibition shifted from educating the public to offering retrospectives of silent film. Eventually, the main thrust of the movement became the preservation of film; by 1933, Henri Langlois created the final, and perhaps most enduring spatial legacy of the filmic avant-garde: the first *cinématheque* (*ibid.*, pp. 272-3).

The film practices of the avant-garde, therefore, have to be understood as going beyond the mere representation of space that we see now a days. These were not decontextualized films, but interventions in a collective dialogue that involved an entire urban space. Clair's *That Crazy Day* – in French, *Paris Qui Dort*, more aptly translated as *Paris In Its Sleep* – has to be understood within this context of associated spaces that link the exhibition and discussion

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quarters of the avant-garde with the rest of the Parisian environment.[55] This point is important, because the movie is ostensibly about a mad scientists who freezes all living movement in the streets of Paris with a bizarre machine which emits rays in every direction. The only people who escape this are some tourists in an airplane, and the Eiffel Tower's night-watchman, who had been sleeping at the very top of the Tower – they were all high above the rays when they were emitted. The tourists land and find the situation rather hilarious, running around town pulling pranks on the motionless Parisians, while the night-watchman looks at a bum frozen in the act of scavenging through a garbage can (echoed later in *Rien Que les Heures* – although, in effect, this movie can also be seen as the exact reversal of *Onésime Horloger*). Eventually, they all run into the scientist's daughter, who leads them to the culprit; the mad genius agrees to reverse the machine, and Paris returns to its usual rush of motion without missing a beat. The significance of the title lies in the fact that Paris itself is the subject of

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[55]Vertov writes in 1926 about seeing this movie, noting that he had had a similar idea and now feels that one of his "positions of attack" has been lost (in Schnitzer and Martin 1973:83).

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the predicate (the receiver of the act); the collective of frozen humans becomes synonymous with the sleeping city. At the same time, the city is brought back to life through the capacity of the human heart to feel compassion (two decades later, Marcel Carné would employ the same theme at the end of his allegory about the Nazi occupation, *Les Visiteurs du Soir*).

More obliquely, but perhaps more markedly, *Un Chien Andalou* connects the urban with the personal through represented spaces. Stuart Liebman (in Kuenzli 1996) makes a sharp semantic analysis of the strategy of visual punning that animates this movie. He supports his claim by taking the point of view shot of the moon in connection to the medium close-up of the woman that follows it (right after that, her eyeball is famously sliced – arguably, the single most enduring image in film). According to his analysis, the woman appears out of nowhere right after the second medium shot of the man in his balcony, looking at the moon with his face in reverie covered by a cloud of cigarette smoke. So, it is quite possible to substitute the woman for what should have been a second shot of the moon and then proceed with a Freudian

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semantic analysis which associates "*la lune*" with "*le cul*," etc (*ibid.*, p. 145). This analysis is quite plausible and indeed thoroughly convincing in that article. However, if we take such a literal, associative reading of sequential shots, we then have to account for the fact that the first shot of the woman (a medium shot) cannot be a point of view shot, since the torso of the man in the balcony comes into frame (identified by the shirt he wears), moving behind her from left to right. He, then, puts his left arm around her head and opens up the eyelids of her left eye (screen right), lifts his right arm above the bottom line of the frame and, holding a straight razor blade we had seen him sharpen before, begins a right to left motion just in front of her opened eye; suddenly (and before the blade has made any contact with her eye), the film cuts to the same shot of the moon, with a thin blade-like streak of clouds slicing[56] in front of it (which could just as easily

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[56]J.H. Matthews states that this type of parallelism is undermined by the revulsion stemming from the next shot of the eye truly being sliced (1971:84-90). For him, the strategy of the movie is to erase all rational explanation; but, he tends to go into a facile and equally dismissible valorization of irrationalism for its own sake. Kyrou, for example, castigates the facile irrationalism that he sees in Dalí; and points out how the same scandalous shots that are means of publicity for Dalí, instead have a revolutionary intention, for Buñuel (1971:207-9). Matthews'

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trigger the connection between the moon and the cloud of cigarette smoke in front of the man's face and not a connection with the woman's face), and then we cut to a close up of an eyeball which gets sliced allowing the vitreous humor to spill out. It, therefore, could just as easily be said that the film privileges a mentally-internalized point of view, rather than a lexical-semantic-metaphoric second level of semiosis. That is to say, it is possible to consider that the man in the balcony imagines himself slicing a woman's eyeball, especially since the second shot of the moon almost seems motivated by the slicing action (the Hollywood Model would invert the order of those two shots to offer a "psychological motivation" for the man's action).

More pointedly, though, that very sequence is the beginning of the whole film, which starts with a title saying "Once upon a time," and follows with a medium close up of two hands sharpening a straight

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attempt to be true to the Surrealists by refusing to go beyond the surface signification of the images ends up depoliticizing the film. Aranda offers Buñuel's justification of the same shot as a means to shock the audience, thus permitting them to view the film in a state of free association of ideas (1975:67). Aside from a curious echo of Eisenstein's "Montage of Attractions," this explanation is truly rationalist and rather at odds with the radically depoliticized Surrealist irrationalism espoused by Matthews.

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razor blade (the shot is framed right to left – the arms extend from the right edge of the frame to the left, where the blade slides across the strop); cut to a tight reverse medium shot of the man (he is framed left to right, with the blade presumably below the frame line). This strategy of "unmotivated" reverse angles coupled with shots in reverse order[57] will be repeated throughout the film. From the very beginning, the film is signaling its intention to make a problem out of the conventional

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[57]For example, just after the shot of the sliced eyeball there is a title saying "eight years later," then a short sequence of a man riding a bicycle towards a building. Then we see the woman, whose eyeball had been sliced, sitting in a room reading, suddenly she stops and looks up (as if she has heard something), then we see a street level shot of the cyclist riding from left to right (edited in reverse order to her reaction shot). The woman tosses the book, a closeup reveals drawings on it, and she exits the frame from left to right. The next shot is her going towards a window, but she moves right to left (reversed screen orientations); she looks out the window and recoils in reaction; then we see a top shot (her point of view) of the cyclist riding from right to left (reverse direction from the previous street level shot), he suddenly collapses to the ground near the lower frame line (slightly left to right, head towards bottom of frame, bike with its wheels towards the top). Cut back to a full shot of woman at the window, she looks and recoils again in reaction. Cut to top shot of man lying on the street, except this time he lies near the top line, from right to left, with his head towards the top of the frame and the bicycle wheels towards the bottom (i.e., this cannot be her physical point of view, despite the fact that it is the same point of view shot from the window). Later on, a couple will have a point of view shot from the window of a woman poking a severed hand with her walking cane for the blind, the same incongruity of reverse shots will operate.

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linkage between consecutive shots (associative montage).[58] In fact, in the Hollywood Model, this angle-reverse angle connection is usually reserved for characters facing each other or facing an object that they do not hold; whereas in this film, that relationship could become more of a metaphor for the relationship between viewer and screen, when we consider that the woman is sitting on a chair staring forward – Stuart Liebman wonders what she is staring at so intently; well, her attitude is as if she is watching a movie. The man comes in behind her (as Liebman reminds us, played by Buñuel himself), as if the director-turned-subconscious, literally seizing the viewer's head, was there to state: "now I am going to slice your eyeballs with my movie."

This connection between the moon and the slicing of the eye is only one of many cases in which an action in the interior of the

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[58]Paul Sandro speaks in the same vein of a disruption of relations between realistic and phantasmatic space (1987:31-2). But there are telling slippages in his analysis. For example, he talks about a top shot which shows an androgyne on the street, tapping on a severed hand with a cane; which then cuts to an objective shot of the same subject from the street level. Then he mentions matter of factly that this androgyne gets run over by a car. This is not so clear, as we will see below, since the "realistic" placements at the street level are disrupted, too; so that the relation from "shot A" as phantasmagoria to "shot B" as reality is too facile.

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apartment is followed by a continuation of the same action in an incongruous exterior. For example, later on in the movie, a man is shot (by books turned into revolvers) in the apartment, but he falls to the ground in a meadow surrounded by woods; as he falls, he slides off the naked back of a woman perched atop a rock, she literally dissolves off the shot (i.e., optical superimposition) and the lone figure of the man ends up lying on the grass. And, of course, we can also mention the famous final sequence, in which the woman walks out of the third story apartment, and the reverse angle shows her walking onto a beach with the ocean ahead.

There is, however, one clear instance in which an action from the exterior flows into the interior.[59] It happens when the couple at the

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[59]We are, of course, aware that a linguistic-semiotic or an aesthetic analysis is the preferred strategy to deal with Surrealist and avant-garde work. We are also aware that our spatial analysis of representation in this film has no precedent and no previous "authority" to legitimize it through "footnote reference." This analysis is not making either a superior or corrective claim over other modes of analysis, it is merely attempting to show other ways in which sense can be made of these films. Later on in this chapter, we apply this analysis to Vertov's *Man With the Movie Camera*, and in Chapter Six we present proposals for the application of this type of analysis to other films. Whether our own application of this analysis is successful or not will rest at least in part on the reader's judgement, whether this analysis can be a fertile way to approach the widest diversity of screen representations seems to so extensive in its possibilities as to be beyond dispute.

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window – presumably the man in the bike and the woman who was reading in the room – see a woman (played by the same actress at the window)[60] getting run over in the street. The woman, who appears to be blind, has been standing in the middle of the street holding a box with a severed hand inside, while car traffic keeps running around her. Next, we see a car coming straight towards the camera, placed at street level. This is a shot from her point of view, which is confirmed by the next shot, a medium closeup of her clutching the box and looking off to the side; suddenly, she lifts her head and looks straight ahead in panic – can she suddenly see? The following shot is a dolly in from inside the car,[61] which is rapidly moving towards the woman standing in the

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[60]The scene is very complex in its cross-referentiality to other moments of the film. For example, the severed hand is, well, handed to her by a cop, it has been placed in a box which is the same or identical to a box that the man in the bicycle was carrying around his neck before he collapsed in the street. The cyclist was wearing something that resembled a woman's dress over his tailored suit, while the woman with the cane has her hair cropped short and wears a masculine-looking tailored suit. Later on, we see the naked woman being fondled by the man, who turns out to be blind (even though it was her eye and not his that had been sliced presumably eight years before). This hint of confusion between the identity of the man and of the woman is one of the building blocks towards the complete collapse between internal (mental) and external (physical) reality in the whole film.

[61]First, the only other straight dolly in occurs when we first see the man riding the bicycle towards a building (presumably his point of view of the building he is

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middle of the street; she brings her hands up and opens them in front of her face as she screams in horror while the box lies on the ground by her feet. However, the next cut is to the same medium close up of the woman still clutching the box as her shoulders and head recoil backwards. This is followed by a full shot at street level in which we see the car moving from right to left towards the woman, who stands screaming in the middle of the frame with her hands still open by her face. As the car is about to hit her, we cut to a reaction close up of the man at the window, then to the top shot from the window – the woman is lying on the ground while the car speeds out of frame, still moving from right to left (one of the few instances of continuity in the screen orientations); only then do some of the pedestrians, who had previously

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approaching, and which may or may not be where the woman sits with the book of drawings); perhaps it is a memory of someone else he ran over? Second, only the man at the window seems to notice her standing in the middle of the street, he calls it to the attention of the woman standing next to him, but the reaction shots of the accident are exclusively close ups of the man at the window (the reactions, if any, of the woman at the window are completely left out of frame and, therefore, out of the diegesis). The pedestrians and a cop had been observing her poke the hand with her blind person's cane, and yet never thought of guiding her to the sidewalk once she got the hand in the box; they just left her alone, while the people at the window react in panic – is she really *there*?

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left her in the middle of the street, enter frame and move towards her motionless body. Cut back to the reaction closeup of the man at the window, he looks downward for a beat or two, then turns his head left and walks out of frame from right to left (towards the place where the woman at the window would be standing). Cut inside the apartment to an over the shoulder medium reverse shot of the woman standing at the window, the man (obviously seen from the back and closest to the camera) is looking out the window, then he turns towards her and begins to advance away from the camera and towards her – this is one of the few times in the movie that the cut does not match on action[62] and, thus, continues to reinforce not only the lack of realism (the viewer's relation to the shot and its continuity with the next one), but also the uniqueness of this particular sequence within the overall diegetic and syntagmatic strategy of the movie. The sequence will

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[62]That is, the action in the reverse medium shot overlaps what we already saw in the previous close up. Alan Williams claims that the film is carefully done (1992:153), with scrupulous match cutting and framed in American shots (medium shots cut at or just above the waist), etc. From a technical standpoint, he is correct; however, in his zeal to show that Buñuel was no film amateur, he fails to discuss the precise relation between normative form (Hollywood Model) and its calculated disruption in this film.

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continue with a series of shot/reverse shot back and forth (the camera is now "objective;" that is to say, not one of those shots is from the point of view of one of the characters). The man continues to advance towards the woman, she simply stands still; then, he grabs her by the sides of her torso and slides his hands over her breasts. She backs away and continues walking backwards out of frame (left to right); cut to a medium shot of him looking to the right and walking towards her (she is off camera); cut back to a medium shot of her backing away from the camera and towards a wall; cut back again to a medium shot of him entering frame and stopping right as she reaches her against the wall. The rest of the sequence goes on with him cornering her and groping her breasts, quickly dissolving from her dressed body to her nude body, perhaps indicating that he is imagining her nude and he is blind. He is, then, pushed off to the middle of the room, where he takes some ropes and begins to pull two grand pianos with dead donkeys and a couple of priests who dangle from the ropes (one of the most famous shots of this iconic film). The important element, for us, is only the beginning of this sequence; because it mimics (although it does not

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exactly replicate) the previous sequence, where the woman was run over in the street – it is as if the man in the apartment had become the same as the car advancing head on towards the helpless woman.

As we already established, this is the only time when an action flows from the exterior to the interior location, a privilege accorded only to the urban space. The shot/reverse shot of the sequence seems to mirror the reverse flow of "motivation," as if the street for once behaved as a reverse shot in relation to the interior of the apartment. Viewed in tandem with *That Crazy Ray*, these two Surrealist filmmakers seem to be driving at the ominous undertones of urban space and its technology (cars, ray guns, etc). The unconditional celebration of science and technology in the Dada movement now finds itself flowing from its objective realm (the space of everyday city life) towards the subjective realm of the mind (where people are frozen, and where coming or going and seeing or being blind are immaterial). Simmel's question about the effect of urban life on the mind seems to be taken for granted by the Surrealists, who now seem to ask: given that our subjectivity had been blinded and run over by the

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homogenizing objectivity of science and technology, how can we determine what it means these days to see, to feel (and lust), to be able to leave the madness behind?

These were not necessarily "national questions," these were problems of modernity at large. In that sense, the avant-garde was "universal," rather than nationalist; and, because of this, it was also a closer "cultural" manifestation of Fordism than any other form, except for cinema as a whole. By the same token, a brief mention[63] needs to be made of the relationship between the avant-garde and the national cinema that did emerge in France during the 1930s. In general terms, the advent of synchronized sound (recorded dialogue) allowed countries with a studio system – France, Germany, Japan (Britain did

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[63]To our great regret, we will have to leave out the work of Poetic Realism (Carné, Duvivier, Gremillon) and of Renoir, Vigo and the "mainstream" Clair. From a cinematic standpoint, this work observed most of the narrative and rhetorical strategies of the Hollywood Model, their strength is "style" (i.e., their variation on the Hollywood Model). Because of this, we have chosen to leave out the German Expressionists (whose stylistic pyrotechnics embellish what is nothing more than a Hollywood Model psychologism); and we have used 1929, the year of the Fordist crisis, to cut off our look at the French and the other European cinema. This also leaves out the Pre-War masterpieces of Japan (Ozu, Mizoguchi and the Monumental Style).

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have studios, but also problems of language competition) – to somewhat contest the onslaught of Hollywood imports. If the work of the Poetic Realists seems to add a French touch through language and attitude, it may well be that the more emblematically French (and more enduring) films are those of Clair and Renoir. The Poetic Realism ultimately recast the old bourgeois melodrama around the figure of the doomed man, rather than the victimized woman; and its vision remained anchored on individually embodied examples of the lingering "*comédie humaine*." Renoir and Clair, by contrast, actually seemed to involve the whole of French society in their films, and thus to speak for an entire nation. One of the explanations is offered by "some critics" (Sesonske 1980:388) who attribute a certain historical continuity in some of Renoir's films, forming a sort of informal trilogy out of *La Grande Illusion* (1937), *La Marseillaise* (1938), and *The Rules of the Game* (1938).

One can certainly see the intervention of history, language, music, and landscape to create a French vision, just like those of any nation-building effort since the Romanticism. But it is more accurate

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to see the inclusion of a specifically cross-sectioned social slice within a unique space as the reason for a French perspective within these films. For example, Clair's *Le Million* (1931) in which the search for a winning lottery ticket accidentally left in the pocket of a discarded jacket, allows the filmmaker to gather an entire neighborhood within the same apartment house[64] in a collective dance of celebration as soon as the ticket is recovered: friendships are regained and fortune is made. This is the same strategy followed by Renoir in *La Marseillaise*, in which he includes a whole cross section of the middle class within the group that marches towards Paris, but he also has a generous look at the ruling monarch and his aristocrats (mediated by the iconic figure of Louis Jouvet playing Roederer, the liaison between the revolutionaries and the King's court) – so that the only real villains are the foreigners (Buchsbaum 1988:259). This cross-sectional strategy will become

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[64]A whole book could be written on the use of the house as a metaphor for the nation – just to mention a handful of examples, G.B. Shaw's *Heartbreak House*, Renoir's *Rules of the Game,* Cantinflas' *Ahí está el detalle*, Zheng Junli's *Crows and Sparrows*, Torre Nilsson's *The Hand in the Trap*; and lately, Jeunot and Caro's *Delicatessen*, the house with its basement in Kusturica's *Underground*, and the work of some Chilean writers after the Allende coup (e.g., Donoso, Skármeta, and Isabel Allende).

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even more concentrated in a single space in *The Rules of the Game* (1939), under the shadow of an impending war.

However, unlike the more monolithically consistent presentation of Hollywood directors, these French *auteurs* demonstrate a tension between representations of space. That is why a film like *La Bête Humaine* (1938) seems so out of place in Renoir's work during the 1930s, since it reclaims the individual drama of the Poetic Realism (including the return of Jean Gabin to work in a Renoir film) and it occurs largely in that interstitial space of the train track between the large city and the rural terminal (itself a liminal space, not quite part of the actual town, just the point where the train ends its run). More significantly, Clair ends *À Nous la Liberté* (1931) precisely in the opposite manner as *Le Million* (also 1931), with people who are and will continue to be excluded from spaces of social status and profitability. Renoir shows the same thing in *The Rules of the Game*, not only for the servants (explainable by their class-based identity), but also for Octave (played by Renoir himself), the one character who tried to bring everyone together and to mediate all disputes throughout the

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film. It is no coincidence that the Clair film is still imbued by the spirit of the avant-garde in its rendering of the oppressive factory interiors with its monstrous machines and impersonally dictatorial Taylorist overlords (prefiguring Chaplin's *Modern Times*); while, by contrast, the self-refection involved in the expulsion of the peacemaker-as-film-director in the Renoir film is a classic gesture of High Modernism in general.

Perhaps no other French film of the 1930s reflects these contradictions more clearly than Renoir's own *A Day in the Country* (1936). This is a film anchored on a literary classic (de Maupassant), with a bucolic landscape full of local folk to which and to whom city dwellers *"return,"* and a love story that promises to unite the socio-demographic poles represented in the story – tragically for both lovers, this fails to materialize and instead we have a sad ending of bourgeois conformity and regret. When viewed carefully, however, this film seems to stretch the framing norm of the Hollywood model to its maximum. For example, Sesonske (1980:244) notes only the framing of the two attractive city women swinging back and forth

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while two local boys watch them through the window (another self-reflective allusion to filmmaking, made even more personal by the fact that it replicates a painting by the director's famous father). But this scene goes beyond mere framing from a single angle, with the camera moving closer to the swings and showing a highly complex set of spatial relations between parents and swinging daughter, males in the family and swinging females, etc.; all rendered through a series of shot/reverse shots that locate one character at the edge of the frame and another at the opposite edge, only to reverse that relation again. This literally ex-centric framing strategy will continue throughout the film (even involving a singing nightingale perched on a branch); in doing so, the river that serves as the meaningful clue, since attention is now drawn not to the center of the frame (where the river would be metonymic) but to the edges of the frame where the river flows (into-through-off frame) as "the course of life" (metaphor). Thus, what could have potentially been the most nationalist rendering of French life, at least by Renoir, becomes universalized as a Modernist look upon the universal human condition. This tension between metaphoric

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universalism and metonymic localism may serve to explain the lack of a politically-centered position in *La Marsellaise* (Buchsbaum 1988:250-70, esp. 256) out of Renoir's (and France's) incapacity to balance the conflict between the forces of Fordist internationalism and regular nationalism.

VII

Peter Wollen (1982) writes about two cinematic avant-gardes, the French one which descended from painting, and has left a legacy of "introverted ontology" searching for the nature of cinema in the very physical elements of the photographic process or of film strip itself. The other avant garde came out of "the theater (Eisenstein), and futurist sound-poetry (Vertov)" (*ibid.*, p. 94).[65] That strain of the avant-garde

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[65]One can assume that Wollen is basing this assessment of Vertov on Sadoul (1973). Sadoul, indeed, shows how Vertov's initial interest was to create "sound montage" with the then new sound recording devices – those experiments might have prefigured Varèse's "concrete music" rather than a true montage. At any event, Sadoul quotes amply from Marinetti and especially Apolinaire's sound poetry during that section of his book, but in the end admits that Vertov probably never heard of this during his sound period. Vertov soon discarded that approach and moved fully into "arming the eye" while filming for the *Kino Nedelia* (Cinema Week), during the Heroic Period of the civil war (see Vertov in Schnitzer and Martin 1973:79).

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showed greater concern with the manipulation of ideas and the communication of concepts, inherited later on by Godard or Straub and Huilet. That consideration alone would make it imperative that we take a closer look at this second avant-garde; more so, since this was the only avant-garde group that found itself in a truly revolutionary situation – which promised not only a new application of Modernist principles, but a new state of de-alienation that would incorporate the conscious process of artistic production in the building of a new society (perhaps even the possibility of creating a non-bourgeois nation, however contradictory this might sound). However, although Wollen briefly considers the "institutional context" in which art and culture are produced (p. 103), this seems to fall into that strand of criticism which sees the films themselves as exemplary phenomenological events by their very nature, and turns the analysis itself into a Modernist form of knowledge out of self-reflection (Penley 1989:36). This approach "makes it difficult, if not impossible, to consider the spectator's unconscious relation to the film, the screen, the *entire viewing situation*" (*ibid.*, pp. 36-7, our italics). We must turn, then, away from

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Wollen's phenomenologism to this consideration of spatially situated avant-garde producers and their equally situated viewers.

In Lefebvreian terms, the "cultural site" of the avant-garde continued to be a practice of (Taylorist-Fordist) *differential space*; while the Hollywood Model had already institutionalized a codified process (regulation) of proto-linguistic calculation into the practice of the mainstream movie house and the mainstream screen, turning these places into *abstract space*. Yet, this "forward look" also found its visual representation (both in painting and in the cinema) in the repetitive, patterned, calculated motion of mechanical pieces (gears, levers, pivots, wheels) and, on a larger scale, in the repetitive, patterned and calculated circulation of people through the city. In other words, the practice of the avant-garde remained firmly within the "capitalist project" of calculability and abstract value; any opposition it may have presented in relation to mainstream politics was always the continuation of a utopian side of Fordism. This happened, as Lefebvre pointed out in relation to Soviet socialism, because neither the aesthetic nor the political avant-gardes were able to produce a new space

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beyond the urban landscapes created by Fordist technology and demographics. Thus, by treating cities as "revolutionary" or innovative sites (differential space) where mechanical technology and efficiency retained a certain magical desirability, the avant-garde participated in the continuation and maintenance of the utopian-transformative possibilities of Fordism, when its ideological possibilities were becoming rigid and institutionalized.

In a certain sense, if we extend the concept of *flâneurie* to the activities of the avant-garde – and the Surrealists clearly behaved like *flâneurs* – then we have to conceive of their spatial activities as "productive." That is to say, setting aside any revolutionary claims, we can see that the avant-garde was itself involved in a spatial practice, recasting the city as a differential space (technological Modernism). Their art cannot be understood apart from the new urban experience exemplified by their own activities geared towards group cohesion (journals, lectures, cine-clubs, happenings, etc), precisely because those activities were as crucial to the production of Fordist cities as the building of factories, roads, new housing developments, etc. To turn

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the work of the avant-garde into mere aesthetic representation is not only a mistake that "tears ... [artistic] work out of its historical context" (Aronowitz 1981:213), it also misconstrues the totality of the process of socio-historical transformation (be it called a historic bloc, a regulatory phase, or a "new order"). When we understand the differential "aesthetic" space of the avant-garde to be exactly the same as the differential "economic" space of Fordism (that is, the technological city), then we can see the connection between the formal and the substantive choices presented in the artworks themselves.

The revolutionary practice that eluded the French avant-garde was certainly present in the Russian reality, beginning in 1905, when the revolution failed; and steadily growing through the 1910s and 1920s, with the Bolshevik takeover of power in the context of World War I. The takeover of power, however, complicated matters, since the revolution was now engulfed in the "national question;" thus, from Lenin to the lowliest rural deputy in Kamchatka, all revolutionaries had to confront the problem of building a socialist nation. This, too, became an issue for the revolutionary avant-garde movements of the

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1920s, with the Bolsheviks themselves claiming to be the "vanguard of the proletariat." No two movements within the Russian avant-garde encapsulate the whole combination of issues – nationalism, revolutionary culture and politics, utilitarian materialism, urban and technological centerdness, etc – like the Suprematists and the Constructivists. Despite their short-lived existence (brutally ended by Stalin), they exerted a key influence on the filmmakers, most notably on Eisenstein and Vertov. Therefore, it is important to examine their own work and theories, before dealing with the key film of the Russian avant-garde, Vertov's *The Man With the Movie Camera* (1929).

The avant-garde movement in Russia actually started relatively early, well before the civil conflict of 1905. Groups of artists began to emerge as early as the 1860s, like "The Wanderers," whose aspiration was to create "work subordinated to reality," and whose inspiration came from writers like Chernishevsky and Nekrassov (Gray 1962:9-10); or the "Knave of Diamonds," a group active in the 1890s, which merely produced an internationalist aestheticism derivative of the Blaue Reiter or the Fauves (*ibid.*, p. 37 ff).

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The failure of 1905 was, nevertheless, instrumental in forging real hopes of social transformation in the younger groups of the avant-garde; which, symptomatically, began to be called "Futurists," a self-imposed label having more to do with a will to create an art of the future, than with any direct connection with the Italian movement spearheaded by Marinetti (Gray 1962:94). In 1912, the "Donkey's Tail" group had its first show, which presented the first examples of Larionov's Rayism; and 1915 became a seminal year with two exhibitions, the "Tramway V" and, later on, the "0.10 Last Futurist Exhibition," with Tatlin's Constructivism and Malevich's Suprematism at the forefront – in effect, marking also the emergence of non-figurative abstractionism in art and the moment in which Russian art stood ahead of the whole world. The "Donkey's Tail" exhibit took place the same year that the move from Piquette Avenue to the Highland Park plant allowed Ford Motors to kick its production into high-gear and Griffith moved permanently to Hollywood. The "Tramway V" and "0.10" exhibits took place the same year that the millionth Model T was sold and Griffith produced *Birth of A Nation.*

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There is more than circumstantial connection here, especially when we examine some of the writings and manifestoes of the artists.

Larionov's Rayist manifesto, distributed during the 1913 "Target" exhibition (Gray 1992:136), expresses in literal terms the sense of Modernist rupture that characterizes their break with the older groups of the avant-garde

> we declare this bluntly and frankly – we consider ourselves to be the creators of modern art. ...
> Art of life and even more – life for art!
> We exclaim, the whole brilliant style of modern times – our trousers, jackets, shoes, trolleys, cars, airplanes, railways, grandiose steamships – is fascinating, is a great epoch, one that has known no equal in the entire history of the world.
> We reject individuality as having no meaning for the examination of a work of art. One has to appeal only to a work of art, and one can examine it only by proceeding from the laws according to which it was created. ...
> Long live the beautiful East! We are joining forces with contemporary Eastern artists to work together.
> Long live nationality! We march hand in hand with our ordinary house painters. ...
> We are against the West, which is vulgarizing our forms and Eastern forms, and which is bring down the level of everything. ...
> More than anything else, we value intensity of feeling and its great sense of uplifting. ...
> The style of rayonist painting that we advance signifies spatial forms arising from the intersection of the reflected rays of various objects, forms chosen by the artist's will.

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> The ray is depicted provisionally on the surface by a colored line. That which is valuable for the lover of painting finds its maximum expression in a rayonist picture. The objects that we see in life play no role here, but that which is the essence of painting itself can be shown here best of all – the combination of color, its saturation in relation of colored masses, depth, texture; anyone who is interested in painting can give his full attention to all these things (in Bowlt 1988:89-90).

There is a clear nation-building impetus linked to a stance of anti-alienation or anti-rationalization (in Weber's terms), which Larionov sees as stemming from the West; and, it is a "forward looking" course in its call to break away with tradition and to pay attention to the present, especially in its material objects of everyday life. This vision calls for a painterly specificty that breaks down the represented object into basic constitutive elements projected as rays into space, and also breaks down the constitutive elements of painting, reducing them to a dimensional (if not calculable) relation to color.

This position is stark in separating painting from nature (or the "ocular" representation of nature), and in also separating painting from its social context to advance a hermetic universe of painterly laws and rules for interpretation. In the long run, this was to be the central

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position of the avant-garde: the Suprematists certainly followed the separation from nature and the linkage between pure sense-perception and pure painterly elements (Gray 1992:166), the Constructivists issued their internal and self-contained notions of the spatialized art object and a politicized breakdown of its constitutive elements. The "Russian Formalists"[66] would make grand theory out of this internalized specificity: the work standing alone, related only to other such work and to the rules of its own making.

Suprematism, which Malevitch himself claimed to have started in 1913 but not shown in public until 1915 (in Bowler 1988:144; Gray 1962:160), predates any other abstract movement in the Western visual arts. His signature peace, *Black Square*, became iconic image and statement all at once. In many ways, this was a logical prolongation of Larionov's posture

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[66]There was never such a group, that label was applied later on to the Russian linguistic and literary critics of the 1920s, who were interested in developing an analysis of the internal laws (i.e., non-contextual, except in relation to other texts) of the literary or artistic work. Most of these critics – Eichenbaum, Shklovsky, Propp, Tinianov, Jakobson, and Bakhtin – were sympathetic to the avant-garde but, with the exception of Osip Brik, not direct participants. See, Todorov 1976; Ehrlich 1981 and Eagle 1981.

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> At present, man's path lies across space – across suprematism, the semaphore of color in its fathomless depths.
> The blue of the sky has been conquered by the suprematist system, has been breached and has passed into the white beyond as the true, real conception of eternity, and has therefore been liberated from the sky's colored background.
> This system, cold and durable, is mobilized unsmilingly by philosophical thought, or at least, its real force is already moving within that system (in Bowlt 1988:144).

Self-consciously anchored within the historical context of modernization ("at present, man's path, etc."), Malevich seems to claim superiority over his predecessors in the avant-garde by legitimizing his approach as a *system*, a cold and durable pictorial regimen "mobilized unsmilingly by philosophical thought." This is the Taylorist mode of regulation internalized as self-guiding precept for ascetic art, with philosophy as its unsmiling foreman. Only a machine-centered culture could nurture and sustain an art based on patterns of decontextualized geometric figures (pure calculability turned pictorial). And, in his manifesto of 1915, Malevich is quite delirious in this respect

> Honor the futurists who forbade the painting of female hams, the painting of portraits and guitars in the moonlight.
> They made a huge step forward: they abandoned meat and glorified the machine.
> *But meat and the machine are the muscles of life.*

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> Both are the bodies that gave life movement.
> It is here that two worlds have come together.
> The world of meat and the world of iron (in Bowlt 1988:125; original italics).

This is the utopian dreamworld of the Russian Modernists, the somatization of technology and its hybridization with the body.[67] As we will see shortly below, this hybridization of the human organism and technology is of paramount importance to Vertov's concept of *kino glaz*, but the seed of an avant-gardist notion of the perfectible ocular perception is already found in Larionov's manifesto of 1913

> Our eye is an imperfect apparatus; we think that our sight is mainly responsible for transmitting concrete life to our cerebral centers, but in fact, it arrives there in its correct form not thanks to our sight, but thanks to other senses. A child sees objects for the first time upside down, and subsequently this defect of sight is corrected by the other senses. However much he desires to, an adult cannot see an object upside down.
> Hence it is evident to what degree our inner conviction is important with regard to things existing in the outside world. If

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[67]This became an incredibly powerful trope in the avant-garde work of the first half of the century (e.g., Čapek's *RUR*, of 1921, the play where the word "robot" was coined; Rivera's mural from 1934, *Man at the Crossroads*, destroyed by Rockefeller but recreated later in Mexico City), and in the commercial narrative cinema and television of the United States in the latter half (HAL, the humanized computer gone awry in Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odissey* from 1968, or the technologically enhanced anatomy of *The Sixth Million Dollar Man* from 1974 and the Borg in *Star Trek: The Next Generation* from 1987).

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> with regard to certain things, we know that they must be as they are because science reveals this to us, we do remain certain that this is as it should be and not otherwise despite the fact that we cannot apprehend this directly by our senses (in Bowlt 1988:97-8).

The futuristic artists were taking part, with unabashed enthusiasm, in the technological and scientific demolition of the old Humanism handed down from Renaissance philosophy; with it, they were also confronting the decentering of the human organism and its cognitive capacity. There is also a sense that the work of futuristic art serves as a way to arbitrate the relationship between defective human perception and corrective scientific system; this, in embryo, is already a regulatory conceptualization. With the Constructivists, the avant-garde takes a greater concern with space.

The non-figurativist turn of the Suprematists paved the way for Tatlin and the Constructivists to engage in greater experimentation with art as material practice

> like Malevich, Tatlin is not concerned with the object or person as an individual entry and both, though in such different ways, subordinate their figures to a geometric pattern. But if Malevich's ... works emphasize the two dimensional character of his medium, Tatlin is concerned not with a new pictorial space,

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> but ultimately with real space. He dissects an object not in order to arrive at a truer visual representation of the object like the Cubists, but in order to incorporate real space created through colour and surface play. Colour and canvas are treated as materials in their own right (Gray 1962:172).

Like Husserl's Phenomenology, the Russian avant-garde goes back "to the things themselves;" a new tabula rasa resulting from the dethroning of the human-centeredness of Renaissance rationalism. The semantic level was no longer an operative concern, because the work of art did not depend on the viewer's contact with a "higher truth." The work of art now stood, in relation to the viewer, as an independent phenomenon in its own right – i.e., when seeing a flower while walking through the meadow, we seldom if ever stop to ask, "what does the flower *mean*?" That is the same status that the work of art has for the Constructivists – it simply is. But if it has a sheer ontology,[68] just as Cavell would posit

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[68]It is not that the subject disappears. In fact, the subject emerges as a stronger entity in its self-sufficiency and independence from a higher order. The problem for the avant-garde, as it was for the Phenomenologists, was the collapse of the Cartesian Cogito, which had anchored the human-centered rationality of the Renaissance in a sheer mentalism equipped with a method for the correct understanding of data reaching the mind as impulses intuitively perceived by the human senses. Now that the human senses had come to be understood as incorrect and unreliable, the transcendental Cogito needed to be replaced by a new legislative function of Reason; or, as it was the case with the Phenomenologists and the non-figurativist artists, to be discarded altogether.

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with respect to the screen, then the chief concern becomes the fact that the work exists *in* space and it also exists *as* space. If the Rayists were concerned with the depiction of the ray of light as it traveled off the object towards the human eye, the Constructivists actually became concerned with how the object extended its own space into the space of the wall upon where it hanged, and then towards the rest of the gallery where the exhibit was taking place, etc. Like the cinema, Constructivism became a practice of linked spaces of signification. At the level of the work itself, Tatlin began to produce "paintings in relief," where pieces of objects jutted out from what otherwise would have been a conventionally flat canvas; eventually he began to produce three dimensional objects, experimenting with the manner in which those materials projected themselves into space. The most innovative were the "corner reliefs," meant to deal with projection into space at the point where the plains of the two walls came together (Gray 1962:180-3; Lodder 1983:12-17). The available environment (space, walls) was incorporated into the particular existence of the piece itself. Some years later, Diego Rivera would take the same functional approach to

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the architectural characteristics of the walls and buildings that he painted (most notably, the stunning murals in the Chapel at Chapingo); and Malevich – who in 1913 had already ventured into the "spatial application" of his work with the geometric-shaped costumes and backdrops he designed for Kruchenikh's opera, *Victory Over the Sun* (Gray 1962:158-9) – turned from painting to three dimensional models of abstract architecture (*ibid.*, pp. 166-7). The most interestingly idiosyncratic space, however, was the *Café Pittoresque*, where Tatlin and Rodchenko hung all manner of circular and semi-circular relief objects from the ceilings and walls, while the Moscow bourgeoisie frequented the place in order to witness the antics and posturings of Larionov, Goncharova, Mayakovsky and the rest of the avant-garde (Gray 1962:212-18). Significantly enough, this café was enthusiastically promoted by the industrialist Filippov, the connection between differential space of representation and industry thus becoming quite evident, even in the remote backwaters of Russia.

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With the revolution, the attention of the Constructivists shifted from the space of the artwork itself to the social space beyond the studio, gallery, or Dadaesque café

> the rebuilding of life cast aside the old concept of nations classes patriotisms and imperialism which had been completely discredited.
> the rebuilding of the town threw into utter confusion both its isolated elements – houses streets squares bridges – and its new systems which cut across the old ones – underground metro underground monorail electricity transmitted under the ground and above the ground. this all developed on top of a new powerhouse whose pumps sucked in the whole of creation. technology which in its achievements took the most direct route from the complexity of the train tot the simplicity of the aeroplane from the basic primitiveness of the steam boiler to the economy of the dynamo from the chaotic hubbub of the telegraphic network to the uniformity of radio was diverted by the war from the path of construction and forced on to the paths of death and destruction.
> into this chaos came suprematism extolling the square as the very source of all creative expression. and then came communism and extolled work as the true source of man's heartbeat (Lissitzky in Bowlt 1988:153-4).

One of the striking elements of this passage is the incorporation of sociological explanations for changes in urban space which serve as the basis for Modernist art. In addition, there is an attempt to forge a

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materialist basis for revolutionary art – i.e., the basic square must now be given full human essence by linking it to all forms of work.

After the October Revolution, the Constructivists joined their fellow workers in all kinds of activities. They hung banners and backdrops on buildings and staged great spectacles with thousands of people reenacting, for example, the storming of the Winter Palace (Gray 1962:121-3). These mass spectacles would serve as the basis for Pudovkin's *The End of St. Petersburg*, Eisenstein's "Odessa steps" scene in *Battleship Potemkin*, as well as the scenes of worker massacres in the streets of Moscow and the storming of the palace in *October* (Cohen 1974:52-3). They also joined forces with other revolutionary organizations, like Bogdanov's Proletkult, to advance the proletariat and reject tradition and folklore; they also followed the government's call to produce agitational art, going on to decorate trains and boats in order to travel around the USSR spreading revolutionary concepts (Gray 1062:124-5), while Mayakovsky called on the armies of culture to go into the factories to read and display their art.

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Additionally, through such avant-garde organizations as the Society of Young Artists (OBMOKhU) and the Institute of Artistic Culture (INKhUK), the Constructivists engaged in all sorts of debates and pronouncements on how to execute their work. The consensus, if there was any, centered around the treatment of the *materials* that made up the piece to be constructed and on the utilitarian nature of their work. The most emblematic application of these concepts was, undoubtedly, Tatlin's project for a *Monument to the Third International* (planned during 1921, with drawings and a couple of models made out of wood but, of course, never carried out). The idea was to erect a tilted spiral structure, somewhat reminiscent of the Tower of Pisa, but mostly reminiscent of the Eiffel Tower (Tatlin had visited Paris) with its crisscrossing structural supports. Inside this enormous tower would be three rotating chambers made of glass: the lowest one, shaped like a cube, would take a full rotation in the course of a year and would be utilized by the legislative assemblies; the middle chamber, shaped like a pyramid, would take one month to rotate in full and would be destined for the executive committees; the third

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chamber, shaped like sphere, would rotate in one day and would be used as a radio broadcast center to communicate to the people with news from other parts of the USSR or from the rest of the world and with messages and edicts from the government branches laboring below (Gray 1962:226; Lodder 1993:61-62).

This, in effect, is already Fordist art and culture. The intent to reach a mass public is palpable, so is the inclination towards some type of highly refined and formulated standardization of single elements to be assembled according to plan; and there is a utilization of space for regulatory purposes – i.e., the glass chambers that rotate in calendric ways to facilitate state administration and its integration to mass broadcasts.

Then came the drought and widespread famine, especially in the interior provinces of Russia and the Ukraine, accompanied by peasant revolts along with the famous mutiny of the sailors in the Kronstadt fortress (Andrle 1994; Kaser 1970). The state had been engaged in a fierce civil war and had only concerned itself with the aggregate (macroeconomic) measurement of economic performance and

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utilization, despite the fact that its command over productive and distributive activities was almost total. Thus, the government was woefully unprepared to deal in detailed terms (microeconomic) with the slump in productivity, and with the administrative bottlenecks and disparities in distribution (Kaser 1970). Thus came the first attempt by the new Soviet state to establish a formalized type of economic regulation: the New Economic Policy, better known as NEP (Andrle 1994; Kaser 1970). In a nutshell, the NEP allowed for peasants to pay taxes in grain and to sell their surplus in the open market, while small business enterprises (mostly retail) were allowed to reopen in the cities; additionally, the government began to implement planned programs to build infrastructure (such as GOELRO, the plan for electrification of the USSR), and created a series of agencies and semi-official intermediaries to deal with a mixed economy.

This came to the dismay of the leftists who made up the Constructivist movement. Even Lunacharsky (commonly regarded as Lenin's minister of cultural affairs and, officially, the head of the People's Commisariat for Enlightment or NarKomPros) would

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complain about the return of the drinking establishment and its connection to art under NEP; he also reiterated the need that the Revolution (i.e., the Soviet State by then) had for art as the best means to continue its labor of agitational propaganda to push the masses towards the pursuit and attainment of social and economic transformation (in Bowlt 1988:190-196). Years later, Zhdanov (Lunacharsky's successor) would tweak the Fordism inherent in this idea by quoting Stalin's pronouncement on writers as "engineers of human souls" (*ibid.*, p. 293).

The situation of avant-garde artists became dire during the first years of NEP (the poet Khlebnikov actually died of starvation during the years of famine), Lenin and the Soviet leadership hated avant-garde art (Andel in Andrews and Kalinovska:228) and a reorganized Narkompros simply began privileging more traditional art, expelling the Constructivists and denying them funding. It became nearly a matter of life and death for the Constructivists to argue for their work and for their theoretical positions. One of the most fiery rebuttals to NEP, from a left perspective (the Constructivists were grouped around

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LEF, the front of leftist artists), was presented by Alexei Gan in his Manifesto of 1922 (in Bowlt 1988:217-225). Echoing *The Communist Manifesto*, Gan argues against art as an outdated idea based on spiritual beliefs that propped up the priestly class of antiquity, now turned into the art patrons and government functionaries of the present. Echoing the *Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy*, Gan argues that human relationships are structured by the technological organization of society, from which he derives the following slogan as part of the tasks facing revolutionary artists: "Labor, technology, organization!" For Gan, Constructivist work eschews aesthetics in favor of industrial-like production, and deals with the making of the piece according to the following disciplines: 1) Tectonics, which deals with the ideological and social context of the ideas for the work; 2) Faktura (sometimes translated as "texture"), which deals with the selection and handling of the materials of the piece; and 3) Construction, which deals with the organization of the piece and the overall concept resulting from the other two disciplines (Gray 1962:258; Lodder 1993:99). Ironically,

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Gan would perish in Stalin's labor camps, along with other radically Marxist Constructivists, like Arvatov, Kushner and Klutsis.[69]

At this point, the ideology of Regulatory Fordism is fully evident: it is no accident that the slogan seems precisely to lead from labor, through technology, to organization; and it is no coincidence that the disciplinary ladder from tectonics to construction seems to follow the same pattern. This is as much a blueprint for "organized socialism," as the New Deal became a program for "organized capitalism" (cf., Lash and Urry 1987). At the same time, this group had

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[69]Jaroslav Andel speaks of the paradox faced by the Western avant-garde which "thrived in the very political and economic systems it sought to eliminate," while the Russian Constructivists avoided this by joining the Revolution, only to face the irony of being eliminated by their own government (in Andrews and Malinovska 1990:223). At the same time, these artists had considerable influence in Russia and in the Western world. There is a debate between those, like Donald Drew Egbert, who argue that the avant-garde could only be supported by a liberal-democratic system, and those who argue that the West absorbed Constructivism only by discarding the politics (p. 238; Andel does not give a reference, we imagine he means Lodder 1990:225-238; and Hal Foster in Andrews and Malinovska, pp. 242-253). Andel finds fault with an inherent reductionism of both positions, and claims that these divergent views are based on the notion that rival political systems are mutually exclusive, pointing out the fact that avant-garde groups "transcended political divisions and definitions" and influenced each other across the globe (p. 238). This analysis would seem to indicate a certain validity to our own argument that these rival political systems and rival avant-garde groups were simply different wings of world Fordism, which could explain the global influence of Modernist art without recourse to some mysterious "transcendence."

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been cast away from the center of power, these artists were now in the position of a counter elite and their work seems to result from this counterhegemonic impulse. Their work became more fragmented and, in many cases, more non-figurative and utilitarian than it was before. The experimental work became functional and, at the same time, sparing in its structural conception. For example, Klutsis, as well as Gabo and Pevsner (whose relationship to the other Constructivists was tenuous), began to design models for columns which consisted mainly of two intersecting rectangular plains, or of a rectangular block made up by thin strips of material arranged in a grid pattern. Rodchenko would take flat strips in circular or oval shapes and would arrange them at varying angles to create a spherical object suspended in space. These projects would create a sense of volume by simply taking the minimal structural fragment (a strip, a flat plain), letting the viewer fill in the rest of the sculpture out of the "negative space" that existed between these minimal elements. A further fragmentation, standardization and serialization in the sequencing of production tasks was carried out for

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the curriculum of VkhUTEMAS, an arts institute where many Constructivists taught.

Some abandoned all experimentation and turned to utilitarian design. Tatlin started designing ovens to heat houses with a minimum of fuel, as well as furniture and dishware; and, along with Stepanova, he also began to design functional clothes and garments for everyday wear and for sport. Rodchenko began to design collapsible cupboards and wardrobes; if we add the architectural designs of Golosov, Ginzburg, and Vesnin, then the Constructivists anticipated the "total design" ideas of the Bauhaus by almost a decade. Lissitzky set aside his architectonic PROUNs, a synthesis of multicolored squares arranged in the fashion of Constructivist sketches over a black Suprematist circle, and instead became invested in projects of graphic design for public display. Alexandra Exter designed the costumes and sets for Protazonov's science fiction film *Aelita* (1924),[70] and Lyubov Popova designed gigantic machine-like constructions for several plays

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[70]For a detailed account of Protazonov's career and of this film, see Christie and Youngblood's contributions in Taylor and Christie (1991).

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staged by Mayerhold (who had undertaken a synthesis of Taylorist and Constructivist approaches by breaking down the basic elements of actors movements, turning them into "biomechanics;" see Wollen 1969:27-29). Klutsis began to design collapsible kiosks and portable stands for such agencies as MOSSELPROM (the Moscow agricultural goods store) or for book publishers. One of Klutsis collapsible kiosks, involved a tripod-like stand with a radio transmitter and a screen on top to broadcast radio messages and agitational propaganda in the streets and the rural areas. Rodchenko designed a plan for a "Cinema Car," a small flatbed truck which could show film in the streets and rural areas by mounting a screen above the driver's cabin.[71] Additionally, the Constructivists designed a whole variety of posters, some of the best known are Rodchenko's posters for Vertov's *Kino Glaz* series.

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[71]Louis Harris Cohen (1974:457) shows that "film installations" in rural areas rose (in thousands) from 0.14 in 1914 to 19.5 in 1940; of these, 11.5 were mobile units, which reached a peak of 30.2 as late as 1958. This was an important strategy for socialist nation building – in one of his *Kino Pravda* reels, Vertov shows a mobile unit setting up a screen in a small outdoor market square, and Octavio Cortázar's *Por primera vez* (1967) shows a mobile unit showing cinema (Chaplin's *Modern Times*) for the first time in a rural area of Cuba.

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The posters are a fascinating example of the synthesis between form (faktura and construction) and "revolutionary message" (tectonics) that the Constructivists were trying to develop. In most cases, the total surface would be fragmented into subspaces, which would contain discrete images or lettering designed in various sizes and sometimes different coloring between words. The discrete images of each subsection would often have added meaning when seen in connection to the lettering or the other images; often, the images would be arranged in opposing sides of the poster to give them a basic dialectic tension. More than mere graphic design, these posters are examples of montage[72] and they attest to the intimate connection

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[72]The theory of montage is well known and need not be retraced here (Eisentein 1957). In short, it is the link between two or more images – side by side on a poster, one after the other in film – to create a "meaning" or "commentary" that a lone image lacks. Montage is said to have been "discovered" in 1922 by Kuleshov, who ran experiments in which he intercut the expressionless closeup of Moshukin with closeups of different objects. The viewers assigned a "feeling" to the actor that depended on the image that followed (i.e., an "anthropology of the actor," Yampolsky in Taylor and Christie 1991). This "discovery" is problematic given the fact that the posters already practiced such a "dialectic of the image;" clearly, montage was a general Constructivist strategy, and more than one type of artist contributed to it. Tsivian (in Elsaesser 1990:247-55) offers a provocative contextualization based on the reception of randomly selected films, a common exhibition practice in the early silent era. The issue resides in the connection between visual dislocation and cultural background, the classes with a higher

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between Constructivism and the revolutionary film practice of the great theorist-directors of the silent era in the Soviet Union. Needless to say, the Futurist visual artists and poets were themselves fascinated with the cinema; for instance, Mayakovsky wrote articles and poetry as early as 1913 and Gan was a frequent contributor to LEF on cinema (Taylor 1979:39; Taylor and Christie 1974:33-7 and 67 ff).

Lenin's decree to Lunacharsky that "of all the arts for us the most important one is the cinema" (in Taylor and Christie 1994:57), along with his contentions that the proletarian leadership has a right to inspect intellectual and artistic works to make sure that the wrong message does not get transmitted to the people (*ibid.*; Lenin 1971:626-8), are clear indications of the Fordist convergence between nation building and technological mass spectacle – even for a revolutionary, anti-capitalist government. This, of course, raises the possible contention that Fordism, far from being the private and individualistic

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degree of literary background found the visual practice of film more difficult to accept. The invention of a film language, therefore, had at its core a socially-homogenizing struggle "to create a unified spatial articulation of the world" (p. 254).

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enterprise of its own legend, actually requires a "Strong State" to command not only the economy but also culture (again, raising the issue of viewing social transformation as a totalizing process). As Lenin stated

> The fight to instill into the people's minds the idea of *Soviet* state control and accounting, and to carry this idea into practice; the fight to break with the rotten past, which taught the people to regard their procurement of bread and clothes as a "private" affair, and buying and selling as a transactions "which concerns only myself" – is a great fight of world-wide historical significance, a fight between socialist consciousness and bourgeois-anarchist spontaneity.
> We have introduced workers' control as a law, but this law is only just beginning to operate and is only just beginning to penetrate the minds of broad sections of the proletariat. In our agitation we do not sufficiently explain that lack of accounting and control in the production and distribution of goods meant the death of the rudiments of socialism, meant the embezzlement of state funds (for all property belongs to the state and the state is the Soviet state in which power belongs to the majority of the working people) [1971:413; italics in the original].

Lenin collapses the state, the nation and the mental subjectivation of the citizenry into one operation: agitation. Socialist nation-building, therefore, becomes self-consciously cultural, an effort at bringing a particular social psychology into effect. This operation had to take place within a specific political and economic juncture

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> Socialism is inconceivable without large-scale capitalist engineering based on the latest discoveries of modern science. It is inconceivable without planned state organization, which keeps tens of millions of people to the strictest observance of a unified standard in production and distribution (Lenin 1971:443).

This is not the place to debate the character of the Bolshevik Revolution, suffice it to say that this statement, written in 1918, prefigured not only the NEP "correction" of 1921 but all of Regulatory Fordism, especially the New Deal.[73] More to the point, it sets the agenda and the points of contention present in the theory – montage –

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[73]We do not mean to imply, however, that "capitalist development" and the "actually existing socialism" of the Soviet system are equivalent, the differences are considerable (beginning with a real attempt by the Soviets to achieve a distributive parity unthinkable in a "market economy," and so on). The fact is that Lenin wrote much of this while debating his critics from the "left communist" wing; his positions had raised issues about "state capitalism" long before NEP (cf., Kaser 1970:35). This is a lengthy and cumbersome topic of discussion, which falls out of the scope of our work except in the following sense: to one degree or another, all Regulatory Fordism is "state capitalism," there is not one example of Fordist development without business enterprises supported by the public sector – at the very least, in the form of transportation or utility companies or government agencies taking over these services after private bankruptcies (capitalist countries as varied as Mexico and Sweden developed complex mixed-economies in which the public sector owned and "sold" more than mere infrastructure). The implication, of course, is that the Soviet Revolution, at least as it became institutionalized, turned out to be "premature Fordism" rather than socialism; this would explain why the Soviet Union centered its development around the technological city, instead of producing its own emancipatory space.

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and the work of the great Soviet filmmakers – most particularly in *The Man With the Movie Camera.*

Montage is precisely a production standard and also a means for the mass communication of ideas. The various elements that go into Eisenstein's systematization of montage – the fragment, the image, the frame, etc – can indeed be compared to Metz's own inquiry of film as one more form of linguistic communication (Aumont 1987:30 and 34-5). In fact, this set of issues is more apt to resonate in the context of Constructivism (Eisenstein and Vertov's own context), than in relation to the concerns of social analysis imperative in France during the 1970s. Given this initial context of Constructivism, it is no surprise that Aumont finds in Eisenstein an insistence on "the physical characteristics of each fragment" (*ibid.*, p. 32), and a "tendency to absolutely master the fragment, or the image, by breaking it down analytically into 'stimuli'" (p. 33). Systematically speaking, both historical materialism *and* Fordism have the same synthetic aim – a totalization of a fragmentary system, in which the fragments are opposed and very often in conflict with each other (labor unions, for

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instance, became the necessary indicators and negotiating conduits of the Fordist system, with its "demand-side" regulation). Thus, when Eisenstein claims a higher level of materialist "ecstasy" resulting from a dialectically synthetic "organicity" (i.e., the creation of a higher cognitive-semantic unity out of conflicting fragments),[74] he places his montagist system squarely within a totalizing imperative of the times[75] (Aumont 1987; Polan 1985).

Given this, it is no accident that Taylor (1979) divides his minutely detailed account of the various efforts to organize the Soviet film industry into two halves – the disorganization of the early 1920s and the organization of the disorganization in the late 20s; thus following the same sequence and nearly the same timetable as the

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[74]We will set aside all discussion of the underlying intentions that Eisenstein may or may not have had in his early theories of montage, which he discarded after 1937 in favor of a visual counterpoint to musical and dialogue soundtracks. This is thoroughly covered and discussed by Aumont (*op. cit.*).

[75]Eisenstein's appeal to the "natural, ideographic" status of montage, is seriously problematized by the following quote: "The assembly line appears to the worker as a series of discrete actions and other workers are similarly serialized. Only 'scientific management' can comprehend the whole, now seen as a *purposive arrangement of the parts according to criteria that defy the notion of the 'organic' unity*; the mechanical unity produced by capital is always a pastiche marked as natural object" (Aronowitz 1981:207-8).

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Fordist regulation of "organized capitalism." In Fordist terms, one example of such a regulator attempt was the ODSK, or Society of Friends of Soviet Cinema (*ibid.*, p. 99-101), a "trained elite [who were] to introduce films, explain the titles and lead any ensuing discussion" (p. 101). Just as it would be for a Fordist enterprise, the production of consumption was an issue for Soviet "socialism," as well. Most of those efforts, however, failed. By 1927, the chorus of criticism against Sovkino (the official production and distribution agency) began to rise, and in December, Stalin made his famous remarks about the cinema being used against vodka – Taylor (*ibid.*, p. 105) claims that Stalin's remarks dealt with the collection of tax revenue (vodka sales being the highest source at that time). In 1928, with the backdrop of the first Five Year Plan, Narkompros and Sovkino again came under fire at the All-Union Conference of Cinematographic and Photographic Workers; the climate of years to come was prefigured by the recrimination against the heads of those agencies for their lack of leadership and their deviation from a clear proletarian direction in the films they produced (*ibid.*, p. 105-121).

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The Five Year Plan led the government to switch from production estimates to "quotas equivalent to official laws," and began demanding cost accounting from every enterprise. It also added import substitution strategies, so the industry was able to go from importing all its raw footage in 1929 to manufacturing all of it by 1932; but the poor production methods of raw stock meant that the industry, which was able to produce around one hundred feature films annually at the end of the 1920s, could only produce about 35 by 1932 (*ibid*).

At the beginning of 1929, the Central Committee issued a declaration on "Strengthening the Cadres of the Cinema," which began the call for more direct involvement by the Communist Party in the planning and production of Soviet films. There were other voices in the press that called for the end of "cine rubbish" from abroad, or criticized filmmakers for being foreigners and aesthetes too distant from the masses to produce the kind of film needed right then and there (Taylor 1997:122-3). By mid-1929, once the 14th Party Congress had taken place, the reorganization of the film industry seemed imminent. In 1930, oversight for film affairs was taken away from Narkompros

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and placed under the Supreme Council for National Economy, with Sovkino essentially reorganized as Soyuzkino (Babitsky and Rimberg 1955:27). Unlike its predecessors, Soyuzkino gathered under its aegis all the aspects of rental and distribution, aside from being in charge of almost all production studios; and it was also put in charge of the production of raw stock, cameras, projectors and so on (*ibid.*, pp. 27-32). This, again, resembles the total integration of departments of production envisioned by Ford for his River Rouge plant, and this happened as an entire regulatory phase of the USSR was being ushered under the Five Year Plan.[76]

Vertov carried out his major writings and films in this climate of political and economic retrenchment, recriminatory competition for scarce or dwindling resources, and mounting pressure from the

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[76]In significant ways, the USSR moved into a regulatory phase ahead of the United States, this seems to back Lipietz's warning that regulation is a country by country affair and cannot be generalized. On the other hand, the Crash of 29 and the Depression, which forced the formalization of Regulatory Fordism in the US, pale by comparison to the famine and the collapse of the initial system of macroeconomic accountancy of the first five years of Soviet rule; thus, the imperative to regulate in the USSR simply came earlier, yet the features are so similar to those of the New Deal and the "private" Fordist cartelization that it puts Lipietz's remark into some, admittedly qualified, contention.

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authorities. Under those circumstances, the avant-garde filmmakers were fighting with everyone, including each other, for their own professional careers, and for what they considered to be the only direction that a new revolutionary and socialist society should take. This is what gives Vertov's work its particular urgency.

Just as Wollen speaks of two avant-gardes, it is certainly possible to speak of two avant-gardes in Russian Montage (or Constructivist film). At first glance, it would seem that one of them is spatial (Eisenstein), while the other one is aural-visual (Vertov). It is well known (e.g., Bordwell 1993:1-8) that Eisenstein worked in the theater and participated in Kuleshov's workshops on "film without film" and in the Factory of the Eccentric Actor (FEKS). All these efforts were geared towards the externalization of concepts through the gestures and movement of the actors in space (e.g., see Tadeusz Szczepański's notes on Eisenstein's staging of *The Wise Man,* in Kleber and Lövgren 1987:11-24, esp. 15). We have also mentioned the participation of Constructivists in mass spectacles recreating the Storming of the Winter Palace for the Anniversary of the Revolution. The influence of

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these theatrical experiences is evident in various scenes of his first feature film, *Strike!* (1925), which is told as much through staging as it is through intertitles – for example, the attitude of the workers around the machines as a bin is slowly lowered at the beginning of the film; or shortly after, the gestures and spatial disposition of the grotesque boss and his assistants. This, of course is also evident in Kuleshov's *The Adventures of Mr. West in the Land of the Bolsheviks*, made a year earlier. *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) and *October* (1927) are famous for their vast sequences of mass pageantry (as are Pudovkin's *Mother* from 1926 and *The End of St. Petersburg* from 1927 – Pudovkin was the assistant director in *The Adventures of Mr. West*). Thus, even though Aumont rightly notes that Eisenstein never admitted the possibility of montage within the frame (1987:37-8), it is clear that composition and even the assemblage of body movements within the take are integral to the *construction* of a "film sense."[77]

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[77]Curiously enough, Pechter gets closer to this despite his uncharitable opinion of Eisenstein. One of his criticisms is that, unlike Renoir's free flowing imagery, Eisenstein's films are characterized by a mania to impose meaning and movement in what essentially is a collection of visually deadening, though impressive, still compositions. In effect, this is both a political and an aesthetic statement – we

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By contrast, Vertov spent the early years of the Revolution in the Civil War front and in other provincial areas, shooting newsreels for *Kino Nedelia* (Cinema Week); which, according to Sadoul, were no different than the standard newsreels of Western production companies like Gaumont and Pathé (1973:59). It is not until the middle of the 1920s that Vertov begins to link montage (construction) with a specifically political notion (tectonics) of *kino*-glaz or cine-eye (faktura). In one of his early manifestoes, with the characteristic typographic display of the Constructivists, Vertov asserts that

> The most thorough investigation does not reveal a single film, a single piece of research that is correctly designed to *emancipate the camera* which has been pitifully enslaved and subjugated to the imperfect and none too clever human eye. ...
>
> *The basic and most important thing is:*
> *A CINEMA FEELING FOR THE WORLD.*
>
> Our starting point is: *the use of the camera as Cine-Eye, more perfect than the human eye for examining the chaos of visual phenomena that resemble space.*

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know that Eisenstein wanted to control the production of meaning for politically revolutionary reasons, and we have shown how these notions also came out of the Constructivist movement. Despite his sympathies towards other leftish filmmakers like Godard and Antonioni, Pechter cannot help himself in rescuing an ideology of bourgeois illusion when he privileges Renoir's "effortless, 'invisible' flow" (p. 123). This spectatorial tradition is precisely what the montagists are attempting *to disrupt*.

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> The Cine-Eye lives and moves in time and space, it perceives and fixes its impressions in a completely different way from that of the human eye. The position of our body during observation, the number of aspects of a particular visual phenomenon that we observe in a second is by no means obligatory for the camera which will perceive more and better, the more it is perfected (in Taylor and Christie 1994:91, italics and line centering in the original).

The implications for building a new society (or nation) are evident here. This is, ultimately, a discourse linking the end of an era – the bourgeois era of the enslaved camera – to a specific iteration of Neopositivism: the gradual and incremental perfectibility, through careful calculation, of a camera which becomes necessarily autonomous as it renders a truer representation of the natural world beyond the reach of the intuitive apparatus (senses) available to the transcendent mind. The weight of this sort of Neo-Kantian Aufklarung can be felt in the following passage, which seems to nearly resuscitate the Transcendent Idea

> I am the Cine-eye. I construct things.
> I have planted you, who were created by me, in a most remarkable room that never existed before and that I also created. In this room are twelve walls filmed by me in different parts of the world.

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> In combining these shots of the walls and of the details with one another I managed to put them in an order that will please you and to construct a cinematic phrase, that is the room correctly in intervals.
> I am the Cine-Eye. I create a man more perfect than Adam was created. I create thousands of different people according to different preliminary sketches and schemes.
> I am the Cine-Eye.
> I take the strongest and most agile hands from one man, the fastest and best proportioned legs from another, the most handsome and expressive head form a third and through montage I create a new, perfect man.... (*ibid.*, pp. 92-3).

On hindsight, this passage is frightening if taken as a Transcendent Idea, for it is prescient of the Stakhanovist "perfect man," rather than the "scientifically emancipated mind of a classless society" – this manifesto was written in 1923 and Vertov can be absolved of any hint of proto-Stalinism. Meanwhile, Eisenstein's notion of "ecstasy" comes very close to the Kantian idea of the sublime in art. There is a paradoxical fact that, despite any claims for a new society, both filmmakers are merely redefining the rules of the Enlightment through a Modernist game.

Vertov actually takes us back to the origins of cinema – his is a variant of the Frankenstenian sense that science and technology can

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reverse and outdo nature (this time by building a composite room or a composite man, as well as by mechanically improving an imperfect biological organ). His is also a return to the Cinema of Attractions, that pure impulse to render the visible. This, once again, may be due to the fact that the Russian avant-garde found itself in the position of a counter elite and simply accepted at face value the transformative aspects of Taylorism and Fordism – this can be extended to the entire Bolshevik Revolution *vis a vis* world capitalism.

The big difference between the playful Taylorism of the early 1900s and Vertov is the immediate imposition in the same manifesto of Fordist regulation, a tightly controlled production of consumption

> I compel the audience to see in the way that it suits me best to depict a particular visual phenomenon. The eye is subjugated to the will of the camera and is directed by it....
> Example: Filming a boxing match [... or] a group of dancers not from the point of view of the audience sitting in the auditorium...
> For a ballet audience haphazardly follows firs the ensemble of the group of dancers, then random individuals, then somebody's feet: *a series of incoherent impressions that are different for every member of the audience.*
> THE MOST UNPROFITABLE, THE MOST UNECONOMIC WAY OF COMMUNICATING A SCENE IS THROUGH ***THEATRICAL COMMUNICATION!***

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> We must not subject the cinema audience to this. The system of consecutive movements requires that the dancers or boxers should be filmed in a way that sets out the relevant materials one after the other and *forces* the eyes of the audience to see the consecutive details that they must see.
> *The film camera drags the eyes of the audience* from the hands to the feet, from the feet to the eyes so on in the most profitable order and it organises the details into a regular montage exercise (*ibid.*, p. 92).

The imperative to impose order and organization is more systematic and extensive here than in the earlier *kinok* manifesto "We." In that piece, Vertov rejects, for example, humans as an object of film interest, because they cannot control their movements; and he also merely wants movement of objects in space and time within the film according to some unexpressed principles of internal coherence to the work (Vertov 1984:5-9 or in Taylor and Christie 1994:69-71). These concerns are closer to the Taylorist preoccupation with the regulation of movement in order to control the operations of manufacture. In the above passage, the focus is broader; yet, and tellingly, the vocabulary of economics and profit bursts in. More tellingly, the word "profitable" is directly connected with the words "order" and "organizes," which are themselves connected to montage exercise.

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In a way, the revolutionary avant-garde cinema of Vertov simply takes the same hegemonic impulse that the Hollywood Model placed upon the subdivided screen and displaces it to the editing process.[78] A year later, in 1924, Vertov would put this in greater perspective

> The very theme of today's debate, "Art and Everyday Life," is of less interest to us than, let us say, "Everyday Life and its Organization" because, I repeat, it is precisely in this last field that we are working and that we consider it right to work (in Taylor and Christie 1994:115).

Lurking underneath all these statements is Vertov's rivalry with Eisenstein, borne not only out of professional competition (especially in an era of dwindling resources) but also out of a profound ideological rift in the Modernist ethos that sustained both. If Eisenstein's Montage is proto-linguistic (or syntagmatic), Vertov's Montage is sociological; it is as if these two positions mirrored Wollen's distinction of the

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[78]Sadoul offers a simple economic explanation for this: Moussinac reported after his visit to Moscow in 1927 that the Soviets lacked even dolly trucks for their movies, and this is why they shot and spliced short fragments rather than experimenting with a Bazinian deep focus (1973:98). This is, at best, a very partial explanation, considering that painting and sculpture were equally fragmentary at that time in Europe, and that the basis of Montage was "Americanitis" (Kuleshov in Taylor and Christie 1994:72-3), an early Soviet enthusiasm for the films of Griffith (which, of course, were done under a plethora of resources).

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introverted and the extroverted avant-gardes. As we said before, in an atmosphere of dwindling resources, these fights involved funding and professional survival as much as they involved the direction that the new society should take. Vertov, accordingly, declared that the only admissible cinema under revolutionary socialism would be the documentation of everyday life without the use of bourgeois throwbacks to the theater (actors, screenplay, etc) and that what "We" need is a "factory of facts" (Vertov 1984:58-60 and in Taylor and Christie 1994:150-1). While Eisenstein would counter with the charge that Vertov was merely engaged in the formalist aesthetization of life and that what "We" need is not a "cine-eye but a cine-fist" (quoted in Polan 1985:52; for a fuller account of this rivalry see Petrić 1987:49-60). The question of mediation, an urgent one for revolutionaries, enters this debate with full force; for it would seem that Eisenstein is allowing the subject to not only be active and actualized (empowered, in contemporary jargon), but also to remain human. Whereas

> ...Vertov's grasp of causality proposes a new epistemology – one in which the world is produced; that which **appears** external is merely the object-form of our creative action. What remains

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> problematic is whether technology has become hegemonic in Vertov's conception of knowledge and action, or whether "man" is the subject.... that is, the camera as technology does mediate between the subject (human beings) and the object (nature) but reconstitutes and controls both (Aronowitz 1981:213, bold in the original).

This is clearly the case in some of the *Kino-glaz* reels where a steak or a loaf of bread are "edited backwards," so that we see the whole process of selling, butchering or baking, taking to the slaughterhouse or mill, raising the animal or sowing and harvesting the grain, in that order. This allows for the "Marxist method" to be introduced as a mechanically produced reconstruction of the web of relations that allow for the merchandise to reach the market. In the wake of the NEP regression to privatization and retail capitalism, this had a double thrust: on the one hand, to combat NEP and dissipate the fetishism of the commodity by showing it as the result of an entire process rather than as reified value; on the other hand, and perhaps this was unintended, to echo the historic retrogression that NEP meant in the new revolutionary society.

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However, the problem with this notion of mediation is that it is anchored purely on a universalized and decontextualized Rationalism proper to the Enlightment. Vertov, in our view, is actually positing a new reality in which the machine is the expressive subject; hence, his contention that the *kinoks* seek a cinema where the camera is autonomous. When he presents the idea of *kino glaz*, he actually intends it to be a hyphenated entity (hybrid, in contemporary jargon), a sort of mechanical centaur. Thus, the object of the gaze – the images upon the screen – becomes the new reality for the new society; a reality which is achieved by a composite subject (human-eye plus camera), thereby requiring no mediation between mind and external reality.

At the same time, this is a process of collectivization – both in the sense of creating a new Modernist subjectivity, and in the sense of creating a new *Gesellschaft*; very clearly intended in his two previous films, *One Sixth of the World* (1926) and *The Eleventh Year* (1927). As such it cannot be reduced to a problem of sheer mediation; it has to be considered along the Constructivist lines of production. Vertov is rather consistent in that respect, placing his cine eye concept at the

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level of tectonics, the image at the level of faktura, and montage at the level of construction. However, at the heart of this position is the process of social production, and the only constant capable of holding together the entire process is none other than space.

Nothing makes this more explicit than the opening and ending sequences of *Man With the Movie Camera.* These sequences literally bookend the entire film and emphasize Vertov's conceptual armature as an overdetermining aspect of this work. The film actually begins with a horizontal split screen, resembling a Constructivist poster. The lower two thirds of the screen are filled with a full closeup, from a slight low angle, of the front of movie camera; the upper third is a mound of dirt unto which climbs a man carrying a tripod with a movie camera attached to it. The man sets the tripod atop the mound and swings the camera to point straight ahead (towards the viewer), then he begins to crank. What follows after that is the famous first sequence, to be discussed in greater detail below, about an empty movie theater which opens its doors to let an audience come in and watch a movie called "The Man With the Movie Camera."

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The next time we see the same composite frame is almost at the end of the movie, right after a lengthy segment about people doing sports and running on the beach, with kids riding in a merry-go-round, which ends with a shot the Proletarian Movie Theater announcing "Green Manuela" on its marquee. Suddenly, we see a shot of buildings and streets taken from a roof, a gigantic cameraman stands on the roof of the buildings we see (obviously another horizontally split frame). This is followed by a sign that says "Beer Hall," and then a shot of a beer mug on a table with the cameraman seemingly crouching inside; after a beat or two, he stands up and his torso is now clear above the rim of the mug, then he starts to walk away. Another sign follows, reading "Proletarian Club." Then there are several shots of hands inserting beer bottles in a machine that pops the caps off, the bottles are passed around, people drink. Suddenly, we see the storefront of the beer hall and the cameraman comes out followed by a rather portly woman in a white barmaid's uniform, she stands by the door as the cameraman exits frame right. A middle shot shows the woman leaning against the doorway with a quietly satisfied expression as she watches

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in the direction that the cameraman took; this is followed by what may be her point of view, a full shot of the cameraman walking into the Proletarian Club. This is followed by chessboards set on a table, then two pairs of hands that spread checkers into their opening positions on a board (edited backwards), and shots of a sound amplifier with knobs and speakers. Then, a pretty young woman is seen with a rifle, taking target practice; she aims at a metal cutout of Hitler that reads "Father of Fascism." After several shots, she aims at a metal cutout in the shape of a house, and as she hits it, a giant with an axe pops over the roof (probably from a folktale). Then she is joined by another young woman, and suddenly we see a wooden case with beer bottles in it. As the women shoot, bottles start disappearing as if they were hitting them with their guns. Then we see the young pioneers in the club singing a song, an ear is superimposed on one of the speakers, a mouth is superimposed on the other speaker. Then we see a top shot of an audience sitting in a theater, we only see the backs of their heads and we do not see weather this is a stage theater or a movie theater; the rest of the sequence will be intercut with reaction shots of various groups of

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people in the audience. An animated tripod walks by itself into a room, a straight wooden bench is set against a brick wall in the background. The case slides along the bench and opens up as the tripod lowers itself to be more or less level with the bench; a movie camera glides out of the case and mounts itself on the tripod head. The tripod begins to walk around while the diverse cranks of the camera move at various times, the robotic yet anthropomorphic look of this dance is at once hilarious and startling. The dancing tripod eventually walks off frame to the left, and a shape of a spinning coil (white against black background) dominates the frame; then, there is a cut to a full shot of the theater from the orchestra floor, there are several spinning coils projected on the screen. This is followed by several shots of the movie screen with projected movie shots of a whole diversity of vehicles (a car, a motorcycle, an electric streetcar, a bicycle, etc) coming towards the camera from the left, then taking a turn to the right and going off frame, creating almost a circular motion. These shots are intercut with very rapid parallel traveling shots showing the cameraman cranking away on a car going from right to left (opposite to the other vehicles) –

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in one of the most dazzling feats of cinematography, Vertov makes it appear as if he has put the theater and its seated audience on a merry-go-round (so that the "represented" action transcends from the screen to the theater – of course, the theater is itself a representation). Suddenly, we see a top shot of a street covered by a huge throng, human heads and tops of shoulders as far as we can see. There are other shots of vehicles, including a low angle shot of a train moving away from the camera and other trains moving towards the camera and passing directly above it (at the beginning of the movie, we had been shown how these shots were set up, but this is the first time we see the actual takes of the trains). This is followed by more shots of traffic and street scenes: one vertical split screen of a top shot of the street makes it seem as if streetcars materialize out of nowhere in the middle of the street and rush off frame to the right; and suddenly there is the third and final horizontal split, with the cameraman and his equipment on the upper part of the frame along with an extra tripod set further away, the huge mass of people occupies the half below (this time, the upper and lower splits are about equal in size). Suddenly, the action begins to

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speed up, rapid takes through the streets and reaction shots of the theater audience, and then the Bolshoi Theater begins to break in half and sink (a vertical split screen optically tilted downward at the middle); this is followed by a couple of horizontal splits showing two streetcars on each split; each going in opposite directions, creating the illusion of a screen with multiple split frames. As the speed of the camera movement and the editing rhythm both accelerate, we begin to see the same shots of machinery that we had seen earlier in the movie; then, we see the faces of workers we had also seen before superimposed on the machinery. Cut to a full closeup of the front of a movie camera, it points straight ahead and a human eye is superimposed in the middle of its lens, the external iris slowly begins to close; when it has shut completely, there is a cut to a title on black background reading "The End."

The animated tripod and the horizontal split frames with the cameraman are the two elements that hold the key not only to this final sequence but to the entire film. The animated tripod and camera are, of course, the literal embodiment of Vertov's call in 1923 to "emancipate

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the camera from the none too clever human eye." But within the film it must be also understood as a localized performance before a seated audience; by replicating the process of film viewing, he is collapsing the requisite Modernist self-referentiality with a recoding of the subject-object relationship which addresses our previous point about mediation. This recoded relation, in essence, abolishes mediation at the metonymic level of the diegetic moment and at the allegorical level of the mise-en-abîme; that is to say, the representation of an audience that sits at that moment of the movie to watch a dancing tripod is like the play within the play (mise-en-abîme) that clues the viewer as to how to understand the entire piece. The message, of course, is simple, there is no mediation because the viewer does not go to see a representation of reality, he or she goes to link the naked eye with the new landscape rendered upon the screen by the autonomous camera. Vertov's film is not attempting to represent Reality, it is attempting to present experience and, as we will see below, the opening scene is of paramount importance to this understanding.

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This is, in our view, one of the chief faults with the formalist reading of the film in Anette Michelson's famous article about Vertov's epistemological intervention (1972:60-72). She enumerates, for example, several formal strategies that Vertov uses to expose illusionism, among these is the alteration of speeds in a sequence where a represented audience watches athletes – thereby shattering the uniformity of two publics (p. 69). But this is the simplest reading possible, staying at the level of the selection of materials – the image – and of the immediate effect of its arrangement with the contiguous images (faktura). At the level of construction, there are alternations and alterations of speed all over the film; in one sequence, the emancipated Frankenstenian camera almost runs over a visibly scared pedestrian (a very fast dolly in with the camera mounted on a car), in another sequence the camera begins to move in the same circular motion of the gearworks it is recording, and, finally, of course we have the animated tripod dance which also varies in speed – there has to be greater *meaning*, therefore, to this variation of speeds than a mere will to anti-illusionism. That greater meaning is provided at the level of

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tectonics, which is also left out from Michelson's reading. At that level, Vertov is proposing a politicized hybridization of the camera and the eye, a rendering of life *qua* life and not as representation. Vertov wanted his images, his films, his entire work to be understood as part of the world like anything else (a factory of facts); and, by reducing the means of the visible image to the ends of its formal elements, Michelson is limiting the status of the visible in the profilmic element to a representation, to a copy of something else, at best. By relocating the image back to the level of representation, Michelson is, paradoxically, achieving the opposite of her own manifest intentions, since this operation ends up also restoring the illusionism she seeks to destroy.

These problems underscore a Constructivist-Montagist tension between the fragment (faktura) and the totality (construction) operating in the entire film. The more visible part of this tension is the obvious fragmentation and the dislocation of standard cinematic procedures. Vlada Petrić, for example, observes the "thematic meaning" (1987:70-128) of the film by looking at some of its formal strategies – negation

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of narrative, disruptive associative montage, etc – and linking them to ideological implications (the *Kinoks*'s anti-NEP stance) or social commentary (depictions of vagrancy and alcoholism). But his commentary largely stays at the level of the fragment, which is certainly valid, but not enough. For instance, the split frame is more than a recurring device which has localized interventions in "fragment x," over here, or "fragment y," over there. There is a systematic use of this device throughout the entire film, and this affords the film a higher order of signification than it would have if this was only a collection of fragmentary impressions (which is the shortcoming of Rutmann's *Berlin, Symphony of the City*).

At the beginning of the film, the split frame seems to be suggested, almost motivated, by the landscape of the urban space. In one of the beginning sequences, there is a top shot of two buildings standing side by side (a "natural" split frame); and one of the earliest side-by-side split frames of buildings comes right after the first shot of two trolley cars moving in opposite directions – one towards the camera, the other one away, with the camera set up in the narrow space

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between the outbound and inbound tracks. Vertov, moreover, adds a further level to this naturalistic motivation just before the "cycle of life" sequence. We see a full shot of a tripod placed at the edge of the a building's rooftop (the entire urban panorama is seen below, in the background of the shot). The cameraman enters and, with his back to the viewer, begins to film the city; first he pans his camera to the left in order to record one side of the street, then he turns it to the right in order to record the other side of the street, and suddenly he begins a 180-degree pan that ends just before the camera lens gets to point directly at the viewer. Next, we see couples coming into an office to get married, and some others coming in to get divorced; then we see an old woman mourning by a grave, etc. The point to the split screens is to enforce a dialectical understanding at each level. First, there is a dialectic of nature (the street has two sides which function as two distinct "moments" of the dialectic). Second, there is the social dialectic, which inhabits that dialectically posited urban landscape and which has its own moments of conflict and synthesis – there are marriages, which can end in divorce or in death and widowhood; there

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are quarrels and reconciliations; revolutions and counterrevolutions – in other words, the understanding of "another side to the street" has its social implications too. Finally, there is a dialectic relation between the cameraman pointing to the viewer and then triggering the above social dialectic (which, of course, emphasizes the connection between audience and visual object); but there is also the totalizing dialectic, also triggered by the pointing cameraman, which indicates to the audience that the act of viewing and the action of comprehension are part of the same full process of putting together the fragments of the entire sequence, and then reflecting upon them to come up with a synthetic meaning that incorporates the totality of the visuals into a new level of signification. That is to say, the camera pointing at the viewer triggers an effect of recognition (i.e., those who marry or divorce are the same as us in the audience, since the film shows exactly what "We" do), but it also triggers an effect of interconnecting hybridization ("We" are made up by the process of watching the different segments of the film, putting them together in our minds, and then interpreting and understanding ourselves as integral to this whole

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process). Montage occurs, therefore, not only upon the screen, it occurs also when it is put together "inside" the spectators activated mind. Viewing the fragment in relation to the totality, therefore, becomes one of the imperative demands of this film.

The revolution-counterrevolution conflict adds a further dialectical level to this splitting trope of the film: a political intervention beyond the mere recording of a social dialectic. This is exemplified most clearly by the Beerhall/Worker's Club sequence. It is highly significant that the second horizontal split screen of the cameraman atop the buildings appears just before this sequence. It echoes the previous take of the cameraman atop the building, but now the cameraman has become larger than life; so that, when we next see the same cameraman as a little man inside the beer mug, we are prepared to see not a humorous rendering (Petrić 1987:83) but a dialectical overcoming and synthesis (aufhebung) of this visual polarization. Sure enough, the cameraman literally transcends the rim, the limits of the mug, and leaps toward a higher state of self-realization with the silent approval of those workers, like the barmaid, who are

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forced by necessity to stay behind. It is no surprise, then, that the Constructivist split-frame is accompanied by a Constructivist superimposition of the ear on the speaker (Vertov did speak of the radio-ear as much as he spoke of the camera-eye, pp. 52-6 and 85-92). And of course, we see the young women literally shooting the beer out of existence at the end of the sequence. Needles to say, this is a restoration of the Modernist self-referentiality, politicized though it may be; and this is habilitated by an earlier take in the film in which we saw airplanes flying against the sky, followed by a volunteer guard grabbing and panning an anti-aircraft gun (very much in the same manner as the cameraman moving his machine upon the tripod).[79] This

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[79]The same can be said for the startling and superbly realized sequence of the freeze frames that turn into a demonstration on how the film gets edited (Constructed). The first time we see this, it is simply Svilova editing and organizing takes; the takes are seen as a film strip against the light of the editing table, but after watching how they are spliced together, the freeze frames "come back to life" (they become animated photograms instead of stills). But there is a second level added later on, during a sequence that shows different aspects of grooming at a beauty salon, etc; other forms of work are included and intercut with the grooming. At one point, we see a manicurist filing somebody's nails and the film immediately cuts to a shot of Svilova filing a splice off the edge of the film strip. Suddenly, the whole Modernist self-referentiality comes full circle as it begins to equate itself to labor in general and to the somatized city (earlier in the movie we had seen a young woman washing her face intercut with shots of other women washing sidewalks, signposts, etc, as if the city itself was also washing its

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is Montage writ large. Instead of having one shot oppose the next shot, what we have here are two consecutive scenes that become the contrasting sides or dialectical moments of a montage of oppositions that operates only when the sequence has been considered in its totality. But, this extends to the consideration of the film as construction, this Montage-sequence stands as a dialectical moment in opposition to the rest of the film. As such, it is also moving towards its own negation and reconciliation as a higher form of synthesis (the negation of the negation, the operation of Aufhebung); and, of course, there is a shift in the split frame from faktura to tectonics.[80]

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face in the morning). At the center of the whole montage of sequences stands the editing process, with its stacks of coiled trims organized on a rack with cards labeling what each trim contains, as if this was a large Constructivist sculpture.

[80]It is significant to see how the counterhegemonic stance of the film avant-garde takes place precisely upon the space of the screen. The fragmentation and disruption of the unitary frame – with its rules of continuity editing to create a seamless unitary narrative – are readily available to the public, because this is the precise terrain where the counterelite stages its struggle (attempting to make the viewer aware of the hegemonic illusion of realistic representation). It is no accident that even decades later, the counterhegemonic and anti-imperialist Third Cinema movement would repeat this transgressive fragmentation of the unitary screen and extend it to the space of the viewing room itself. This was most notoriously done by Solanas and Gettino in their clandestinely shot and clandestinely exhibited *Hour of the Furnaces*, in which the film would usually get shown as part of an education-recruitment effort in the struggle against the Argentinian military government. Built into the exhibition of the film are

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True to this Hegelianism, Vertov finds a final level (teleology) in the work of the camera-eye/camera-gun itself (the very last shot of the film, but also the very first one). This is the unifying principle to the whole film, and the element that allows it to leap from mere Modernist exercise to a contribution towards Soviet nation-building – even if it was actually rejected by public and officials. If the optical shot of the cameraman moving out of the beer mug has a high symbolic charge, it behooves us to note that this is hardly the first or the most important time in which the cameraman is seen shifting in space and symbolically

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moments in which the projection gets stopped and people are asked to turn to the person sitting next to them in order to discuss what they have seen and what information they could add from their own experience. At the end of the first part, which is an account of Argentine labor history, the projection also gets stopped and viewers get to listen to an update of recent events which surely could not have been filmed; thus inscribing the film in the active life-process of history-making, rather than the passive process of historical narrative. This is the same era in which Godard attempted to create an anti-cinema by disrupting the techniques that built the Hollywood Model's "master space" of naturalism (e.g., "wrong" sound effects, jump cuts, unrealistic props, etc); then moving on to form the, tellingly named, Dziga Vertov Group to shoot in factories and places of labor struggle – echoing Third Cinema filmmakers like Rocha and Sanjinés, who used improvisation and consultation with their non-actors in order to allow "their" truth to be shown on the bourgeois screen. In Japan, Oshima and Imamura got their own movie theater and attempted to create a new space for the exhibition of alternative and independent film productions. Finally, this era also was a "Second Golden Age" for documentary film (Rouch, Marker, the Maysels, Wiseman, Prelorán, Solás, De Antonio). This was a last hurrah for film; soon afterwards, hegemony and counterhegemony moved their battle to smaller screens.

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transcending a reality. In fact, the first discrete segment of the film is precisely bracketed by the cameraman shifting in space: the first shot of the film shows him entering frame and moving atop a mound located itself atop a camera, while the first segment of the sequence (before the audience walks in) ends with the cameraman walking towards the blank screen and disappearing behind the curtains that cover it (as if going through the looking glass). Basically, there is the first split frame in which the cameraman walks up from behind the mound, as if coming out of the camera itself; having placed the tripod, he points the camera to the right of the frame and begins to crank. Cut to a low angle of a building, then back to the split frame with the cameraman now pointing his camera straight at the viewer,[81] followed by a low angle of a street lamp with a cloudy sky above; finally, the cameraman, with the tripod resting over his shoulder, is seen walking

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[81]The whole movie is full of shots of the cameraman and his camera, including a moment in which a storefront door with full length mirror swings open, revealing a reflection of the cameraman doing the take. The problem is that all these shots are narrativized, in so far as they involves the comings and goings of a cameraman through the streets of a Russian city – the camera, in this case, is really a prop. The camera that does the actual takes – that records the profilmic event – is never brought to the viewer's attention.

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through the curtains (as if walking into the screen). Next follows the celebrated sequence in which we see full shots of the empty seating area of a movie theater. Cut to a full shot (side view) of a lone projector, the projectionist comes in and begins to fiddle with it; a close up shows his hands opening a film case resting on a table and taking out a reel, the title on the case reads "Man With the Movie Camera." The process of threading the film in the projector is intercut with shots of a clock and of details of the empty seating auditorium: the theater seats begin to magically unfold themselves row after row, each row in unison. The following shot shows the hands of a female usher coming into frame and unhooking a rope that holds in place the curtains that cover the entrance to the seating auditorium, this is scrupulously match cut on action to a top shot that shows the usher finishing the process of unhooking the rope and opening the door as a full group of spectators begins to pour in. The shots of the audience coming in and taking their seats are intercut with further shots of the projector being thread, musicians take their place in the orchestra pit, and empty seats magically unfold. Suddenly, the fancy overhead candelabra lamp

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darkens, and everybody is still. The musicians are frozen, holding their instruments, and so is the conductor with his baton high in the air waiting to cue the start of the music. The projectionist moves two knobs off the side of the projector, a close shot shows the carbon rods coming together to create an arc, light is shown coming out of the projector lens, and the feed and take up reels begin to move. The frozen orchestra suddenly begins to play away, and an animated roman numeral one slowly rises. This marks the beginning of the next sequence, which starts with a slow dolly in towards a window with lace curtains, inside is a sleeping woman. The rest of the film will show the city, and the woman waking up, then the start and eventually the end of the workday, the leisure activities in the evening, and the merry-go-round experience of the movie theater at the end.

Vertov is well aware that this film is structured as a continuous loop. The brief prelude shows the forces of production and the tools of the recording process (camera and operator) literally entering the space of representation (screen), a sequence already existing at two levels, literal and metaphoric. The sequence where the audience enters the

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theater and sits is another instance of *mise-en-abîme*, in which the frozen orchestra is actually activated by the starting of the projector (and the showing of the movie). Once again, this is Modernistic self-reflection, but it also prefigures the sequences with freeze-frames and Svilova editing the images, which are immediately afterwards allowed to come back to life/movement/projection (see Footnote 79 above). The dialectical Aufhebung comes in the twinning of Modernist self-reflection and Constructivist processing (from faktura, through construction, to tectonics).

Even during the initial credit and title sequence, the movie had already displayed a typical Constructivist format through typography, with different sized letters (to add emphasis) and all sorts of *Kinok* proclamations indicating that this was a film done without a scenario, without the aid of the theater (without actors), etc. As the split frame that follows would further emphasize, this is a film in which the process of putting together the separate elements of the film is of capital importance. Thus, we are in the presence of a fully Constructivist strategy when we see the elements that go into threading

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a projector, preparing and opening a theater, and putting together a projection-performance. But the point of the construction is to be able to show life caught unawares, and the first examples of that are actually of the audience seated at the theater. Only after the projector activates the performance do we get to see the first dolly in that initiates the film proper by taking us into a metonymic window that serves as a metaphoric screen, as if the camera-eye is slowly letting us approach the social reality that we will discover by experiencing the film. This dolly in cannot be merely understood as representation, as if the director was saying: now I am going to show you a slice of life from the world out there. Because, in the final analysis, the looping effect of the film is the real construction and it does not permit such interpretation. The first (and also the final) reality represented is the one inside the theater; it is by being in the theater that we can move to the "outside" world. But the outside world is not outside, it is constructed upon the screen, and it is constructed out of the same materials that are inside the theater – the people from the city that was recorded are the same people who are now in the theater, the spatial

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practice of the screen creates that loop. As such, what this means is that reality now includes the film; or, conversely, that reality does not exist outside of the film: our everyday experience is an experience that now includes the viewing of life in film and the living of film in life, they flow into each other – this is the ultimate meaning of cine-eye.

Whether this is truly revolutionary, or merely Fordist, no longer needs to be discussed here. It is part of Vertov's growing legacy – though our knowledge of it is made up from bits and shards of a phantasmagoria of the past – that for a moment, if only all too brief, it became possible to have a fleetingly real experience of utopia in a most remarkable room that did not exist before.

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Chapter Six
Conclusion and Further Research
From "Hard-Fordism to Flexible Accumulation: towards the small screen

I

The production of space as a contemporary concept in the sociology of modernity can be traced only as far back as Henri Lefebvre and his systematic critique of everyday life, begun at the height of European reconstruction after World War II. However, it must be noted that the connection between space and modernization was already a heightened philosophical or sociological concern in the work of Hegel, Marx, Simmel, and Tönnies. Much of this work revolved around two key concerns: 1) the progressive stages in the division of labor and the transformation of social aggregates from small communities to larger societies; and, b) the assertion of a discrete sociocultural aggregate with common sociocultural essence (*Volkgeist*) and its connection to a delimited space (territory) that belongs to this people now understood as a Nation. Lefebvre, by contrast, understood the connection between space and everyday life as an entirely social

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issue; that is to say: 1) space is always socially produced and every mode of production produced its own space; given this, 2) the production of space is involved in the reproduction of social relations, which primarily involves the imposition and enforcement of sociopolitical power; 3) the increasing production of abstract notions related to an equally abstract space are not part of a greater refinement in our understanding of society but, rather, the result of a particular determination of space produced by the specific social relations of the time – e.g., the manner in which late capitalism bases its social relations on homogenization results from pure calculabilty and requires a belief in the primacy of abstract space. The only way to form a critique of this type of space is to enter into a critique of everyday life, which is where the determinations of power and the sociocultural beliefs of the epoch are negotiated. It is of utmost importance to note that Lefebvre's insistence on the connection between specific modes of production and their equally specific productions of space implies a historic understanding, which puts into question any contention that

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would erase time (history) in favor of purely spatial development (geography).

If there is a single qualm we could have with Lefebvre's work on space is that he consigns it exclusively to the moment of social reproduction, where he diminishes the connection between mode of production and production of space. That is to say, if a mode of production produces its own production of space, it would follow that the analysis has to account for the connection between the production of space and production in general. The screen is one of those specific productions of space in the era of late capitalism. The screen is itself a produced space, but it also has to be understood as one component of a series of functionally interlinked spaces. These interlinked or associated spaces constitute the basis for a material practice of space which has as its key productive function to provide a modern subjectivation. Subjectivation, then, comes to be understood as a materially constructed social state of being, instead of the mystically psychological or ontological positions held by a variety of analyses of the screen.

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Subjectivation has two functions in the production of society: it induces a particular sense of self in relation to a particular object, and it also induces a specific relation of subsumption to a tacitly understood force of social domination. In both cases, the subject-object construct must be understood as spatially produced *and* determined. It is, therefore, imperative to demystify the screen through the understanding of its material practice of space, which then solves the gap that most psychological or ontoideological analysis find between the forms registered upon the screen and the capacity of the human brain to transform those images into ideas that, in turn, condition the audiences behavior. There is no such direct conditioning from image to human behavior, there are practices of space which are continuous, and which situate the viewer not as an individual "decoder" but as part of a social aggregate which is being formed *in toto* by that material practice of associated spaces. Given this totalizing process, the subjectivized individual finds him or herself constructed under a double aspect of the production of screen space: a) the individual is a subject positioned in relation to the screen itself and to the virtual space it represents through

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the mechanisms of rear projection; and, b) the individual is always also subject to the screen inserted in a continuum of associated spaces which extend from the screen to the seating auditorium and, then, to the neighborhood where the theater is and beyond.

The screen, has to be understood in the manner of Deleuze and Guattari's *assemblages*. As such, it is integrated by a chain or a series of associated spaces which are articulated through a material practice. This gives us the basis to understand the continuum between the process of signification in the viewing act, and the connection that exists with the larger social process in which this viewing act is spatially embedded. Of course, this is a dialectical process in which the larger social process is embedded in the spaces that constitute and determine the viewing act; this, in effect means, that any question of causality is erroneous by definition – for instance, "does a production of space cause a social transformation to occur?" The fallacy consisting of assuming that space can have a monocausal function.

Given this framework, any account of the screen as a production of space has to show the historic specificity of its emergence and

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consolidation; beginning with the fact that the cinema itself is a result of the scientific and technological research involved in the emergence and consolidation of late capitalism. A specific breakdown of late capitalism can be taken from the work of the Regulation School, with some modifications. If we understand late capitalism not as a tendency towards monopoly or towards speculative uses of finance capital, which in any case are not new occurrences, but rather as a series of transformations of the mode of regulation in the capitalist regime of accumulation, then we can understand the shifts in relations of labor, their articulation with government policy and macroeconomic activity, and their extension as social relations (e.g., culture). The social transformations operating since the late 1800s can, thus, be seen as a shift from Taylorism to Fordism, and, finally, to the current regime of flexible accumulation and neoliberal regulation. It should be noted that Taylorism arose as a response to prolonged economic crises, beginning in 1860. The intensification of the labor process introduced by Taylorism had the advantage of greater market competitiveness, but also faster market saturation; that is why "neocolonialism" became an

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added feature to late capitalism. However, neither colonial consolidation nor a marked tendency towards cartelization were able to stave off the cyclical crises of capitalism, they merely turned it into an international conflict. Fordism attempted to remedy that situation by further intensifying the production process through mechanization and by absorbing the lower prices of their circulating commodities into a strategy mass production for mass consumption.

The problem for Fordism was that such a strategy required a highly regulated world order in which factors of production and consumer demand would be both highly homogenized and synchronized. This is the reason behind the clear regulatory moves initiated within the Ford Motors Company itself, such as the Sociological Department, which trained immigrant workers to be disciplined for production and consumption through ascetic living (Prohibition was possible due to this Fordist impulse). Moreover, after the Crash of 1929 and the ensuing Depression, the problem for Fordism became the regulation of production to maintain effective demand; which, in essence, led to the so-called Welfare State. This meant that a

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constant source of pressure and a huge obstacle in crisis situations would be the high cost of labor; the current system of Just In Time production and flexible regulation is the latest attempt to control that problem.

The screen as a production of space emerges in "parallel" fashion to these economic developments. One can certainly see an extreme "coincidence" between the key dates of economic transformation and the key dates in the transformation of film production or exhibition; this is due to the fact that the screen is the central production of cultural space in the Twentieth Century. The screen, as a production of space of representation, emerges with the maturation of the Taylorist mode, which in itself was a production of space at the level of the shop. Taylorism, as it is well known, consists of a breakdown of the production process into its simplest tasks, which are then done by individual workers arranged in order along the factory floor, a space above is created for supervisory and middle management personnel to literally oversee and be able to coordinate the flow. The time-motion studies necessary for Taylorist regulation, involving series

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photography, constituted an important part of the development of motion pictures. Another crucial step was the "cultural" promotion and valorization of new technologies through fairs and amusement parks with their attractions – these were already productions of space designed to extend Taylorism beyond the plant and into the rest of the society. The pioneers of the cinema, Edison and the Lumière family, were part of this wave of inventors and industrialists engaged in the technological intensification of the process of production. The first show offered by the Lumière Family at the Grand Café in December 1895, marks the real production of space of the screen. It was the first time that motion pictures were projected on a screen for the general public; the fact that film initially was shown in viewing boxes – i.e., Edison's nickelodeons – demonstrates that projection is not the unique or "natural" way to show film, and that the screen inserted in a theatrical setting constitutes a veritable production of space. That was the real "discovery" of the Lumières.

With the collective experience of a technologically based simulation of life, and with its concomitant sheer pleasure in viewing

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and showing, the Cinema of Attractions was born. Traditional views on the history of the cinema propose a development from the Cinema of Attractions towards a "mature" Classic Hollywood Mode of Representation. This teleological progression is predicated on the gradual discovery of a linguistic essence which reaches its full potential in 1915 with Griffith's *Birth of A Nation.* Many writers have begun to reconsider the early period of the Cinema of Attractions in its own right, and not as an underdeveloped form inevitably destined to be superseded by the fully realized narrative mode of the Hollywood Model. What these autarchic studies accomplished was a recontextualization of early cinema in which form and narrative strategy fit and make sense with the world view of its time. Viewed in this light, the Cinema of Attractions appears to be a cultural iteration of Taylorism in its attention to technology and efficiency (films of firefighters saving people, or even dogs rescuing kidnaped children); but it soon begins to develop an orientation towards providing extremely inexpensive spectacles for the largest amount of buyers: the cinema enters the transitional era of the Nickelodeon theater, in which

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the narrative of the Cinema of Attractions begins to turn into the most inexpensive form of mass entertainment. This transition is not a mystical linguistic maturation but a transformation in the modes of regulation of late capitalism. The fact that the screen itself is a production of space becomes rather clear when we see the "grammar" of the Classic Model not as some visual duplication of linguistic codes, but as spatially disposed representations upon the physical space of the screen. The Hollywood Model creates a grid that subdivides the screen into zones of unequal value; when added to the techniques of continuity editing, this creates a system that standardizes signification in a typically Fordist way – the regulation of vision.

The Nickelodeon, in short, is a differential space in which the regulatory transformation from Taylorism to Fordism takes place; Fordism, will produce its own cinematic space. There is a relative parallelism between the development of auto manufacture (and its corresponding productions of factory space in the Ford Motors Company) and the development of the cinema, which leaves no doubt as to a common history to these seemingly disparate spheres of

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production. Aside from tying the cinema to Fordism, this phenomenon also destroys any notion of culture as an *ex post facto* reflection of an economic base – at the level of material practice of space, the "base" is indistinct from the "superstructure;" any distinction thus made is exclusively useful at the level of analysis.

The Nickelodeon theaters were productions of space insofar as they allowed for the initial Taylorization of theatrical operations – separating the functions of the projectionist, the presenter, and sometimes the box office manager; additionally, distribution cartels began to attach specific business practices to the whole exhibition process. In addition, the linkage of associated spaces of the screen became stronger with World War I: theater owners began to decorate their facades and marquees with patriotic and heroic motifs to attract the public, and they also began to combine displays in their lobbies with specific shows or special functions prior to their shows – the direct connection between spectacle on the screen and ideological message in the street became patently evident during that time.

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The displacement of "pure" Taylorism by the mass market strategies of Fordism, led to two significant productions of space in the cinema: the Hollywood studio with its production system, and the movie palaces. The studios were perfect Fordist integrations of place and function, a consolidation of every aspect of production and circulation necessary to the movie industry; the studios were, in fact, large industrial trusts. The movie palaces, for their part, developed a full departamentalization of services and a professionalization of labor; from the box office to the projectionist, and from the manager to the designer of the lobby and the viewing hall. Additionally, these places accentuated the intention to "make believe" through architectural spectacularization – in Kracauer's words, this was the "cult of distraction," a perfect subjectivation effect for the inception of Fordism in the 1920s.

There was another spatial effect resulting from the connection between screen spectacle and movie palace: the development and legitimation of outer neighborhoods and city districts for the bourgeoning industrial middle class (i.e., factory workers and clerks

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with salaries unheard of until that time). The connection between the technological city and the cinema became a double one. Not only were the moviehouses directly related to the new geography of the city, but the city itself became an object of representation in the movies themselves. Audiences that frequented the movie palaces were delighted by comedies set in urban environments, such as the endless street chases of Harry Langdon or the Keystone Cops, and the perils faced by Harold Lloyd in *Safety Last* or Buster Keaton in *Steamboat Bill, Jr.* (set in a small town visibly undergoing transformations led by big capital). It would have seemed as if late capitalism had achieved a perfect circularity of form and content, presentation and representation, illusion and reality, until such high hopes were dashed by the economic and social bust of the 1930s. The vision of the city became dark and pessimistic. Cavalcanti's *Rien Que les Heures* presented the city as a living organism, as "one day in the life of Paris." The city was no longer presented as a center of hope and opportunity, but as a complex ecological system where people, like rats, depended on their strength and underhandedness to survive, and where poverty and urban

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spectacle coexisted incongruously. Lang's *M*, made already in the midst of the Depression, was even darker; presenting not only poverty and crime, but the banality of a system which imposed a homogenous sense of Taylorist specialization and efficiency to criminals and police alike. In the long run, the greatest fear in that film became the rule of the mob and the collapse of civil society, a dire call for regulation in the wake of the Nazis takeover of German society.

The Stock Market Crash and the Depression finally forced the consolidation of Fordist Regulation, chiefly, through the government. The interpenetration between the supposedly private sphere of capital and the public sphere of political administration forced Fordism to accept the production of national space as a normative element of its regulatory efforts. Earlier Fordism, had an internationalist stance, borne of self-interest in developing a large export sector and in allowing displaced European peasants into the cities as sources of cheap industrial labor. Regulatory Fordism now had to involve nationalism in order to assure its success. In that respect, the United States had a privileged position. It had not only survived a World War

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with its economy intact, but it also had strengthened its position in the European markets with the rebuilding effort.

During this time, the U.S. Government had realized the importance of film as the medium to instill desire for American manufactured goods. With the nationalist turn from World War I to the Depression, a preexisting production of space was added to the push for regulation, with an inevitable internal tension between the internationalist tendencies of Fordism in general and the nationalist pull of Regulatory Fordism. A neoimperialist phase of late capitalism began to emerge in which territorial conquest gave way to macroeconomic domination and indirect political control. Much of this struggle for space in the cinema became a fight to control screens; and, once again, the U.S. achieved quick domination with the felicitous combination of a large internal market (which allowed Hollywood films to recoup their investment through domestic earnings), and the destruction of the European film industry with the War (which allowed the American film exports to capture uncontested screen space in the

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early 1920s, given that language was no barrier and local production had been destroyed).

The Great Depression, however, is the true turning point towards nationalism. On the one hand, stabilization and recovery meant the closing of borders to immigration, and the use of the government to support industry and to finance a consumer base for domestic industry in opposition to imports. On the other hand, the social and political turmoil caused by the economic shock created a climate for domestic law and order over any other consideration, a situation rife with isolationist and nationalist implications.

Looking more closely, the Crash of 1929 was a typical example of the end to a technological bubble, and the advent of sound and color in filmmaking had been part of that feverish pace of transformation. The inclusion of synchronized dialogue spoken in a "national language," was certainly one factor in the nationalist turn of the Depression, but other factors also played their role – for example, the movie palaces discarded their exotic ornamentation, modeled after the lavish homes of the rich and famous in the 1920s, for motifs exalting

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local and regional qualities. The content of films also observed this pattern. Despite the repeal of Prohibition, the quest for an ascetic consumer discipline continued to be presented to the public through such films as the gangster and the cowboy epics, in which law and order inevitably triumphed over deviant individuals or primitive (i.e., non-industrialized) populations.

At the same time, this hegemonic appropriation of visual regulation (through screen codification) and thematic homogenization by the Hollywood films of the 1920s and 1930s did not go unchallenged. The first form of opposition to the Hollywood Model came in the form of avant-garde filmmaking, primarily from France and the nascent Soviet Union. The French Dada and Surrealist movements took their general concerns and brought them into their filmmaking. Additionally, it must be noted that a large amount of film-related activity took place in spaces created or appropriated for that purpose. Avant-garde film practice intervened across a full practice of space and not merely as a form of representation. Dada films were concerned with rhythm and patterns of movement, and with the

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depiction of mechanical and technological objects. Surrealism searched for the unusual and subliminal in everyday reality, attempting to depict the flow of the unconscious in their films.

The most iconic of the Surrealist films, Buñuel's *An Andalusian Dog*, disrupts the conventions of the Hollywood Model in the editing and in the camera placements to yield a representation of space that lacks conventional verisimilitude. The formal disruptions allow the film to elude a coherently rational type of analysis, but an analysis of the representation of space in this film yields observable consistencies that help unlock some of the meaning that may be occluded when content-based or purely formal strategies are employed. However much the Surrealists might have engaged in a celebration of the aleatory, they also seem to have a will towards some form of regulation or, at least, regularization of the flow between the conscious and the unconscious states of the mind. In many ways, their approach simply relocated Regulatory Fordism from the economic to the affective realm, putting into question their own claims to revolutionary transformation. In fact, it is quite possible to see a connection between Fordism and any

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of the avant-garde movements of the early 20th Century, forcing a consideration of these groups as counter elites.

The connection between Fordism and representational space becomes even more crucial in the work of the Soviet avant-garde and the filmmakers associated with the Constructivist movement. Constructivism was in many ways the most radical of the avant-garde movements in that it attempted to revolutionize art through a double route; it transformed the status of art from a form of representation to a form of production (as construction), and it brought art to the service of social transformation by foreclosing any gap between artists and public (or object and subject). There simply was no longer a distance between art and revolutionary reality. The Constructivists indeed engaged in all manner of socially conscious activities, ranging from participation in education and propaganda efforts (agitprop) to the design and construction of utilitarian objects. These artists also engaged in the direct production of new spaces of representation, both before and after the revolution (from an arts café and actual performances in the streets to the investigation of actors' movement in theatrical and film space).

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A Fordist ethos was clearly present in their attention to calculation and geometric forms, to standardization and assembly of constitutive parts of the object, and in their will to communicate with the largest mass audience possible.

The theory of montage in film came out of this type of Fordist ethos when Kuleshov ran experiments to observe the tendency of viewers to associate a moving image with a subsequent one projected on the screen. Montage entailed a consideration of the image as material, the further consideration of ideological implications in the association with other images through editing, and finally the possibility to structure an entire film by selecting and fitting together these images – a thoroughly Constructivist strategy. Vertov added the effacement of representation to this filmic strategy in order to create films without scenarios, in which "life was caught unawares." Vertov's produced his own version of a Fordist form of the regulation of vision through his notion of camera-eye (*kino glaz*), which celebrated the perfectibility of visual perception through the lens and the mechanisms of the camera.

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In his masterpiece, *The Man With the Movie Camera*, the object of Vertov's camera-eye is ostensibly the technological city, which is presented as a celebration of the modernizing capacity of revolutionary societies. However, there is a more complex production of space working in this film. Since vision is now the result of a hybrid, the viewing act is not complete at the moment of filming, but at the moment of viewing what the eye saw in conjunction with the camera. This means that the separation between external reality and cinematic event are no longer mediated by representation – the cinematic event now gains its rightful status as full part of lived reality, creating not virtual but actual experience in the and of the world. The only representation possible, then, is self-representation, and it is no accident that the opening sequence of the film shows all the preparations for the projection of a film called "Man With the Movie Camera." More than a film-within-a-film, this sequence will be the front end of a loop that will take the spectator with it; allowing not only for a Modernist self-allusion to the filmmaking process, but also for a constant breakdown of the separation between reality on screen

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and off screen (the reality of the audience). As the movie progresses, the images of the city become increasingly fragmentary and disorienting; until the end, when the loop turns into a vortex that speeds up the action and collapses the visual unto itself. The screen is no longer so much viewed as it is experienced, harkening back to the Cinema of Attractions but constituting itself into the negation of the negation prior to a presumably revolutionary synthesis of the social and the cultural in the act of viewing a film. The fragmentary images and dislocated narrative strategies of the avant-garde will oppose themselves to the unitary images and continuous narrative strategies of the hegemonic model.

The fact that a process of social contestation can take place through a spatial break up of the visual field, confirms the screen as a production of social space which functions to situate the viewer and generate subjectivity. At the same time, being that the screen is an *assemblage*, this strategy of merely affecting the space of representation – the screen itself, and on occasion the rest of the movie hall (as it happened with some Dada events) – becomes indicative of

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the shortcomings of the avant-garde's revolution. By merely modifying already existing space, rather than producing their own, the avant-garde acted as a counter-elite; their work was a radicalization of Fordism, rather than a revolutionary transformation aiming at a new mode of production.

This, however, should not be construed as an indication that individuals or groups can become revolutionary by producing new space in a voluntaristic manner. Socioeconomic change is a complex process, contingent on a variety of dialectically interconnected factors; the production of space cannot be understood as a mere "cause" of social change, anymore than it can be understood as an "effect" of social change. Both depend on each other and are necessary but not sufficient explanations for social phenomena.

II

The second half of the Twentieth Century features what can be seen as the gradual transformation from "Hard Fordism" to Flexible

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Accumulation[1]. Fordism can be understood as having two phases: an "easy" one in which rapid industrialization is possible because markets have been untapped, followed by a "hard" phase of market saturation (with ensuing price inelasticities, labor strife and cyclical recessionary "corrections" that aggravate the tendency of the system to rely on credit and debt to induce consumption and to overcome delays in the turnover cycle due to rigidities, bottlenecks and other slow downs). The size of the U.S. economy – and its happy juncture as rebuilders of Europe after two devastating wars – allowed for these periodic missteps to take place with minimal trouble. For the rest of the world, however, these problems meant the need to squeeze further profits by lowering the cost labor; by military force, if necessary – hence the notion of "hard" ISI in Latin America, for example. The domestic tranquility of the U.S. economy was propped up by that perpetual social and political turmoil

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[1]For the sake of brevity, the following sections will proceed with minimal footnotes and citations. All works consulted with respect to globalization and Post-Fordist economics; Postmodern theory; Postcolonial and Postmodern film; as well as television and computers are duly referenced in the bibliography.

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in its subsidiary economies, exacerbated by the "Cold War" framework that dominated the extent of that hard phase of Fordism.

The need to maximize market consumption and minimize the cost of labor eventually led to a completely different configuration in the relations of labor. At the level of the workplace, the cost of labor was minimized by making the process of production "flexible," allowing for disaggregated manufacture. In other words, part of the product would be manufactured in one place, other parts in different places, with yet a third region for the final assembly of the different components. This allows capitalists to exert downward pressure on the price of labor by shifting from place to place to increase the labor market supply, and to overcome localized labor strife and other social or natural problems.

At the level of the consumer market, the process of mass marketing is equally flexible, looking for niche or specialty areas of consumption, with intensification of the idea of planned obsolescence through design, one-shot use of disposable products, or staggered market introduction ("version one" followed soon enough by "version

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two," and so on; thereby capturing new consumers and forcing older ones to "upgrade"). This requires both a hypertrophied financial sector, with greater growth in speculative capital, rather than in direct investment on assets; and it also requires a retrenchment of any state or public sector interference in the "free market" – the workplace and the social benefits of the welfare state are eliminated in order to create a labor supply that will behave according to the "free" market process. As governments lose control of their national economies and recede to the arena of social and cultural policy, the need for macroeconomic regulation becomes imperative; this is what explains the transformation of Breton Woods institutions from conduits of short-term balance of trade loans during Fordism as "lenders of last resort," to enforcers of stabilization and adjustment as a new form of global hegemony – a turn to export-led strategies accompanied by the imposition of economic neoliberalism, known as the "Washington Consensus."

This entire system, of course, relies on the notorious Just In Time (JIT) principles of production and marketing, where a manufacturer produces only the right amount of components for a given region and

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gets them to that market at a given date – i.e., just in time – for the sale to take place. This process has the flexibility to address specific market peculiarities (e.g., exact amounts and product preferences for that market), with the advantage of not requiring the huge inventories and additional warehousing plus the costly skilled labor necessary under the Fordist system.

At the root of this new set of relations of production are two specific technological innovations, the television and the computer. Neither the JIT system, nor the regulation of consumption could take place without the "small screen." It is barely necessary to indicate that the chief purpose to television is to bolster consumption through commercial advertising, its capacity to dominate the domestic space makes this mass medium most important to business interests. Computers, for their part, are the chief element that makes the JIT system possible: it is a computer that indicates a specific production target, and it is a computer network that allows command in one part of the world over all the production, distribution and sales subsidiaries in the rest of the world. It is also the network technology that allows for

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the instantaneous transfer of capital and information that characterizes the contemporary market at all levels (from the most obscure financial circles to the home consumer). Finally, the production process continues to be transferred from living labor to computers and cybernetic robots, with the consequent devaluation of wage demands and generalized purchasing power. There is also an enormous growth of the informal economy, both legal and unlawful, as subcontracting, self-employment and temporary work and freelancing become prevalent features. The entire process, of course, leads to massive un- and underemployment and low purchasing power; producers and manufacturers, however, can avoid any ill effects by targeting consumer niches without having to depend anymore on local markets (where unemployment and underconsumption have their impact).

This is nothing more than the process of uneven development typical of all forms of capitalist social relations. The new forms of decentralization and reconcentration of accumulation dictate the new geopolitical configurations. Some areas have been able to recast their hegemony in the new mold of information processing and finance

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banking (e.g., the old manufacturing centers of London and New York turned into "informational cities"), at the same time a patchwork of disparate new service or manufacturing centers has emerged (e.g., Silicon Valley and Seattle, Japan and the East Asian "Tigers"), while a whole new area of "enterprise free zones" also emerges (e.g., the maquiladora belt in Northen Mexico, and new manufacturing centers of Central America, Africa, Asia and parts of Eastern Europe where national labor laws and union organizing is forbidden or limited – with consequent increases in early mortality rates and workplace accidents). Additionally, the relatively integrated industrial centers of the Fordist era are now undergoing their own "internal" uneven development. This allows the new informational economy of New York, for example, to bypass neighborhoods like Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant or almost the entire Borough of The Bronx. As "cultural capital" becomes more important in the economy, the decoupling of these urban areas from the main venues of symbolic exchange creates further inequalities. And, as this form of uneven developments further becomes "normative," it sets back any possibilities of a meaningful

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sociocultural integration coming from those areas – even when expressive means are made available to some of the members of these "communities" (to wit the massive wealth accumulated by hip hop stars without much impact in their neighborhoods of origin; a new "Harlem Renaissance" is simply inconceivable in the age of television). At the same time, some can see this process as having the potential to develop the kind of international proletariat envisioned almost a century ago by the "Wobblies." In any case, we confront a new practice of space, requiring a new analytic paradigm.

As these new practices of space develop during the transition from Hard Fordism to Flexible Accumulation and Globalization, a clear indication is that the screen becomes a greater factor in the production and reproduction of the entire historic bloc. The cinema has its own space as a "leisure activity," and its connection with the cycles of socioeconomic production are not as easily discernible as the connections that it has with the cycles of social reproduction. By contrast, the small screen – especially the computer screen – is so ubiquitous and embedded in the spatial practices of everyday life *at*

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every level as to not only become identified but materially included in the cycles of production. The deeper we get into the new globalized order of flexible accumulation, the more every aspect of our everyday lives comes to be centered around different types of computer screens and less on face to face contact with other people.

Needless to say, this glut of small screens in our daily existence is the exact crux of Postmodern theory and practice – the de-centered, de-referentialized life under the simulacrum. In the final analysis, the passage from Fordism to Globalization is also the passage from Modernism to Postmodernism. The fact that its associated productions of space – the city and the screen – are not different from Fordism should serve to qualify (if not quantify) the extent of this transformation; further typified by the fact that "new labels" are impossible, so that innovations in analytic paradigms become simply "Post-" (i.e., Post-colonialism, Post-modernism, etc.).

What has indeed changed is the nature of the spaces themselves – we now have the informational city, a new urban center of global networks; we also have the media-driven global village, a new world

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where the ecstasy of communication is centered around the CRT screen. Imbricated in these myriad transitions are the dynamics of contemporary social change; which, of course, base their transformative capacity on new productions of space. Accordingly, we must take a look at 1) the spaces of the movie screen under the Hard Fordism of the second postwar period; 2) the productions of space implicated in the transition from the cultural centrality of the cinema to that of television; 3) the emerging displacement of television by computers. This research will, in the first place, further confirm the connection between socioeconomic production and space by showing the changing practices of space related to the new configurations in the relations of production. Secondly, this research will give material grounding to the dynamics of contemporary social change, explaining the "Postmodern Condition" not as a collapse of epistemology or as a metaphysical teleology of capitalist "development;" but as a current form of subjectivity arising from our social experience of contemporary productions of space. Finally, this research will also restore the concept of time to the contemporary analysis of space, since the

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constant production of space – the screen – is, nevertheless, imbued with change: it shifts from the large "silver screen" to the small cathode ray tube screen; and it does so in relative connection to shifts in the "economic" and "cultural" levels of the existing set of social relations. In that respect, the production of space not only acquires a chronology, but returns to where it belongs: it is history.

III

The internationalization, if not globalization, of film was strengthened during and after World War II with two specific practices of cinematic space. The first one was tied to the emerging nation-states of the Third World, a label which itself became an emerging concept and practice of geopolitical space at the height of the Cold War. This emerging Third World Cinema, as well as the cinema from industrialized countries, owed a lot of its success to a second practice of space which served to legitimize film as a key cultural commodity – or even in certain cases as fine art – through the creation of an international festival circuit. The strange symbiosis between "national identities" and the "internationalist Modernism" of regulatory Fordism

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became the staple of yearly events at Cannes, Berlin, Karlovy Vary and, later on, Havana. The creation of this "carnivalesque space" of cyclical film consumption on an international scale allowed for the widespread recognition of "locally rooted" film work – Italian Neorrealism, Japanese drama (Ozu, Mizoguchi, Naruse, Kurosawa), and even several Third World productions (e.g., Fernández's *María Candelaria*, Buñuel's *Los Olvidados*, Ray's *Pather Panchali*, Torre Nilsson's *La Mano en la Trampa*).

However, the greatest change in the spatial practice of the cinema was forced by the appearance of an altogether new and different screen space: the television. Its impact was felt immediately after the Second World War

> Fredric Stuart provided precise data to substantiate the theory that the introduction of the new medium was the *principal* reason for the decline in movie audiences in the period 1948-1956. Stuart began by examining and comparing the introduction of television in specific geographic areas. From this comparison he established a strong statistical correlation ®=0.91) between television's introduction and the drop in movie attendance.... Before 1948, per capita expenditures on motion pictures were predictable on the basis of per capita income. After the introduction of television, however, this correlation was no longer valid. If the additional independent variable of percent of

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> households with television sets was also considered, then the equation, once again, provided a strong correlation (Jowett 1976:350, italics in the original).

Television also transformed the commercial aspects of mainstream culture – the number of families with television sets rose from 8,000 in 1946 to 34,900,000 in 1956, while the average weekly attendance dropped from 90 million to 40 million in the same period (*ibid.*, p. 348). It also transformed mainstream culture

> After the glorious year in 1946 when close to 1.7 billion dollars was paid by movie patrons to see their favorite entertainment, the fortunes of the American motion pictures went steadily downhill, with only the odd year in which this decline has been momentarily halted. In the fourteen-year period between 1946 and 1960, the average weekly attendance dropped from ninety million to forty million. More important, the expenditures declined even more sharply, from one-fifth to less than one-tenth of the available recreational dollars. [...] While the movies would continue as a major entertainment medium, by the early 1950s it could no longer claim to be the *major* source of commercial recreation (*ibid.*, p. 338, italics in the original).

The displacement of film from a position of cultural centrality to a secondary role would seem paradoxical in light of its continuing internationalization and legitimation as a form of High Art. In fact, the hard phase of Fordism required an intensification of consumption and

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television was the ideal medium for this. The practice of "watching television," however, allowed the world to become increasingly disaggregated and individualized, as people or small and relatively homogeneous groups (families, friends) became isolated viewers in the confines of the home. The "loss of community," the sense of despair and impotence before seemingly overwhelming forces that direct life outside of one's reach is a direct result of this new practice of screen space after World War II. As Fordism began to break down and new flexible forms of production and consumption began to emerge, it was no longer necessary to gather people in one place in order to form the subjectivity of the mass. The small screen was in a better position to enter the habitual spaces of everyday life and to have direct interplay with the activities and mental life of the quotidian. The external world of commerce and the market collapsed into the internal world of the home, blurring the boundaries between the bourgeois public sphere and the private one; this was a new production of space which clearly indicated that the disaggregated and solitary world of the small screen was a "social product" and not an individual preference for "private

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entertainment." The small screen featured (and still does) a great capacity to penetrate the habitual realm of everyday life, becoming so ubiquitous as to actually dominate that realm; so, it was perfectly positioned to form the new subjectivity of the flexible mode of regulation: a generalized sense of individual immersion in the midst of a "society of the spectacle."

It is within this contextual framework that we propose an agenda for further research focusing on 1) the extension of film practices to "marginal areas" (the Third World) alongside the "golden era" of counterhegemonic responses from the industrialized world (Italian Neorrealism, Japanese Postwar drama and samurai epics, and the final bursts before the collapse of Fordism: the French and Japanese New Waves) – this would be coupled with a look at prevailing extension of US independent film to "marginal populations" (minority subcultures) as well as the international Postcolonial and Postmodern film practices in the era of the small screen (including film broadcast on television or in analog and digital video formats); 2) the emergence of television and its capacity to transform "mass audiences" into "global audiences;"

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and, 3) computers and their "virtual space" as a paradigm of the new hegemony. Below, we will briefly outline a variety of proposals for this future research. Some of these ideas are meant to cohere around the sequence of screens throughout the Twentieth Century and can be organized as a book proposal. Some ideas analyze space in a series of more narrowly focused approaches that can yield separate essays or articles – for instance, some of the entries offering specific analysis of representations of space within a limited number of works.

IV

After World War II, the cinematic space underwent the same transformations that the urban space suffered, particularly in the United States: both became secondary – the suburban space attracting a large portion of middle and high income earners; and television attracting most viewers, especially older adults. The attempts to attract audiences through large screen formats, 3-D, and stereo and quadraphonic sound are well known. More relevant to film is the fact that mainstream culture began to move away from specific demographic centers into its own self-contained enclave: the shopping mall. This became a practice

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of space in which commerce and leisure became undifferentiated; and, in this particular site, a new form of the cinematic screen began to take shape: the multiplex, with its smaller theaters and screens, and its concentration of different offerings (or different schedules for a single blockbuster) in a single place. This phenomenon was the result of a new production of extended metropolitan space, the postwar urban flight that appended affluent and racially purified suburbs to the city. The civic and cultural center of these communities was altogether non-existent, finding its substitute in the shopping mall, which basically turned weekend leisure (the cycle of reproduction) into sheer consumerism. The multiplex served as baby sitter to drop off the kids while adults went shopping, or it served as one more among all the activities of consumption for that day: "from 11-1 we go to this store, from 1-2 we go to the food court, from 2-4 we watch a movie at the 'plex,' at 4:30 we can catch the new cookware demonstration at this other store (along with food samples), and then we can go home." In this respect, the collapse between the space of domestic consumption and the space of film entertainment could not have been so "seamless"

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without the production and practices of television screen space, as we will see below.

Additionally, film began to be viewed at home on television and, eventually, on videocassette. These latter developments began to counter any attempts at wide screen formatting or at using full compositions in the cinematic mode, because of the smaller cineplex screens and the NTSC format of American television – which has a 1:1 aspect ratio, closer to the square format of 16mm film than to the wider aspect ratios of 35 and 70mm formats. Deep focus and long takes were soon abandoned for tight close ups centered within the frame, accompanied by rapid fire cutting; this has now become the dominant style in American film and television production.

At the same time, certain countries and independent producers began to rise in challenge to the Hollywood hegemony, aided by the international festival circuit and the middle-class mainstreaming of the cine club and art house practices started by the avant-garde. This counterhegmonic film production became widespread and too vast to

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analyze in a single "snapshot;" but we can sum up certain examples below.

The best known Post-War film movement is, without a doubt, Italian Neorrealism. The films of Rossellini, made as the Nazi occupation of Rome was waning, and the films of Zavattini-De Sica, Monicelli, and Visconti certainly made a point of challenging Hollywood production values by foregrounding the presentation of "small people" (the poor, the aging retirees, the small time crooks, etc) in their mundane settings and everyday dramas. The alleged immediacy and transparency of this aesthetic approach is certainly questionable, but its impact as a Modernist strategy and as a new form of nation-making discourse is undeniable. For our purposes, the issue to be grappled is the notion of a representation of space purporting to have equivalence, if not equality, to real space.

Japanese dramas and samurai epics also entered the international arena through the festival and art house circuits. The work of Ozu and Mizoguchi, in particular (although we should also include certain individual examples like, Naruse's *When a Woman Ascends the Stairs*),

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shows a fascinating double reflection on the recent military nationalism and on the contemporary modernization along American lines – many of those Post-War classics were made shortly after the American occupation and the military administration of Japan under General MacArthur. Mizoguchi's *Ugetsu Monagatari* (1953), for example, begins with elaborate credits written on Kanji calligraphy over what looks like a soft-focus grainy background. The first shot is a tilt down and left pan over a landscape, eventually ending in a top shot of a road where two men are loading a wooden cart. They talk about the possibility of going to town to sell their pottery and making a fortune; one of the men is berated by his wife for his silly ambitions. In the distance, a man walks out of one of the roadside houses, followed by a woman. The camera moves in closer while the man stands on the road, which forks right behind him (in the background of the shot); he tells the woman to be careful about ill-begotten gains during wartime – peasants cannot take advantage of that situation to go above their means and social station, because that brings ruin and damnation later on. The fact that Mizoguchi moved his character onto the road to make

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a public speech added to the fact that the camera just passed over the landscape and that the road shows alternative paths beyond, turns these initial shots into a metaphor for the recent history of Japan (fresh from being under General Mac Arthur's military administration) and its present path towards modernization – the representation of space renders a national discourse. The same year, Ozu will do likewise with his representation of Tokyo in connection to the domestic spaces in *Tokyo Story*.

Some consideration also has to be given to Soviet and Eastern European film of the Cold War era. It is nearly impossible to correctly understand the situation in those countries, since much of the work commonly done and exhibited there did not come to Western Europe and North America. A lot of the known work is by "auteurs" celebrated in the festival circuit or dissident filmmakers favored by American distributors; thus rendering a distorted image of what seems to have been very much an industrial system of film production. Despite its complexities, an acknowledgement has to be made of the work of Soviet fimmakers like Parajanov, Tarkovsky, and Mikhalkov

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(and singular examples like Askoldov's *Commissar*), and the work of diverse Eastern European filmmakers like Jancsó, Szabó, Fabri, Chytilova, Kadar, Menzel, Kawalerowicz, Zanussi and, of course, Wajda, Polansky, Kieslowski and Forman. In most of these cases, there is a degree of allegory or "second level semantics" alluding to the policies of the dominant socialist state; much of this is achieved by pitting the individualized central character against a background provided by place (representation of space) and the contrasting way in which other people relate to that specific location.

Some Third World filmmakers also benefitted from the international festival circuit and the art house phenomenon. The most compelling examples, for our purposes, are India and Mexico (China could be included), which also showed a paradoxical symbiosis with Fordist expansionism and its regulatory modes. India has become the largest film producer in the world, and its connection with British colonialism allowed it access to technical know-how capable of constructing the studio system of contemporary Bollywood – a regionally hegemonic production system with market and cultural

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influence over Asia and parts of Africa. This industry also provides the linguistic and sociocultural discourse necessary to maintain national cohesion in a large territory inhabited by heterogenous groups. At the same time, a group of intellectual filmmakers – Ray, Gathak, Kapoor, Benegal, Sen – has arisen and produced a number of works addressing several social and historic problems in India. Perhaps the largest issue has been the schism caused by the partition of Bengal. This fragmentation of territory seems to lead to a similar fragmentation in the work of Gathak (regrettably, the films are impossible to view at the moment, leaving us with just this speculative note).

Mexico, for its part, was the specific beneficiary of World War II, since Hollywood began to fund Mexican studio construction and training of skilled film labor in order to maintain its grip on the Latin American market, while American producers and directors turned their attention to the war effort. Additionally, Argentina's film industry was blockaded and effectively destroyed. This produced another regional hegemony in the entire Latin American subcontinent. As a result,

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Mexican film was able to produce one of the most enduring iconic symbols for both the nation and the entire region: Cantinflas.

Perhaps no Third World cinema exemplifies the connection between Fordism and film more than Latin America. As Latin America embarked on its strategy of import substituting industrialization (ISI), a series of developmentalist states began to emerge. It is possible to trace the emergence of major film industries or at least major individual producers alongside the appearance of these developmentalist states. Mexico was one of the first Latin American nation-states to do so under Lázaro Cárdenas' government, even before World War II. It is at the end of his administration (and the beginning of the War) that Cantinflas makes his first film, *Ahí Está el Detalle*, a film which can be seen as an allegory of Mexico's social dynamics in the wake of the first "organized" change of Presidential regime in the country's history.

Mexico dominated the Latin American output of the 1950s, although Argentina gave some faint signs of recovery, with the quasi-independent films of Torre Nilsson as an example. As the Cuban and Brazilian states began to implement some of these ISI strategies in the

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1960's, major films begin to emerge from those countries. Eventually, even Puerto Rico and Bolivia produced films. Puerto Rico, under the developmentalist strategies of the Muñoz Marín governorship, organized the División de Educación de la Comunidad (DIVEDCO), which produced a series of shorts for self reliance – reminiscent of the work done by the pioneers of Soviet cinema. More remarkable were the series of fiction shorts initiated by Willard Van Dyke (the maker of *The City*), and which were scripted by young writers who went on to become some of the most distinguished intellectuals of their generation – e.g., René Marqués, Pedro Juan Soto, Emilio Díaz Valcárcel. Bolivia actually produced major works – *Yawar Malku, El Coraje del Pueblo* – under the direction of Jorge Sanjinés; and Chile was beginning to feature a bourgeoning film industry (Miguel Littin, Raúl Ruiz, Patricio Guzmán), cut short by the 1973 coup. Colombia and Venezuela featured developmentalist states but abandoned ISI for export led strategies, which may explain the absence of major film. The lone exception is Perú, which did have both and failed to produce a major

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film industry, possibly explained by its difficult geography which leads to a drastic fragmentation of its internal market.

Within this framework, it bears remarking on three examples of representation of space with national or regional implications:

1) Torre Nilsson's *Hand in the Trap* offers a complex example of spatial dynamics represented by a large old-style mansion of fading glory, and the provincial city that surrounds it. The family living there consists of two middle aged women and a young niece they are raising, along with the proverbial lunatic relative locked up in the attic. The girl sneaks up on the dumbwaiter used to send food up, and discovers that this relative in the attic is not a deformed midget, as she has been led to believe, but one of her aunts who was abandoned by a man, much to the dishonor of the family which now must hide her from public view. Hoping to help her aunt, the girl tracks down the man, a good lucking and self assured guy, who is seen driving all over town in an American convertible, smoking American cigarettes. He agrees to go meet the girl's aunt, but in fact begins to woo the youngster. Eventually, the tortured lengths that the family went through to keep up

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appearances comes out, and the claustrophobic reality they have to offer the girl is no match to the the Americanized man, who finally whisks her away from that environment, only to turn her into a kept woman in an equally secluded apartment in Buenos Aires. The girl, basically, becomes a representation of Postwar Argentina, caught between the claustrophobic space and traditions of its Spanish past and a free roaming but equally misleading American consumerism.

2) Buñuel's films have been analyzed for their Surrealist touches, for their rage against religion and fanaticism, and for their satyrical observations of bourgeois behavior. However, there is always a problem in pinpointing a political analysis in his work. Looking at the representation of space, however, it is possible to see a specific political sweep and a consistent class-based critique across several of his films. *Los Olvidados* observes the lumpen proletariat in the space of the slums; *Nazarín* observes what happens when a member of a different social class moves into and involves himself in the problems of a poor tenament; *Viridiana* observes the reverse process, in which the lumpen proletarians enter and involve themselves in the space of

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the aristocratic bourgeoisie; and *The Exterminating Angel* observes the bourgeoisie in its own space, mirroring in reverse the situation of *Los Olvidados*. The representation of social class pinned to specific spaces is rather sharp in Buñuel's work, and it becomes extremely volatile when either class moves out of its space and comes into contact with the other class – including, for example, the sequences in *Los Olvidados* when Pedro leaves his slum to walk around the streets of downtown Mexico City and nearly falls victim to a predatory bourgeois man dressed in an ostentatious fur coat, or the sequence in which he is interned in a reform school run by a well intentioned and "progressive" social worker, whose attempts to rescue Pedro might have worked if he could have been entirely removed from the life of the street.

3) Rocha offers a reformulation of Torre Nilsson's film in *Terra em Transe*. The contrast is now placed between the mansion of the local senator and the town where the poor peasants and the dissident middle class live. A young journalist initially backs the Senator, but then sees the true intentions behind the man's rule – tied to U.S. capital through Explint (a made up name for Intenational Exporting); so, he

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decides to oppose him by supporting a charismatic, but ultimately weak populist candidate. A massacre ensues, and the film ends with the journalist walking on a road with destruction all around him, like Benjamin's "angel of history." Under this representation of space, the discourse switches from a moral dilemma (Torre Nilsson) to a dependency model, in which the articulation of U.S. capital and internal corruption leads to the "development of underdevelopment."

The final burst of glory for film can be placed with the French, Japanese and German New Waves – although the latter group of filmmakers (Herzog, Fassbinder, Schlondorff) actually began making films for German television. Of particular interest to us is their attempt to form alternative spaces of production or exhibition. Godard, for example, formed the Dziga Vertov group and attempted to use similar methods to the Third Cinema filmmakers – shooting in factories, allowing the workers to intervene in the making of the film, exhibiting in public settings as opposed to theaters, etc. In Japan, Imamura and Oshima, concerned with studio micromanagement and government censorship, attempted to create their own channels of distribution and

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even had their own moviehouse where they exhibited their independently produced films. There are even stylistic convergences between Godard's work and Oshima's *The Man Who Left His Will On Film.*

Outside of the French New Wave, but related in sensibility as well as shared culture were the films of Fellini and Antonioni, and Louis Malle and Alan Resnais (and of course, Jacques Tati, who defies all categorization). Resnais, along with a second generation Italian Neorrealist like Antonioni, features a whole host of fascinating psychological portraits relating place to modern social disfunction and personal crisis: *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, in fact, actually has a French woman and a Japanese man embody two places separated by geography but interrelated in contemporary history; *Last Year at Mariembad* and *Providence* blur the lines between fantasy and reality, present and future by shifting spatial configuration while repeating the diegetic anecdotes; Antonioni's *The Red Desert* links the chilly and foggy environment of Ravena's industrial zone and the environmental devastation produced by industrial pollution with the psychological

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devastation produced by indusrial management on the manager's wives and the workers alike. Fragmentary and sometimes purposefully derivative (Fellini, Godard, Oshima), this work teeters on the brink of Postmodernism but retains a resolutely self-reflective Modernist spine – Rivette's *Julie and Celine Go Boating* is, perhaps, the quintessential exemplar of this hypermodernist trend.

As film becomes increasingly displaced by small screens (both television and computers), its role becomes secondary despite the fact that Hollywood blockbusters continue setting box office records and commanding large international audiences. This competition with other visual media, as well as the urgency to retain export viability to foreign countries, helps to explain why big budget American films resort to "action genres" based on non-linguistic events (explosions, car chases, gunplay). At the same time, new room opens up for independent producers as well as local or regional industries to take up the nation-making functions left behind by the globalized Hollywood industry. As such, we find the following phenomena:

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1) In the U.S., some of the most interesting, and occasionally popular, films are being made by independent and marginal producers belonging to minority or political "subcultures." Obviously, Spike Lee comes to mind as the most notorious example; but, in fact, he is just the most famous case among a whole constellation of young African American "*auteurs*" describing the Black experience in both urban as well as extremely secluded rural settings – e.g., John Singleton and Julie Dash, respectively. More interesting are the examples of identity paradigms produced by Chicanos or Asian American filmmakers. The latter group feature a new trans-territorial type of filmmaking demonstrated by Ang Lee and Wayne Wang, who alternate between "Western" examples like *Sense and Sensibility* and *Smoke*, respectively, and are equally at home in their native Taiwan (Ang Lee's *Eat Drink Man Woman*) and Hong Kong (Wang's *Chinese Box*). Okazaki's *Living on Tokyo Time* and Nair's *Mississippi Masala*, explore intercultural conflicts among members of different minority groups who are intermarried.

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The Chicano filmmakers have produced some Hollywood blockbuster-type films, including Gregory Nava's *El Norte* and *Selena*, and Robert Rodríguez's *Desperado* (an English language remake of his $8,000 indie hit *El Mariachi*) and *Once Upon A Time In Mexico*. However, the most important example, in our opinion, is still Luis Valdez's *Zoot Suit*, an offshoot of the Teatro Campesino. This film, based on a stage play which ran successfully on Broadway, is a veritable catalogue of representations of space; sometimes veering into the representation of spaces of representation – the film actually opens with a theatrical marquee showing an old play fading into a new play (which happens to be *Zoot Suit*, echoing the opening sequence of *Man With the Movie Camera*), next we see the audience arriving and sitting down to watch the play. Throughout the movie, this space of the audience will be incorporated into the action of the play and, in one memorable sequence, the action will move from the pitch black of a solitary confinement cell to the empty seats in order to stage a confrontation between the main character and his alter ego. By shifting from the level of the stage to the level of the audience and by

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alternating between a closed-in diegetic universe and a self-referential narrativization of audience reception, the film comments precisely on the "community-making" capacity of cultural forms such as the represented play and, of course, the film under re-view.

Another notable example of "minority filmmaking" is Eyre's *Smoke Signals*, based on Sherman Alexie's stories about an Indian Reservation in the Pacific Northwest.

At the same time, this minority or subculture indie trend is tied to the era of globalization. A fascinating example of the "transnationalization of culture," is offered by Kassovitz's *Hate*, a French movie about three alienated teenagers from immigrant families, battling the police and the bourgeois establishment of Paris while carrying out what essentially remains an "American" Hip Hop ethos. A Colombian movie like Gaviria's *Rodrigo D* portrays the lumpen youth of Medellín; their subcultures are divided between "*punkeros*" and "*metaleros,*" further demonstrating the socially structuring hold of "American" music. Needless to say, much of "Latin American" music, from Tito Puente and the bulk of salsa (literally invented in New York)

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to pop stars like Selena and Gloria Estefán all come out of the United States. Some recent examples of films set in India – Nair's *Salam Bombay* and Mehta's *Fire* – are produced, written and directed by filmmakers residing in the US and Canada, respectively. The tension between "national" and global transculturation is no longer a problem of form or content, but even of the identity and status of the work itself.

Finally, some "non- cultural" minorities – e.g., feminists, gays and lesbians – are also attempting to produce films that create certain forms of social cohesion through their films. These range from the controversial and somewhat incendiary films of Lizzie Borden (*Born in Flames*, *Working Girl*) to benign and viewer friendly Romantic comedies with gay subjects (e.g., Berlanti's *Broken Hearts Club*; Ganatra's *Chutney Popcorn*, featuring a mixed White American and East Indian Lesbian couple; or, Wurmfeld/Juergenson/Westfeldt's *Kissing Jessica Stein*, about the "bi-curious" experience, written by two heterosexual women). The traditional notions of fixed identity – both for individuals as well as for groups and large sociopolitical aggregates

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(nations, subcontinental regions) – are jarred loose in most of these recent films.

2) It is well known by now that this loosening of identity boundaries is part of the Postmodern turn in contemporary culture. This Postmodern turn features a variety of strategies which range from parody-homage to previous genres or specific styles to a complete disregard for the established parameters of the Hollywood Model in order to create personal visions with singular and obscure forms of referentiality or in order to experiment with new analog and digital media – the work of Kitano, Tarantino and Lynch are paragons of the former; the work of Tarkovsky is an exemplar of the singularly personal vision; while an exemplar of experimentation with new videographic and digital media is found in some of the work by Mike Figgis (*The Loss of Sexual Innocence* and *Timecode*) and in the work of the Dogma group (Vinterberg's *The Celebration*, Kragh-Jacobsen's *Mifune*, even the American-made *Julien Donkey-boy* by Harmony Korine).

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It is, in fact, impossible to carry out a catalog of the wide variety of Postmodern films that already exist; we will simply bring up a couple of key examples related to our own focus of research. One strain of films is demonstrating a sort of allegorical eschatology, in which a quasi apocalyptic situation leads to an existential reflection on the direction taken by contemporary postindustrial society in the "advanced" economies. In this strain, we can group some of the best known Postmodern examples, Scott's *Blade Runner*, Wender's *Wings of Desire*, Jeunot and Caro's *Delicatessen*, Besson's *The Fifth Element*. In a more attenuated, but perhaps more deeply probing way, the films of Atom Egoyan create a less fatalistic universe of emotional impoverishment that still holds a faint hope for redemption in the end (however pyrrhic this small victory may be). These films collapse time and place (sometimes all of space) in order to render an unmoored present, given that the past no longer obtains in a world of technological virtual reality and time-space compressions beyond a human scale. In a sense, these films attempt to relate postindustrial reality to the human experience in much the same way that Simmel

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attempted to describe the effects of urban environments on the human mind.

A second strain of films describes the impoverishment of the social fabric, whether by virtue of rising un- and underemployment or by the loss of tangible human contact (what Durkheim would claim to result from anomie within the process of solidarity; and contemporary sociology would see as a loss of local networks). Some of the best work in this group comes from the "altered states" mentality, whether by virtue of mental illness of drug induced stupor: the work of Ken Russell is a pioneering effort in this category, but Boyle's *Trainspotting* and Aronofsky's *Requiem for a Dream* demonstrate real depth and masterful command of the fragmentary techniques of Postmodern narrative. The latter film also merits a look alongside Cox's *Repo Man*, for its image of the city as the blighted receptacle of sociopsychological marginality. However, this group can also include formally non-Postmodern work, such as the European "realism" of Loach's *Riff-Raff* or *My Name is Joe*, Leigh's *Naked*, Sayles' *City of Hope* or the Dardenne Brothers' *Rosetta* and *La Promesse* (along with

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some devastating non-European examples like Yanagimachi's *Himatsuri*); but also Smith's *Clerks*, Lee's *The Ice Storm* and Solondz's *Welcome to the Dollhouse* and *Happiness* (films which raise questions about the relationship between urban and suburban reality in the contemporary US context). Similar films from other parts of the world are Bigas Luna's *Jamón, Jamón* and Colomo's *Bajarse al Morro* (and much of recent Spanish film, in general), and Itami's *Tampopo* (which does follow the formal strictures of Postmodernism) and *A Taxing Woman*. A related grouping contains films about personal growth or epiphany in situations where family ties or other social networks (coworkers, friends or neighbors) are no longer responsive or even available – some examples are: Yang's *Yi Yi*, Kieslowski's *Colors Trilogy*, and Kore-eda's *Mabarosi* and *Afterlife*. A third grouping looks at modern life like a curiously Medieval turn of *fortuna*'s wheel – e.g., Anderson's *Magnolia*, Firode's *Happenstance*, and Kieslowski's *Double Life of Veronique* (a film like Voulgaris' *Quiet Days in August* was ahead of this trend).

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The issue of Postmodernism in cinema – and culture, in general – presents a double challenge to our research in its dissolution of time and space. The work itself presents a deracinated space, which basically blurs the line between mental (represented) and physical space, turning contemporaneity into a shizophrenic condition. This, of course, poses difficulties in using traditional tools of analysis and in having the traditional understanding of the "function of art." The second, and perhaps more interesting, problem stems from the difficulty in settling exactly on what Postmodernism is and when it began. Clearly, some avant-garde work shows features of Postmodernism and some work in the 1960s and 70s stretched film narrative sometimes to the point of near incomprehensibility. Seijun Suzuki's stylized films were half comic book and half gangster films (echoed later by Kitano), and already demonstrated a sense of Postmodern blank parody; Antonioni's films with their disruptive endings were already stretching both film form and film sense; and Buñuel's *Obscure Object of Desire* was baffling, and Marker's *La Jetée* actually made an "anti-film" for the nuclear era by telling his

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science fiction story through still photographs (although this film finds a curious complement in the release version of Munk's *Passenger*, finished through production stills due to the unforeseen death of the filmmaker). Furthermore, Downey Sr.'s *Putney Swope* and *Greaser's Palace*, Jodorowsky's *El Topo* and *The Sacred Mountain*, and Lester's *How I Won the War* simply break with any of the narrative markers set by the Modernist tradition, making it impossible to understand directly what those films are about. More notably, Tanner's *Jonah, Who Will Be 25 in the Year 2000* had a sense of social devastation and political impotence that countered the recent optimism of the late sixties; in prophetic ways, that movie signaled a precise moment of transformation when the hopes and expectations of a previous era no longer obtained – a feeling echoed only recently by the final voiceover speech (excerpted from the original book) in Gilliam's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*.

This raises a whole set of issues in terms of periodicity and the connection between the "autonomous" sphere of art and culture and the historic change seemingly led at the "base" by socioeconomic

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structures. The effort to establish the moment of the "Postmodern turn" with greater precision might be an impossible, maybe even a misguided task; nevertheless, it also carries the promise of shedding some light on the mechanisms of contemporary social change.

In that vein, it is possible to take a sequence of films – like De Sica's *Umberto D*, Tati's *Mon Oncle* and *Playtime*, and Moretti's *Caro Diario* – and show a "progression" in the representation of space that leaves no doubt as to fact that capitalist space has not erased history in the least. In this particular case, the passage from the old city (Rome in *Umberto D*) to the disarticulated neighborhoods and islands that make up our Postmodern place (Paris for Tati, all of Italy in the case of *Caro Diario*), can be seen as methodically destroyed and replaced by a homogenized corporate architecture that obliterates all difference of place and function so that the space of an industrial expo (*Playtime*) and a modern home (*Mon Oncle*) end up looking and feeling the same.

3) A final category of contemporary film can be labeled, Postnational or Postcolonial. It is not surprising, in a way, that emerging nations and even subcontinental regions would depend on

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film to define a national identity in the wake of their own anticolonial struggles. In some cases, this process is aided and abetted by the fact that television is taking over much of Hollywood's international arena but with a different focus, so that there is room for local articulations of a national ideology in film. This is no longer the case of Third World countries "catching up," as Mexico and India did within the Fordist mold (essentially repeating Hollywood schemas in their midst); these are fully diverse narratives, often grounded in local narrative traditions and addressing issues or perspectives that are often outside of the grasp of international audiences. This is the case, for example, with Kiarostami and Mehrjui's late work (e.g., *A Taste of Cherry* and *The Pear Tree*, respectively); which becomes dense in its symbolism and oblique referentiality to Iranian culture and politics through the events of everyday life. The Chinese Fifth Generation and the new wave of Taiwanese filmmakers, accomplish the same in a more accessible way to Western audiences, explained by a lengthy filmmaking tradition in China and their tendency to take on historical subjects as political allegory (a familiar strategy in Western drama from Shakespeare to

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Brecht). Kaige's *Farewell, My Concubine*, Yimou's *Raise the Red Lantern*, and Hsiao-Hsien's *The Puppetmaster* are examples of the historical allegory. At the same time, the Fifth Generation filmmakers have been able to turn their attention to dramatic subjects set in remote regions and villages with the accuracy and attention to detail of ethnographers, rendering a unique vision of the entire sociocultural scope of China – e.g., Fei Xie's *Girl from Hunan*, and Kaige's *Yellow Earth*. This work can also be compared with Egypt's healthy filmmaking tradition, from Chadi Abdel Salam's notable *The Night of Counting the Years* and the equally notable work of Youssef Chahine, to Lasheen's *The Pupeteer* (a relatively recent political satire about official corruption and betrayal of Nasser's Pan-Arabic vision, starring none other than Omar Sharif).

Nevertheless, with all this wealth of Third World Cinema, the most remarkable examples, in our opinion, come from Africa, especially from the Francophone countries. (Some of this is explained by the concerted effort of French government agencies to fund French language production and exhibition in Senegal, Burkina Fasso and

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other countries; which of course has the added benefit of creating overseas film and media markets for film and television programming produced in France.) The films of Sembene Ousmane have attracted sufficient international attention, from his early shorts, *Black Girl* and *Borom Sarret* to his latest features, *Guelwaar* and *Faat Kiné*. His films touch on a multitude of internal and external issues affecting Senegalese society; whether it be the racist oppression of colonial rule and the corrupt self-interest of the postcolonial politicians, or the vagaries of minority religions or gender relations in a male dominated Muslim nation.

Even more formidable is the growing body of films from a single nation, Mali. Given the story telling and the musical traditions of the region (which also encompasses parts of what now is Burkina Faso), it is no surprise that a wealth of narratives can populate these films; however, the combination of tradition and cutting edge contemporary concerns is well beyond the meager narrative capacities of most Western cinema. Cissé's *Finye* and *Yeelen* combine mythical elements (a bullet-proof tribal patriarch in the former, and a wooden staff with a

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"will" of its own in the latter) with stories of youngsters rebelling against the arbitrary and heavy handed rule of their elders. Drabo's *Ta Dona* traces the story of a young civil servant in charge of ecological conservation, who denounces the oligarchic politician guilty of starting a damaging brush fire by throwing a lit cigar into the brush; and who, at the same time, begins a mystical journey to a remote region (and to the past) in order to recover the secret of an herbal remedy held by a dying old woman dwelling in a cliff. The various levels of historical awareness, as well as the contact between traditional culture and modernity are embodied by various people and consistently demarcated by circumscribing the character to a single space, or allowing given characters to negotiate the various spaces available to them. Sissoko's *Finzan* mixes raucous comedy with harrowing drama. This is the multiple story of people in a rural village where little children dressed as tricksters aid a young widow who is rejecting the traditional custom of accepting her brother-in-law's claims to her (the man being colossally stupid and ridiculous); while an even younger woman is forcibly circumcised against her will by the elder women of the village

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– she had been sent back from the city to the village by her father in order to get her away from the modern ways of the city and back to the traditional ways that a woman must observe. At the end, both the young widow and the younger woman walk away from the village into the brush, walking along a dirt path towards an uncertain but preferable future.

From neighboring Burkina Fasso, Ouedraogo's *Zan Boko* is a a parable of national politics and class struggle represented as a fight for adjacent living space between a rich and corrupt politician and the poverty striken people who live next door; while a television journalist valiantly attempts to buck the establishment by reporting on the plight of the people about to be evicted from their lot. This takes place within an urban environment that still betrays the fact that modernity had only recently overtaken the territory (and the governing function) of the traditional village. Another interesting example from Anglophone Africa is Schmitz's *Mapantsula*, a clandentinely-made "crime film" (a cover to get the film made under the vigilance of the censors), which shows a thief becoming increasingly involved in the anti-apartheid

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struggle taking shape in the townships of South Africa. Such a film raises questions about the ontological status of space (e.g., what is "black" or "ethnic" space?, and does it appear different to other ethnicities?) and the spatial localization of resistence – these questions are also raised in Sembene's *Emitai*, within the context of French colonialism and the strains put upon a village under forced labor towards the war effort in the 1940s.

Although Postcolonialism may be a stretch for Latin America (after nearly two hundred years of independence), there are several examples that relate to this spatial struggle for self and liberation from "Eurocentric" oppression: Gutiérrez Alea's films of slave rebellions – *Cumbite* and *The Last Supper* (along with the little known *El Resplandor* directed by Luis Maisonet and written by Pedro Juan Soto for the DIVEDCO in Puerto Rico) – and the "Godardian" *Una Pelea Cubana Contra los Demonios*, about the collapse of Spanish rule in a coastal town raided by pirates. Diegues' *Quilombo*, Rocha's *Antonio das Mortes*, and Sanjinés' *Yawar Malku* all deal with various rural rebellions against colonialism, neocolonialism, or oligarchic

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oppression. (Additionally, we should mention the singular work of Gillo Pontecorvo, an Italian filmmaker responsible for two of the most iconic works of anti-colonialist rebellion, *Battle of Algiers* and *Queimada* – the latter set in the Latin American Caribbean.)

There are, especially in Latin America and Asia (to a lesser degree, in Europe too), a series of films that are not quite imbued with the problems of struggle against and liberation from an external power, yet sharing amongst them a sense of shift from one sociopolitical paradigm to a yet-to-be-defined new reality. This worldview could no longer, then, be characterized as Postcolonial; but, rather, as Postnational. Latin America, with its specific nationalist populism tied to the policies of ISI, is fertile ground for these attempts to grasp an uncertain present. Subiela's *Last Images of the Shipwreck* is arguably the most pointed example of this worldview, with its sardonic commentary about an alienated aspiring writer (and insurance salesman by occupation) who meets a dysfunctional family, jettisoned to the outskirts of Buenos Aires from what used to be a relatively stable and prosperous living in the middle of Buenos Aires during the days of old.

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In effect, the family is a metaphor for the old social coalition built by Peronist populism (i.e., Fordist developmentalism), which no longer has any room or function in the Argentina of the new service economy and global capital. In a different vein, Ruiz's *Three Crowns of the Sailor*, made in France and Portugal, is a film about the adventures of a Chilean sailor traveling around the world; which seems to look like exactly the same city in all instances, thus creating a denatured space that turns the story into a hallucination, but also allows for the reterritorialization of a Chilean narrative outside the formal limits of a politico-territorial entity called Chile.

The "national" status of a film is now further complicated by the appearance of peripathetic auteurs working in different places and languages. Haile Gerima makes "Ethiopian" films in Washington, D.C.; Schenectady-born John Sayles makes "Latin American" films such as *Men With Guns* and *La Casa de los Babys*; while Mexico City-born Guillermo del Toro makes an English language horror thriller in Mexico, *Cronos*, and another Mexican, Alfonso Cuarón, alternates between the Hollywood made *Little Princess* and *Great Expectations*

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(both British literary classics), and the very Mexican *Y Tu Mamá También*. Taiwan-born and NYU-trained Ang Lee also alternates between *Sense and Sensibility* or *The Ice Storm* and the Taiwan-made *Eat Drink Man Woman* and *Crouching Tiger, Sleeping Dragon*; while Liverpool-born Alex Cox makes the quintessentially Postmodern American classic *Repo Man* and the biopics of *Sid and Nancy* and *Walker* (set in Nicaragua), and then moves to Mexico to do a routine Mexican films and also an adaptation of Borges' *Death and the Compass*.

In Asia, the Postnational worldview is tinged with a sense of loss of tradition leading to personal or social dysfunction, often affecting inhabitants of secluded villages. In Japan, a film like Suo's *Shall We Dansu?* or the aforementioned *Himatsuri*, point to the de-traditionalization and de-nationalization of culture and mores, to the point of foreclosing survival in the latter film. In China, Xiaowen's *Ermo* details the personal travails and the web of rumors and social opposition formed in a small peasant village when a dowdy local woman decides to work herself to exhaustion in order to engage in the

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very American exercise of "conspicuous consumption" by purchasing the largest television set in the whole region. In Israel, Dayan's *Life According to Agfa* turns a Tel Aviv bar into an echo of the Western-style liberal social order under the old Labor Zionist ruling coalition, being threatened and eventually annihilated by intolerant thugs.

Finally, the European Postnational worldview is closely related to the collapse of the Cold War alignment, and the emergence of new subcontinental forms of integration that challenge and at the same time heighten a sense of national identity. Moretti, for example, offers an episode in *Caro Diario* where he and a friend go island hopping in the Mediterranean, searching for a quiet place to concentrate and do their work. Each island has a quirk, one has suddenly too much traffic and noise; another one has families that only have one child, over whom they obsess; a third one has only jet setters who throw excentric parties. A fourth one has a loquacious major and large families which simply slam doors on him, ignoring his requests; the harried major is trying to accommodate his guests on his way to an appointment with a visiting Japanese agronomist, and his dreams are of attracting tourism and

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direct foreign investment by designing his island's landscape and giving it a musical theme, like in the movies. A fifth island has turned so inward-looking (claiming that they detest all narcissism but also that they are the only ones who are true Italians) as to bypass modernity by means of an austere asceticism and mutism that renders useless any attempt to connect with the modern world. All of this is, of course, a metaphor for the fragmentation of the former national aggregate into discrete and mutually exclusive social islands, a new fact of Italian life which seems to come in response to the cultural and affective pressures of joining a global economy – with a partying international jet set, Japanese export agronomy, and Hollywoodization (if not Disneyfication, as in Paris) of the culture and the landscape. This is what elicits the equally drastic escape into Trappist forms of contemplative withdrawal.

Kusturica offers an even more drastic use of the postnational landscape at the end of *Underground*, a scathing allegory of Yugoslavia since the middle of the 20th Century. The leaders of the anti-Nazi forces hide their workers literally underground, in the

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basement of their farmhouse. Well after the Nazi occupation is over, they continue duping the poor workers into staying down by pretending that the Nazis are still a threat. Eventually that social order collapses when the workers are able to gain contact with the external world and learn the truth; but as the farmhouse's basement literally opens up, it only leads into tunnels where underground trains run towards the large capitals of Western Europe – those tunnels turn out to be more dangerous and deadly than the situation they left behind. Meanwhile, the same leaders who had duped the workers have now become warlords with large caches of arms accumulated during their Communist regime, eventually they end up having a deadly artillery shootout. The entire movie is punctuated by a brass band roaming around while playing gypsy rhapsodies; at the end, the band is standing at the edge of a river while playing, the chunk of ground breaks off and begins to float into the distance while the band obliviously continues playing its festive music. As the old folkloric land of Serbian nationalism withers away, the camera remains focused on the water and the reconfigured shore, leaving the rest of the landscape off camera:

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what is left of the new Yugoslavia remains mired in a deadly gangland warfare that leaves no room for a new community to be imagined.

This, of course, raises a question as to whether cinema is dead or whether it retains a potential use in acts of *future poiesis*. That is to say, can film be used to imagine, perhaps even to fight for a better future in political as well as socioeconomic terms? It seems to us, based on recent and current evidence, that the answer is no. There is arguably no cinematic movement that attempted this strategy of *future poiesis* more radically and completely than the Third Cinema, especially in South America. Nevertheless, it is impossible to find an example of revolutionary accomplishment outside of the very realm of film itself. And, even there, the accomplishment is limited, for not only did these works fail to transcend their historic and geographic limitations, but even within their limited regions they failed to leave a legacy[2] – as are also the cases of Godard, Bertolucci, or Oshima.

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[2]Even in a limited area of Central America, one can observe that the Sandinista Revolution made films while still engaged in the guerrilla war phase in the late 1960s to mid 1970s. The Salvadoran guerrillas, whose fight against the ARENA Party dictatorship took shape in the 1980s were not interested in making films anymore, preferring to do quick short videos or teleconferences. (Jonathan

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This is not to imply that film will disappear, anymore than the novel, the theater, or even oral storytelling have. No one feels necessarily nostalgic for the wonderful times when the polis came together around the amphitheater for a full day of religious rituals and a Sophocles or Euripides play. Nor do too many people feel sorry that the great bourgeois novel no longer provides "foundational narratives" for emerging or re-emerging nations. Film, in many ways, superceded that function, and the Iranians, for example, are creating their great nationalist "texts" in the form of wonderful films. Global or flexible cultural "economy" is bound to find its *poietic* space in the new screens provided by video, television or, most likely, computers, or perhaps on a production of screen space yet to be imagined. That is where the *utopian impulse* (Bloch) must be located as we all search for emancipatory possibilities and *future poiesis*.

Buchsbaum, personal communication). The Sandinistas clearly formed the triumphant part of their struggle while the Fordist strategies of ISI were in place in Latin America, the FMLN in El Salvador formed its major guerrilla thrust as Flexible Accumulation was taking over; it is, thus, no accident that film would still be part of the mass-gathering focus of the former, while telecommunications and tv would offer greater attractiveness to the former.

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If that is the case, then one can look at the new cyberpunk genre as an initial indication of these possibilities. The representation of computers in these works no longer establishes a relationship between viewer and screen, but rather a relationship between mind-of-the-user and mind-of-the-machine. If that is the case – and the technology for this is already available, at least in part – then we have an entirely different production of space which leads to a brand new form of subjectivation, and this may very well indicate an "epistemological break" between radically different modes of capitalist regulation. At that point, it may very well also be the case that the weapons of social change and radical *poiesis* would be clear and evident to us all. Even so, it bears remembering that cyberpunk fiction began as traditional short stories and novels and yet also as part of this embryonic perspective on the future. If the lowly and "superceded" novel can be such an integral part of this effort, at least initially, then this fact alone could also serve to quell any premature claims on the total death or even the total marginalization of the cinema.

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This being said, it still remains quite clear that the central role once occupied by the movie screen under Fordism has now come to a close. The brave new world of Flexible Accumulation decidedly belongs to television, which is now finding its own centrality threatened by the still nascent phenomenon of the computer screen. This will be the focus of the next sections of this chapter, which describe what in effect is the other half of our analytic project. We must emphasize, therefore, that the purported "death of the cinema" becomes rather unproblematic when one considers that the contemporary production of spaces of representation is the screen in general, and not the particular screen of the movies. Seen as phase one in what seems to be a century-long culture of the screen, the passage from cinema to the smaller formats of television and computers is neither a tragedy, nor a surprise.

V

The above mentioned wealth of film practices notwithstanding, the second half of the Twentieth Century belonged to the small screen. As we already pointed out, Fordism could no longer maintain its

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indefinite market expansion, and the avenue available for profit maximization was the cheapening of labor inputs by subcontracting all over the globe, while at the same time targeting specific markets (either by producing enough for a given date at a particular place, or by going after consumer niches). This innovation at the level of "technical relations of labor" – i.e., relations of power between owners of the means of production and owners of labor power at level of the production process – acquired the specific label of "Globalization;" which serves to describe the increasing transnationalization of the production process, but also the extended social relations required by this new system. In effect, what arose was a new Global Order in which not only the economy, but the entire "mass culture" initiated by Fordism, were reconfigured. This required a reconfiguration of the Fordist productions of space – the city, the nation, and the screen were all transformed in complex and increasingly interdependent ways. The "long decade" of urban decay in Europe and the U.S. saw the disappearance of small industrial cities – the famous company towns of the "rust belt," from Scranton, Pennsylvania to the much chronicled

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Flint, Michigan (Moore's film *Roger and Me*, Ben Hamper's book *Rivethead*). This gave way to the new demographics of the South and the South West, as more people migrated to "right to work" states or to new markets for emerging technologies in Silicon Valley and other areas of the West Coast. Aft the same time, it also allowed for the global realignment of certain cities into what becomes now a supra-State made up of "informational cities," which seem more closely connected to each other than to their own nation-states or even their surrounding regional areas. The nation-state, in the meantime, saw its control of the economy subordinated to the demands of a macroeconomic system, controlled by yet another Supra-State: the revamped set of Breton Woods institutions, along with the GATT and WTO coupling.

The monetarist exigencies of this system – control of interest rates to deter inflation, market settings to currency valuation, and bank deregulation on international flows of investment capital – in combination with the export-led orientation of liberalization under the "Washington Consensus," has further retrenched the single nation

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arrangement of world Fordism in favor of supranational regions – NAFTA, the European Union, ASEAN – that often subordinate or abrogate the economic oversight of the old national governments.

The increasing deregulation and emphasis on competition through new technologies was carried to their greatest extremes by the governments of Margaret Thatcher in England and Ronald Reagan in the United States, leading to the immediate swelling of the speculative branches of international finance institutions. This was the decade of the "dance of the millions," in which newly deregulated brokerage industries combined with emerging speculative markets – futures, paper, etc – to create runaway investment schemes both in the U.S. and abroad; especially in Eastern Europe and Latin America, where corrupt oligarchs captured the bounty of cheap sell offs in government assets and possibly even in foreign aid. Meanwhile, unchecked speculative financing in the U.S. eventually led to insider trading scandals (e.g., Ivan Boesky), banking crashes (Keating and the Savings and Loans scandals) and market crashes ("Black Monday," blamed partially on automatic portfolio dumping programmed into the computers of new

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stock market systems like NASDAQ). This untrammeled accumulation of wealth for its own sake only served to prolong the period of recession and adjustment.

As this system of Flexible Accumulation moves on through the 1990s and into the 21st Century, a new pattern of uneven development – with its concomitant geopolitical realignment – seems to be emerging. Certain cities form centers of global finance and information management and network with each other, producing not only economic growth and capital accumulation that bypasses the other regions of their respective nations; but also creating demographic flows – with their concomitant "cultural" realignment – that further the transnationalization of the new world order. Places like Berlin, New York, London, and Tokyo are now resembling city states, with cultural and social hybridities that do not necessarily obtain in the rest of their countries. At the same time, this global realignment still follows the logic of uneven development, producing vast areas of depopulation and impoverishment – in the United States, for example, the rural South and the industrial Northeast are losing population and economic

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viability, with emerging forms of nativism and religious fundamentalism in response to those "external" pressures. Additionally, the increasing replacement of human labor power by technology, coupled with the flexible forms of subsidiary or subcontractual production all over the world, have placed downward pressures on the price of labor, creating a greater sense of economic insecurity and social instability. This accounts for the contemporary sense that things are imposed by forces beyond local control and that everything is always at the brink of collapse. It is under these conditions of "flexible" or "disorganized" spatial-socioeconomic reconfiguration that Postmodernism arises as an equally "flexible" or "disorganized" production of contemporary meaning.

In all these cases, the reconfiguration of socioeconomic spaces – cities, nations, regions – can no longer be explained without understanding mass media as part of the socioeconomic infrastructure; that is to say, neither the labor process, nor the combinations of cities and data management, or of nations and macroeconomic regulation

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could happen without using mass media, especially television and computers.

Perhaps no reflection on television shows the spatial transformation of everyday life like Redford's *Quiz Show*, based on a screenplay by Paul Attanasio (who had developed the critically acclaimed television drama *Homicide, Life in the Streets*). There is a sequence, towards the beginning of this movie, in which Herbie Stempel – a popular but intractably grating and cloying contestant in a television quiz show – successfully advances to the next round; but while he is in the process of doing that, the main advertiser orders him "bumped off." Ignorant of his fate and full of himself, he takes the chauffeured limousine back to his neighborhood in Queens, but requests to be dropped off a few houses down the block so that he can bask in public adulation as he walks up the street. What is striking about this sequence is the representation of new productions of space as an extended social practice of everyday life. Stempel has to get into a booth placed inside the soundstage, the image is captured by a camera equipped with a square screen, which is sent to another square screen

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inside the office of the program's sponsor, who takes the phone and calls the control booth located upstairs in the same soundstage. The control booth relays the call to the producers sitting among the live audience, they tell the sponsor that the common consumers in New York identify with Herbie, who comes from Queens; the promoter exclaims with finality as he slams the receiver: "Queens is not New York!" Soon afterwards we see Stempel walking up the block, he passes a whole row of nearly identical houses with people sitting on the stoops or looking out the ground floor window; as he reaches his own house and goes up the stoop, a television set is seen in his living room, that is where he finds his wife speaking on the phone to her mother.

The sequence sets up a series of encased spaces. The booth is a box placed inside the soundstage, which is a larger box. The booth is captured as an image by the television camera, which is equipped with a squarish viewing screen; this is yet another box also found inside the soundstage. That image is sent to the television sets, yet another box equipped with a larger viewing screen; and this box is found in the identical little boxes (Malvina Reynolds' memorable song) that serve

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as housing in the metropolitan areas of the world. Except for the street, that interstitial space where the "community" can gather, everybody has now been pushed into these privatized little boxes, and the only means of contact is through networked technologies – the telephone or the television (both aptly qualified by the same Greek suffix implying distancing).

At the same time, the film comes close to setting a class based analysis of socioeconomic agency, since it clearly distinguishes between the lavish corporate spaces where the movers and shakers make their decisions and call down to their enforcers, while the dwellers of the little boxes in the outer boroughs are impotent subjects and instruments of their will to profit. This is fleshed out later on in the film, along with a sharp representation of the transformation of social space produced by television. At this point, Stempel has already been replaced by Charles Van Doren, son of a famous professor at Columbia University and part of a highly regarded literary family. He, however, is now under investigation by a government lawyer, who suspects that the show which makes him so famous is not legitimate. This is in fact

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correct, Stempel had been ordered to lose on purpose, and the person he lost to was none other than Charles, whose WASP good looks and cultivated New England accent make him the new golden boy for the television masses. With a mixture of hubris and debonaire manner, Charles invites the lawyer to spend Sunday at his Connecticut estate, where they will celebrate his father's birthday. During the luncheon, father and son compete by quoting and identifying passages from Shakespeare's plays, while various luminaries of the New York intelligentsia observe the proceedings with genteel bemusement. Eventually, they begin to talk about his son's recent wealth and fame, and Professor Van Doren confesses that he has never seen him compete, because he has never owned a television set nor cared to watch very closely. As the birthday presents are finally opened, we get to a huge wrapped gift in the middle of the lawn, it is, of course, a huge television set from his son. The father casually exclaims that now he must deal with having to find a place in the house to put it.

This is the perfect expression for the impact that the televisual practice of space has on the other spaces and rhythms of everyday life.

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Homes like the Van Doren's soon began to produce their own specialized space, the television den; and the modern family soon altered its activities, spending its leisure time increasingly in front of the set. That allowed for a certain spectacularization of everyday life in ways previously not afforded within the confines of the home, but it came at the cost of surrendering control of even one's affective life. At one point, we see the elder Van Dorens watching as their son compete; the father becomes increasingly agitated and suddenly jumps up, abruptly shutting off the television without waiting to see the outcome. As his wife looks at him in astonishment, he can only exclaim that it is too much, that he cannot stand it. (Needless to say, at that point he is still ignorant of the fact that the quiz show is fake and that the producers have furnished his son with the answers beforehand.)

This change in the cultural habits of modern society became cause of immediate concern. Social researchers fretted about a whole range of issues, from possible effects on children's capacity to understand complex concepts due to reduction in attention spans or increased tendencies towards violence from daily exposure to

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television programming to voter preference for JFK over Nixon because the former looked better on television. It is not surprising, under that framework, that most of the emphasis has been on how television takes increasing control of our lives and that the bulk of media studies has either concentrated on "textual" analysis or on "audience studies."

Less attention has been paid to the role of television in bringing about a structural transformation of social life, condensed as the Postmodernist trope of a culture of the simulacrum (already noted by Kosinsky in *Being There*, years ahead of Baudrillard). The undeniable importance and cultural centrality that television has rapidly taken since the beginning of the 1950s is equivalent to the linkage between the cinematic screen and the emerging social relations of labor under Taylorism and Fordism. Just like the cinema, the production of a televisual screen space leads to a linkage of associated spaces, beginning with the space of the living room; which is how television becomes inserted into the flow of everyday life. The radio, of course, also has the same function within the quotidian; but, lacking a screen, it

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does not have the same capacity as television to capture the viewers' attention by fixing the act of communication in a single place – in effect, the flow of everyday life is accompanied but not modified by the radio. Television, by contrast, creates an entire new practice of domestic space, in which activities must be interrupted or altogether abandoned because one must stay pinned to a single place, paying attention to the screen. At the same time, television has effectively collapsed the public sphere of politics and commerce into the private sphere of the home; which turned the recreational aspects of the cycle of reproduction on its head – entertainment was no longer a discrete activity, instead it became interspersed with commercials and attached to the programming that followed on the day's schedule as a form of flow. The point to this flow, as it is well known, is to gather and hold the attention of a stable percentage of the viewing audience in order to lure advertisers to that network; not only is televison programming simple filler between commercial breaks, but viewers are actually turned into a commodity to be "sold" by programmers to the advertisers. With this process in tow, the society of the spectacle was

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born and the commodification of all aspects of everyday life was complete.

There is very little point for us to trace the historical development of television or to do an analysis of specific programs. This analysis would inevitably have to be "contextual" rather than textual, for no matter how viscerally hard hitting, or introspectively pithy, or mordantly funny, these shows do not offer any differences in terms of visual form or content from the cinema. The transformations consisted in the possibility to serialize stories (a practice that the cinema had confined to matinee shows in the era of the movie palaces). This has largely privileged the melodrama (usually as soap opera, although "adult dramas" like *E.R.* have successfully grafted the format to prime time), the crime story, and the situation comedy. The repetitive nature of the serialized narrative enables television to correspond to the routinized stability of the viewer's everyday experience in ways seldom, if ever, available to film – and, in fact, watching television *does* become part of the personal routine of everyday life. This allows for a paradoxical intensification of televisual verisimilitude, despite the

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fact that the sharpness and definition of the visual image is noticeably inferior to film (i.e., unlike "how the eye sees," which may change with the High Definition standard). When this process is inserted as a spatial practice into the flows of domestic life, it produces a powerful effect of subjectivation in which the viewer relates to the virtual universe of television – e.g., the characters in *Seinfeld* – as if it were real.

Given this new "technique of the observer," television then counts on diminished attention spans and blurred lines between fiction, reality, and entertainment. It is here that the socially structuring impact of television is the strongest. Over the past two decades (as the Era of Globalization took its worldwide hold), we have seen a transformation of mainstream television in which news and "reality" shows take up greater parts of the schedule once reserved for narrative (drama and comedy) and variety programming (like *The Ed Sullivan Show*). Off-the-air broadcasters still program plenty of drama and comedy to be sure, but much of it has migrated to cable where entertainment can be targeted to specific niches: there are channels exclusively dedicated to

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"women's entertainment," others show only classic Hollywood films, or nothing but golf or auto racing; and, of course, a growing number of sports are now shown primarily (hockey, basketball) or almost exclusively (boxing) through cable or satellite services.

Even so, the greatest impact that cable has had is in the all news area; and the development of globalization can certainly be charted alongside the development of the Cable News Network (CNN). The turning point was, without doubt, the Gulf War in 1991, which marks the first moment of global prominence for that network. Some of the well known ideological "effects" were, of course, the re-legitimation of the American Armed Forces (which had been badly damaged by the Viet Nam War) and the spectacularization of the technological apparatus of warfare – tiny cameras attached to guided bombs, infrared "night vision" of aerial bombardment, and instant reports by Peter Arnet in Bagdad; in fact, the first two days of his reports did not have any accompanying images, just his voice over the telephone, leading to a bizarre but nevertheless riveting television experience. However, the key manifestation of a new social structure was, to us, the emergence of

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a new global class divide, in which people are grouped around certain media and information outlets (including, of course, computers). That is to say, one can see new class formations in which there is more in common between CNN viewers and New York Times readers in New York City and, say, Brussels, than between those same New Yorkers and their counterparts in other areas of the same city whose viewing and reading habits run to topical or local programming (e.g., the New York Post or *Judge Judy*). As such, we need to understand the small screen as part of the spatial practice of cultural capital, an increasingly important source of power, if not wealth, in the new era of globalization. (And a fact not entirely lost to the filmmakers, either; to wit, among many, Badham's *War Games*, Redford's *Sneakers*, and two classics of Postmodern Paranoia, Cronenberg's *Videodrome* and Carpenter's *They Live*.)

If a series of associated spaces was still maintained with the television, the computer simply has collapsed all space and function into a single practice. The computer is simultaneously a business machine, a communication interface, a vehicle for banking and shopping, a tool for

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research and information gathering, and a toy. Its simultaneity also extends to spaces that previously were not colonized by the screen – it sits on the office desk, it presents itself as a bank teller, it allows for the waiter to relay food order to the kitchen at most restaurants, and now it connects luxury automobiles to satellite guiding systems and communication centers. In terms of a collapse of function, the same computer operations and skills that apply to serious tasks like word processing are used for recreational pursuits. This allows for work to be completed at home "after hours," while many hours are logged at the work computer shopping online for the holidays or attempting to finally win the four-suit level of Spider Solitaire.

Under this new configuration, a series of hybrid spaces and actions begin to emerge: the home office, the automatic teller or phone answering service, the chat room, and, of course, the ethereal cyberspace of the World Wide Web. The pastiche and the schizophrenic speech, the hybrid and the simulacrum of Postmodern culture are all grounded on specific material practices of space in the

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contemporary world – and the spatial practice of the computer screen is central in this process of social transformation and structuration.

With this total collapse of space and function, which allows for the seeming erasure of space and the uprooting of time by microprocessors capable of acting at speeds imperceptible to the human mind, the computer has finally allowed virtual space to become real – that is to say, to become the conduit for the processes of human interaction, rather than to be an object of contemplation or reflection as it was with the spatial imitations of the realistic novel, the cinema and the television. As computer networks become ever more widespread and progressively user friendly (unlike the initial UNIX incarnation, developed by the U.S. Department of the Navy), a utopian fervor begins to arise among grassroots groups of users as well as among certain critics and intellectuals who conceive of the internet in terms similar to how the European "pilgrims" to the New World. Nevertheless, it is becoming clear that the world wide web is not going to become the new Arcadia to be populated by spontaneous and self-regulating communities of cyberdwellers; instead, it has been captured by the same

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society of the spectacle that gave us the simulacrum of the suburb with its sprawling shopping malls and privatized television dens. "Dot com" traffic now overwhelms the internet (chief among them, the sites dedicated to pornography), relegating "dot org" and "dot edu" to the marginal activities of a minority of researchers and activists. The virtual world of the internet has inevitably become the new space of capitalist expansion; even with the bubble burst of the late 1990s.

Having lost its initial promise of either social emancipation or untold riches, the internet is now settling into its role as part of the global order of mass media cartelization – AOL, an internet company, famously merged with Time Warner, of print and cinema origins, to make up the largest media empire in the world. As it does so, the old questions of imperial hegemony arise: the global domination of the English language; the nearly exclusive stranglehold on technological and scientific research and development by a handful of companies in Japan and the U.S., the recent anti-trust legislation against Microsoft and the battles over "open source" programming, and so on. This also brings about a whole variety of new problems in international law

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relating to patent and ownership rights, the rights of localities to control or even censor internet content, the pursuit and punishment of internet crime, and the liability of service providers for the actions of its users (recently exemplified by the music industry's legal maneuvers against Napster, KaZaa, and other fileshare services).

On the other hand, these recent battles over filesharing of recorded music serve to illustrate what some analysts see as the rhizomatic quality of the internet. As commerce turns increasingly into e-commerce, as power turns increasingly into biopower, and as everyday activities become increasingly structured through computer use, the "lesser folk" find themselves gradually using and negotiating the same infrastructure that the hegemonic forces rely upon. This means that the network cannot be entirely shut down in order to stop an attempt at counterhegemonic use, a fact that could potentially allow for a social insurgence to overcome the present construction of globalization conceived as empire.

This notion, of course, also connects to Lyotard's foundational inquiry into Postmodernism, which located the transformative epicenter

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of the new socioeconomic paradigm not in the intensification of the manufacture process but in the new forms of production of knowledge resulting from computers. One of Lyotard's central contentions was that new forms of social normativity result from the system's singular stress on performativity – what is *right* is equal to what *functions* well. It is, therefore, not inconceivable to think that as workers and ordinary users become more deeply imbricated in the workings of the world wide web, they will be able to gain greater and greater control over that performative foundation of the new social order. In this respect, cyberpunk fiction – in literature (Gibson, Stephenson) and film (Wachowski and Wachowski's *The Matrix*) – is a close rendering of this new paradigm. To give only one example, the prowess of Hiro Protagonist in Neil Stephenson's *Snow Crash* comes from his superior capacity to manipulate computerized instruments to simulate sword fighting through his avatar – a simulation of himself within a simulation of space created by the collective interaction of millions of computers around the world. His antagonist turns out to be the leader of a cult that wants to overtake the world, they work by introducing a virus into the

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computer that, when seen only once, disrupts the linguistic performance of the human mind and turns people into babbling zombies. Meanwhile, the real space of the lifeworld has been tribalized into gated communities privately owned by numerous groups of warlords, including the traditional mafia; in this world, Hiro is a marginal figure, living in a storage facility, and working for a meager living as one the mafia's pizza delivery boys. The final battle in the virtual realm is echoed by the final showdown between the mafia and the leaders of the babbling cult. In many ways, Stephenson points out that the new productions of space of global postmodernity are an assemblage of tangible, physical space and the ethereal realm of the internet's virtual space.

In this respect, to us it is imperative to turn back to our initial consideration of the screen as a production of space. If the screen of the cinema and the television produced a more or less unified field of vision, the computer screen is in fact the quintessential locus of postmodern fragmentation. Almost all software packages have discrete areas (menu bars, scroll bars, data fields, etc) that can be the focus of

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attention or can be completely disregarded when most tasks are performed. These bars have a particular status in computer games, which are now an intensive as well as extensive part of the growth process of children and teenagers all over the world. As such, these games have a stake in producing a certain habituation, which to us is entirely produced through the practice of space of the computer screen.

A computer game typically has a set of obstacles or problems to be solved so that a player can then gain access to a new animated space (or "board") to continue the game. There is usually a bar or segment of the screen where numerical amounts increase as the player successfully completes different tasks in a given board or sequence of the game. As these amounts of points increase, the player obtains objects or instructions which can be used at later phases of the game to solve more complicated tasks and, thus, be able to progress even further into the game. These numbers are always accumulated too fast for the player to really be able to relate the quantity of points to the tasks he or she has performed; additionally, and more importantly, these points are accumulated in a space of the screen which is deliberately designed to

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be at the margins of the visual field. The point is for the player to know that a process of quantification is taking place, but also to have a sense that the process of quantification is occurring beyond his or her control, just like the rolling numbers in the digital Debt Clock located on 6th Avenue and 43rd Street or the ineffable macroeconomic dance of the millions regulated by the IMF and the World Bank. This is the practice and the representation of space that allows for the new Post-Fordist form of commodity fetishism; as such, it continues to weigh like a nightmare on the mind of the living.

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