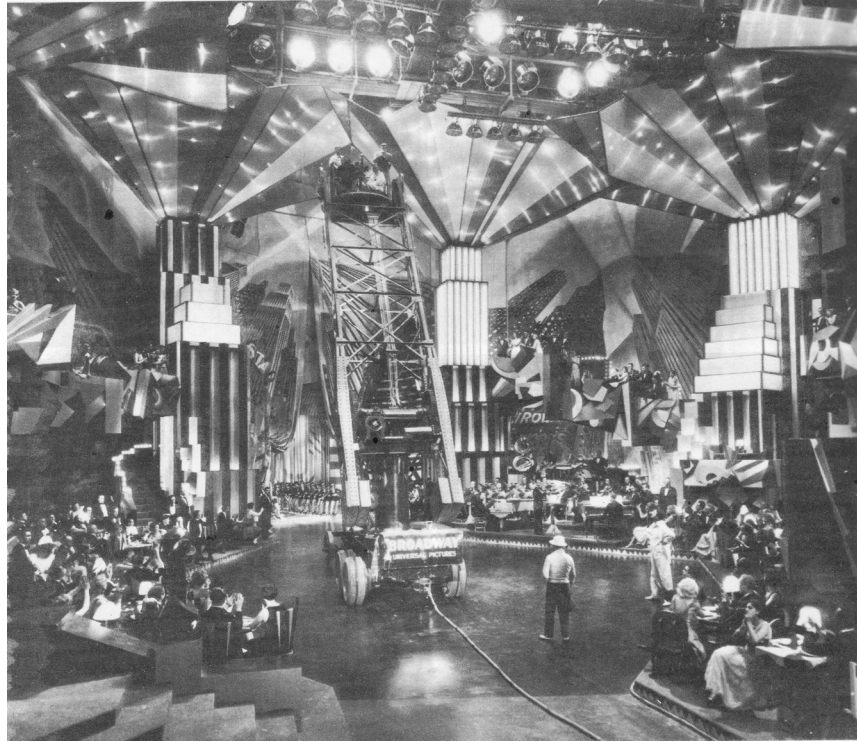


# Camera Movement in Narrative Cinema - Towards a Taxonomy of Functions



*The Broadway Crane (1929). The Classical Hollywood Cinema.*

Jakob Isak Nielsen  
951435  
Richard Raskin/Edvin Kau  
Dept. of Inf. & Media Studies, Faculty of Arts  
University of Aarhus  
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**Résumés (US/DK)**  
**DVD with examples discussed in chapter 4**

## Introduction

In order to introduce the reader to the type of dissertation that is in front of you, it is instructive to recall a tradition of research that is more widespread in art history and musicology than film studies. Just like art historians have focused on for instance composition or lighting, this dissertation takes a single stylistic parameter as its object of study. Within film studies such localized avenues of research have become increasingly viable under the aegis of a perspective known as 'the poetics of cinema,' and within this perspective two interrelated branches: *stylistics* and *historical poetics* (Bordwell 2001: 9-10). Rather than discussing the relationship of cinema to theories of culture, language and psychology, *stylistics* and *historical poetics* engage with localized problems of film form. *Camera Movement in Narrative Cinema - Towards a Taxonomy of Functions* is in line with this research perspective in its attempt to produce knowledge about a single mechanism of cinematic enunciation: camera movement.

Whether in the form of anthologies, monographs or books by craftsmen, there are fairly comprehensive accounts of other stylistic devices such as sound (Weis & Belton 1985, Langkjær 1996, Chion & Gorbman 1994, Abel & Altman 2001 etc), staging (Bordwell 1997, 2005) and of editing (Millar & Reisz 1968, Murch 2001 [1988], Fairservice 2001, Orpen 2003). As will be clarified in chapter 1 such cannot be said for camera movement. The device has not even been honored an anthology. As will become apparent from browsing through the bibliography, camera movement has mainly been embraced as an article or essay topic, a book chapter, a book section, or it has been woven into analyses and interpretations of individual films.

This is particularly curious since contemporary cinema has become saturated with camera movements. Scholars have even posited free-ranging camera movement as a defining stylistic feature of contemporary mainstream cinema (Bordwell 2002, Salt 2004). Camera movements - real and virtual - permeate our visual culture to an unprecedented degree. New media such as computer games have been even more eager to embrace virtual camera movement than has contemporary cinema.

Another reason to study camera movement is that it is a contested area. On one hand, camera movement has held a strong appeal for filmmakers since

at least the mid-1910s (Maltin 1978: 77-8; Koszarski 1974: 48) and continues to do so (Brown 2003).<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, both filmmakers and critics have often found cause to reprimand camera movement excesses (e.g., Hall 1932). Contemporary cinema is almost routinely blamed for 'gratuitous' camera movements (Ettehadgui 1998: 139; Silberg 2003b: 53). Why does camera movement generate such contradictory responses?

The most important reason to study camera movement - and a first step towards answering the above question - is that it has a profound influence on the way films *look* and the way films are experienced and engaged with by spectators. When we see the effects of camera movement we see an entire image in the process of changing.

There is a variety of questions one could ask about camera movement. Do camera movements constitute a specifically cinematic form of communication? One could also ask more humble questions such as "what are the norms and practices of executing camera movement during production and at what points in the course of a film have particular types of camera movements traditionally been applied? How have these norms and practices changed across time?" Critics, historians, and theorists have discussed camera movement from many perspectives and at many levels of generality. Filmmakers and craft discourse have discussed aesthetic norms – why one way of moving the camera was more appropriate than another. Critics have located authorial signatures and interpreted the meaning of camera movements. Theorists have related camera movement to our own movement in empirical reality.

The ways in which camera movement has been engaged with within the literature is itself a topic worthy of study and the first third of this dissertation is dedicated to this task. But one should not stop there. The way films look has a history. Practically since the birth of cinema filmmakers have found occasion to move their cameras - even in the face of staggering technical obstacles. Executing mobile shots entails extra work: laying tracks, following focus, tying the footage into an editing pattern, accommodating lighting schemes so that every second of the shot is lighted in the desired way. But why do filmmakers bother?

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<sup>1</sup> See also cameraman Alexandre Promio's account of his interaction with Louis Lumière concerning what is very likely the first trucking shot in cinema history, capturing Venice from a boat travelling down the Grand Canal in 1896. Recounted in Arnheim (1958 [1933]: 138-9).

One way of answering that question is to look at the various narrative and aesthetic functions that camera movements have served in the course of film history. With the solid foundation of a survey of the literature and a historical survey of camera movements, one can address the question that lies at the heart of this enquiry: Do camera movements tap into a set of definable functional resources? In other words, can one define a taxonomy of functions for camera movement in narrative cinema? The dissertation proposes that it is indeed possible, but also argues that such a taxonomy need not be reductive but can *assist* interpretive criticism.

Interpreting film style in terms of its significance to subject matter, theme and meaning has been a remarkably persistent critical strategy. The British journal *Movie* and critics such as V.F. Perkins, Robin Wood, Douglas Pye, Charles Barr and Deborah Thomas have offered many interpretive guidelines in their articles and books. The recently published *Style and Meaning* (2005) indicates that this tradition is still very much alive – at least in Britain – and that a series of younger scholars such as John Gibbs are continuing the tradition.

On the other hand, *stylistics* and *historical poetics* as practiced by scholars such as Barry Salt, David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson, Charles Musser and Charlie Keil have focused less on the interpretation of style's significance to meaning and more on laying out stylistic norms, conventions and functions and/or placing these in a historical context. Differences set aside both Salt and Bordwell position their work on style in opposition to what Bordwell terms "the hermeneutic model" (Nielsen 2004a) including the abovementioned tradition of interpretive criticism. These issues will be discussed more fully at the end of 1.12. For now it will suffice to say that this dissertation tries to combine the strengths of both traditions.

The thesis is divided into three major sections. The first section features an extensive review of the literature on camera movement (chapter 1). This section analyzes how different discursive communities have explained, analyzed, interpreted or otherwise accounted for camera movement. As to my own contribution to the field I see no need to import a radically new theoretical perspective from psychology, sociology or philosophy and apply that to the study of camera movement. In fact, the existing avenues of research provide ample opportunity for durable and sound production of knowledge about

camera movement. Hence my own position within the field follows naturally as an extension to some of the existing literature on camera movement. At the end of the chapter there will be an explanation as to how this dissertation positions itself in relation to the existing literature.

Whereas the first section discusses the literature on camera movement, the second section describes the history of camera movement itself. This section provides a general overview of what types of movement one is likely to find at particular points in time, but the main objective is to describe salient trends and durable norms concerning the aesthetic and narrative functions of camera movement.<sup>2</sup> A study of such a wide historical scope stands a risk of becoming synoptic but throughout the chapter a number of analyses will supply analytic depth.

The final section is devoted to functional analysis. Chapter 3 presents a taxonomy of functions for camera movement. The functional taxonomy accounts for the organizational principles of camera movement and can also be seen to distill and organize the range of functions laid out in chapter 2. In total a set of six basic functions will be taken to constitute the functional base for close to all camera movements. Some of these contain declensions in the form of central parameters and sub-functions. The functions, parameters and sub-functions are presented in a schematic overview at the end of the chapter.

Six specific camera movements are analyzed in chapter 4, demonstrating how individual camera movements engage two or more of the functions and sub-functions presented in chapter 3. The examples represent various genres as well as different times and countries of production.

As to the methodology adapted for the different chapters, a comment must be made about the sample of films consulted. The very extensive viewing necessary to chronicle the history of camera movement (chapter 2.1-2.7) naturally informs the functional taxonomy that will be presented in chapter 3.1, but time prohibited in-depth functional analysis of all camera movements in these films. In order to create a sample that was more manageable for in-depth functional analysis, it was deemed necessary to select a number of camera movements for closer study. Camera movements were selected in seven

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<sup>2</sup> An inspirational model for this stylistic history of camera movement is David Bordwell's chapter on staging in *On the History of Film Style* (1997).

categories according to *type*: push-ins, pull-backs, arcing shots, handheld shots, booming and aerial shots, follow shots and autonomous movements. For a definition of these types and an explanation of the methodology of selection and subsequent analytic procedure, please see **Appendix 1**.

Another question that has to be addressed concerns the *object* of analysis. In its traditional sense, camera movement is a *form of interaction* between cinematography (the manipulation of a camera) and mise-en-scene (the optic pyramid of space captured by the camera). The object of analysis would then be to focus on what camera movement *contributes* to this dynamic process. This is good reasoning but I should like to redress the issue slightly by emphasizing that it is, after all, an *on-screen effect* that is the object of analysis.

As one commentator has suggested, the very notion of a “camera” situates us in production surroundings and not in front of the cinema screen (Bordwell 1977: 20). Terms such as push-in and crane shot spring from actual ways of moving the camera or from the use of a specific camera support during production. Obviously, the *spectator* is not pushed in towards the cinema screen, nor is she transported away from the cinema screen. What meets us in the cinema is a surface that can display various cues of movement and depth. Strictly speaking we do not *see* camera movement. What we see is that the frame of the image appears to be moving in relation to the motive.<sup>3</sup> This will be the object of analysis in chapters 2-4 and the functional taxonomy is a way of accounting for the organizational principles of this *on-screen effect* of camera movement.

Finally, some practical remarks. In-text references are used in this form: (Brownlow 1968: 230). If, within a short span of text, several references are continuously made to the same source, only page numbers are given in the reference: (p. 84). The original publication date for a book or article will be given if its historicity is important: (Mitry 2000 [1963]: 189). Film dates given are the release dates.

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<sup>3</sup> This definition has led one textbook (Bordwell & Thompson 2004) to apply the term ‘mobile framing’ and then subdivide according to different ways of producing a mobile framing: e.g. camera movement, zoom, virtual or animated mobile framing. Since the dissertation is predominantly based on mobile framing produced by camera movement, this term will be preferred. If it is of significance that a mobile framing under discussion is produced by other means, it will be pointed out in the text. The camera-movement effect is discussed in more depth in 1.9. I subscribe to the definition of the camera-movement effect presented by Bordwell (1977: 19-26).

One of the vexing problems about writing on camera movement is that its effects cannot be captured on the written page. To make them 'come alive' on the page app. 300 still frames ('thumbnails') accompany the text and a DVD has been included with the six examples discussed in chapter 4. If nothing else is stated, the still frames are to be read from left to right, one row at a time.



## 1 Perspectives on Camera Movement: A Review of the Literature

As of now there are no book-length studies of camera movement in the English language. What comes closest are Lutz Bacher's *The Mobile Mise-en-scene*, an excellent master's thesis that was published in 1978, and Serena Ferrara's book *Steadicam – Techniques and Aesthetics* (2001). The former focuses on a particular manifestation of camera movement: mobile *long takes*. Second, only "the most outstanding directors" (p. 1) with a proclivity for mobile long takes are included in the study. Hence it is not a study of camera movement per se. Although it is comprehensive with regards to production history and long take theories up to the point of writing, it is sparse regarding analyses and interpretations of the aesthetic and narrative functions of the camera movements themselves.<sup>4</sup> The latter – as the title indicates – takes Steadicam movement as its central focus. This is arguably the most important camera support to emerge since the advent of the crab dolly in the late 1940s and Bacher's account stops just short of its introduction to feature film production in 1976. Ferrara's book also contains brief sections on the history and theory of camera movement but its chief contribution to the existing literature concerns its information on Steadicam techniques and aesthetics.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the shortage of book-length studies relating to camera movement, it would be fallacious to claim that camera movement has not been written about. It has to a great extent, but typically in more limited or perfunctory ways: in short articles in craft journals, in a few critical articles or essays in film journals, incorporated into broader analyses - of a scene, an entire film or a director's vision – in *all* types of film literature. Discussions of camera movement can also be found in the obligatory chapter on cinematography in introductory books to the art, look or language of film and then, of course, there are more theoretically oriented accounts of camera movement.

The following is a review of the literature on camera movement. It is not a sketch of how camera movement would be hypothetically accounted for, explained or interpreted from differing theoretical positions. Instead the focus is

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<sup>4</sup> Bacher remedied this point in his later work on the films of Max Ophüls (1982, 1984, 1996), which is acutely attentive to the nuances of camera movement staging and - to some extent - also its functions. See 1.10.

<sup>5</sup> Among other things the book contains a number of stimulating interviews with filmmakers who have had experience using the Steadicam (and in the case of John Carpenter, the PanaGlide).

on literature – whether of a theoretical, practical or critical nature - that actually *engages* with camera movement. That said, the account privileges texts originally published in or translated into English, German, French, Danish and Swedish.

The review is organized according to the different perspectives from which camera movement has been discussed starting with craft literature. The reader should bear in mind that the chapter is organized so that there is a progression towards research perspectives that are increasingly pertinent to the work presented in chapters 2-4. Consequently the latter chapters will incorporate more extensive discussions of approaches to functional analysis and interpretation of camera movement so better to situate the research perspective pursued in the ensuing chapters of the dissertation.

## 1.1 Camera Movement as a Craft

Camera movement as a cinematic technique has been discussed and evaluated by the craftsmen and artists working within the film industry since silent cinema. In America, *The Society for Motion Picture Engineers* published its first journal as early as 1916.<sup>6</sup> Another key player was – and still is – *The American Society of Cinematographers* (ASC), which was established in 1919. Relatively quickly the ASC “grew from an informal club into the professional association of studio cinematographers” (Thompson & Bordwell 1993: 119). *American Cinematographer* (AC) – published by the ASC since 1921 – represents the most important source of information on camera movement and camera movement technology as seen from the perspective of the Hollywood craftsman.<sup>7</sup> In many

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<sup>6</sup> From 1916-29: *Transactions of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers*. From 1930-80: *Journal of the Society of Motion Picture [and Television] Engineers* (JSMPE). SMPTE’s publication is now called *Motion Imaging Journal*. In comparison to AC, the articles cover a wider range of topics and are generally more technically inclined. A central aim of the society was and still is to standardize the industry ([www.smppte.org/smppte\\_store/standards/](http://www.smppte.org/smppte_store/standards/)). Testing and evaluating camera supports is emphasized over e.g. aesthetic functions. It should be noted that it is really not until the thirties and forties that one finds discussion and evaluation of specific camera supports.

<sup>7</sup> As to the circulation of these craft journals in non-American film communities, the recently published *memoirs* of Danish cinematographer Henning Kristiansen suggest that AC was well-known outside the context of American film production as far back as the mid-40s: “We [the technical crew at Palladium studios] had only read about professional film equipment in the American craft journal *American Cinematographer* and from this we learned that we [in 1946-47] were at least 10-15 years behind the technological development. This concerned film stock, cameras, optics, zoom lenses, tripods, dollies, cranes and not least lighting equipment” (Kristiansen 2005: 33-34) (my translation).

countries, whatever exchanges may have occurred amongst filmmakers involved with camera movement or technicians involved with camera movement technology (whether in-house camera departments or sub-contractors) were rarely recorded in print. There *are* craft journals in other countries where one can find discussions relating to cinematography, for instance *Le Technicien du Film* and *La Technique du Cinématographique* in France, *Zerb* in Britain<sup>8</sup> and *Film & TV Kameramann* in Germany just to name a few. The contents of these journals concern many matters relating to cinematography, and camera movement is but one of the topics that they take up.

Some entries in both *Journal of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers* (JSMPE) and *American Cinematographer* (AC) are exclusively about camera movement technology: for instance a short presentation or evaluation of a new type of dolly or crane – typically including comments from cinematographers who helped to manufacture it or had experience using it. Both AC and JSMPE are sources where one can trace technical development within the industry,<sup>9</sup> as exemplified by the following quote from an article named “Cinematic Progress 1933 – A Technical Review”: “The Bell & Howell ‘Rotambulator,’ adapted from a design by John Arnold, President A.S.C., has come into general use in several studios instead of tripods, dollies or light cranes.” Similarly, JSMPE has published many progress reports in its time that relayed information about camera supports such as for example new intermediate-size camera booms (Heyer & Fischer 1938: 586-591).

Bacher (1978) and Salt (1992) have already extrapolated a lot of important information on camera movement technology. Although camera movement technology is not at the core of this dissertation one cannot entirely turn a blind eye to the issue. As opposed to editing where in principle a cut remains today what it has always been, i.e. an empty space between two disparate shots, camera movement is procedural. Excepting CGI for the moment, camera movement is part of the image-capturing mechanism itself and hence limited by the ways in which you can actually move a camera during a production (or manipulate the *effect* in post-production). At different times throughout the history of cinema, there were certain ways in which you simply could not move

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<sup>8</sup> *Zerb* is published by the *Guild of Television Cameramen* but is also relevant to feature film production.

<sup>9</sup> Although at least one commentator has warned us that the recommendations proposed in SMPE’s journals may be out of date when compared to the actual films. See Barry Salt’s response to Ernest Callenbach’s review of his book (1985/86: 63).

the camera. For these purposes publications such as *JSMPE* and *AC* are indispensable. Technological progress is still discussed and relayed in *AC* and comparing the publications in *AC* with those of other craft journal one can get a sense of the history of camera supports and camera movement technology.

Craft discourse can reveal camera movement trends – sometimes indirectly<sup>10</sup> – that have been partially or fully ignored by historians and critics. In *AC* one can read about a trend of extensive tracking shots in the early 1930s (they were referred to as ‘perambulating’ or ‘rotambulating’ shots at the time) that challenges the popular notion that early talkies had regressed to ‘primitive’ static long take shooting (see 2.4 for an extended discussion); An *AC* article from 1946 argues that when musical extravaganzas were particularly popular “certain directors and cinematographers (as a matter of professional achievement) used to vie with one another to see how many camera stops they could get into one continuous scene” (Lightman 1946b: 102); And a 1958-article from the same journal claims that “the best Hollywood scripts are written so that as much of the story as possible can be filmed in long, continuous takes” (Lightman 1958: 374). Naturally, the reliability of these accounts must be checked against empirical evidence. Lightman’s comments regarding mobile long takes were actually published around the time the mobile-long take trend was beginning to be displaced and, in fact, the average shot length of American films has decreased ever since (Salt 2004: 67-8).

When filmmakers discuss camera movement, they tend to do so from the vantage point of work processes. This is not only relevant to camera movement research because the various craftsmen have first-hand knowledge and experience but also because their comments on camera movement can help the researcher locate and elucidate why certain norms and practices are favored at particular historical junctures. For instance Jon Boorstin’s discussion of ‘the dinner table conundrum’ suggests that the practical problems of sorting out sight lines (and matching action in general) can be alleviated by shooting the scene with the camera *circling around* the dinner table instead of shooting the scene in accordance with more classical decoupage (Boorstin 1996 [1990]: 37-9).

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<sup>10</sup> On occasion, one can also gauge how camera movement fared within the industry via articles about problems *related* to camera mobility such as the increasing complexities of following focus. See e.g. “What’s Wrong With Cinematography?” (1938), Stull (1936, 1938) and Mascelli (1957).

Studying craft literature furthers an understanding of the practical advantages and disadvantages of specific types of movement in concrete filmmaking situations. When filmmakers speak about camera movement<sup>11</sup> they generally focus on *motivation* and not function. A *compositional advantage* such as the one laid out by Boorstin is a type of motivation, but it is not a *function* of the artwork because it is not part of the communicative fabric of the film. Generally, the task of performing functional analysis of camera movement befalls the researcher and the critic. In craft literature on camera movement one finds more information about camera movement as a *solution* to storytelling problems than on the aesthetic functions of camera movement.<sup>12</sup> This is not surprising considering that craftsmen such as the cinematographer and the director are constantly faced with choices, i.e. how to stage a shot to the best dramatic (intended) effect?

Invariably the chief motivation voiced in craft literature regarding camera movement is *narrative motivation*.<sup>13</sup> A particular camera movement must be motivated on count of its contribution to 'the telling of the story.' The motivational approach to camera movement is remarkably consistent in the craft literature. In 1935, Victor Milner heralded Ernest Lubitsch's approach to camera movement because "he makes sure that the technique of the shot is so flawless that the movement is virtually imperceptible to the audience – natural, inevitable, and wholly subservient to the story-action" (Milner 1935: 46). In 2003, cinematographer Harry Savides states, "You move only to help tell the story" (Thomson 2003: 65). This is a remarkable statement coming from a cinematographer who shot *Elephant* (Gus van Sant, 2003) in a series of conspicuous Steadicam long takes. It illustrates that historical differences are not as distinctly reflected in the motivational categories themselves but in terms of *what types* of camera movement are accepted on the basis of narrative motivation. This is an altogether different matter. Compare for instance the

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<sup>11</sup> Aside from published sources I have interviewed a number of craftsmen in connection with this thesis among them dolly grip Jimmy Leavens and cinematographer Henning Bendtsen who is best known for having photographed Carl Th. Dreyer's *Ordet* (1955) and *Gertrud* (1964).

<sup>12</sup> Herbert A. Lightman's 1953-article "The Function of Boom Shots in Feature Film Production" is an exception but even the functions laid out in this piece are mostly *solutions* to particular storytelling problems facing the cinematographer, i.e. how to convey the sweep of a historical subject or how to keep "the screen geography straight in the minds of the audience" (p. 183).

<sup>13</sup> Please note that a distinction is made here between compositional (or practical) and narrative motivation. Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson use compositional and narrative motivation interchangeably (1985: 19-23).

following statements. In a 1974-article Karl Malkames cites Charles Chaplin's advice as exemplary:

Personally, I loathe tricky effects, photographing or traveling with an actor through a hotel lobby as though escorting him on a bicycle; to me they are facile and obvious. As long as an audience is familiar with the set, it does not want the tedium of a traveling smear across the screen to see an actor move from one place to another. Such pompous effects slow up action, are boring and unpleasant, and have been mistaken for that tiresome word 'art.' My own camera setup is based on facilitating choreography for the actor's movements. When a camera is placed on the floor or moves about the player's nostrils, it is the camera that is giving the performance and not the actor. The camera should not intrude. (Chaplin quoted in Malkames 1974: 712)

Chaplin's critique seems specifically addressed at the opening shot of F.W. Murnau's *Der letzte Mann* (1924) but the key point is that the contribution of camera movement should be minimal and at most facilitate the performance of the players who are, Chaplin implies, the chief conveyors of narrative information.<sup>14</sup> Compare these remarks to the more recent comments of cinematographer Wally Pfister regarding a specific handheld shot in *Insomnia* (Christopher Nolan, 2002) where Will (Al Pacino) speaks on the phone with his adversary Walter (Robin Williams):

Once again the camera is handheld and doing this kind of slow movement in and out of him playing with this dizzying state that he is in. That's what's really fun about having the camera on your shoulder... that you have this freedom, this flexibility to be able to float in and float back. (Pfister, DVD commentary track on *Insomnia*)

Pfister links these external movements to the subsequent optical p.o.v. movements in the scene that have a similar floating quality, the point being that both types of movement serve to "keep us inside this character's world" and convey to the viewer the dizzying state that Will is in. "It still tells the story and still creates atmosphere," Pfister concludes.<sup>15</sup> Other stylistic devices applied in the scene such as Al Pacino's facial expressions and bodily movements surely impart that he is sleep-deprived but Chaplin's critique nevertheless comes to mind: In slowly drifting towards and away from Will's face it is to some extent also 'the camera that is giving the performance' for it plays a significant role in communicating to the viewer the psychological state that Will finds himself in.

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<sup>14</sup> Perhaps Chaplin also links camera movement to generic motivation assuming that the camera also facilitates gags which need not necessarily be narratively integrated. See Donald Crafton's article "Pie and Chase" (1995: 107).

<sup>15</sup> Pfister's commentary can be found on the Danish DVD-edition of *Insomnia* (2002) distributed by Buena Vista Home Entertainment.

Yet Pfister has no qualms about assigning narrative motivation to these movements because he works and accepts a wider palette of motivation. Perhaps he is on par with what cinematographer Ed Lachman said in connection with various uses of the zoom lens: “You can use any tool you want – there’s no rules. The application of techniques take your story further” (Quoted in LoBrutto 1999: 131). I will return to this argument when discussing camera movement in contemporary cinema (2.7.2).

Occasionally, craft literature also discuss or lay-out theories or ‘rules of thumb’ relating to camera movement:

The theory behind the *fluid* camera is a simple one. The camera is the “eye” of the audience, and the spectator sees only as much of the action as the camera sees. But if the spectator were actually present in the situation depicted upon the screen, he would not just stand in one place and restrain his eye from moving about in an effort to follow the action. Rather, he would move around – drawing closer to view this or that bit of action, drawing back to get a better view of the overall situation. The camera, as his cinematic eye, has a right to follow the same course of movement – drawing in, pulling back, narrowing down to some significant segment of the scene. It is as natural for the camera to move as it is for a character in the scene to move about the set. (Lightman 1946b: 82)

Lightman here describes the ‘unseen observer-theory’ of camera movement which gives him occasion to argue that a “sound psychology underlies the use of the mobile camera” (ibid.).<sup>16</sup> Lightman’s argument is not unlike that voiced by Vsevolod Pudovkin (1933: 42) as well as Gavin Millar and Karel Reisz (1968: 213-216) with regards to editing but an important distinction must be made between what one could refer to as *sensory-mimetic* and *psycho-mimetic* style. In defending the motivation for editing Reisz/Millar and Pudovkin face the problem that a cut disrupts spatio-temporal continuity and is therefore incongruous with the way that viewers’ perceptive faculties operate in real-life surroundings. They accept this persuasive argument<sup>17</sup> but argue that editing is defensible on grounds of *psychological* realism, i.e. the cut to a closer shot within a wider composition is incongruous with perceptual orientation in the physical world since viewers do not suddenly leap 20 feet from one point in space to

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<sup>16</sup> The exact same phrase is repeated in an article written by Lightman 12 years later testifying the durability of the unseen observer account. See Lightman (1958: 374).

<sup>17</sup> Not all commentators accept the argument that editing is foreign to human perception, i.e. Walter Murch argues that there is an analogy between blinking and editing. *In the Blink of an Eye* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Los Angeles: Silverman-James Press (2001).

another, yet it mimes or *can be staged to mime*<sup>18</sup> the way that a viewer would want to focus on said detail were he actually present in that space.

The distinction between sensory-mimetic and psycho-mimetic camera movement is not as clearly voiced within the literature on camera movement as in the literature on editing – perhaps because only a limited number of camera movements foreground the distinction – but it certainly extends to camera movement. In fact, Lightman himself describes the use of the zoom shot and push-in as “a dynamic way to focus audience attention on a dramatically important facet of the scene” (1946b: 102). Clearly Lightman has two types of mobile framing in mind that are not sensory-mimetic but psycho-mimetic. A “spectator actually present in the situation depicted” would not be able to move as fast as the camera pushes in on a close shot of, say, the gun in Brandon’s (John Dahl) pocket in Hitchcock’s *Rope* (1948). Nor would a spectator in moving ahead get down on all fours to take a close look at the pocket. The push-in on Brandon’s pocket could be defended as psycho-mimetic but certainly not as sensory-mimetic.

## 1.2 The Camera: Anthropomorphic Analogies

To me the camera represents the eye of a person, through whose mind one is watching the events on the screen. (Murnau 1928b: 90)

Another important point about craft literature and camera movement is that filmmakers typically motivate camera movement on the basis of anthropomorphic analogies. This is apparent from Lightman’s quote. Besides the *observer* (sometimes referred to as objective angle or third-person perspective), filmmakers and books on cinematography will refer to the camera acting as a *participant* in the action.<sup>19</sup> The term ‘participant’ is generally applied when the camera takes part in the events at hand, either as an anonymous participant or when mediating the viewpoint of a character in the film. Note that the first type of participant is still thought of as an unidentified entity just

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<sup>18</sup> Further motivations for singling out a detail would include preceding narrative information (e.g., conveyed by dialogue) or other stylistic devices: sounds or eye-lines could call attention to the background object thus motivating a subsequent cut-in.

<sup>19</sup> For other examples of these distinctions see the definitions of ‘objective angle’ and ‘subjective angle’ in Mascelli (1965: 13-18). Garrett Brown’s comments regarding a combined crane and Steadicam shot in *Bound for Glory* (Hal Ashby, 1976) also highlight this distinction: “...the audience is instantly transformed from a third-party voyeuristic perspective [on the crane] to a participatory point of view [when Brown steps off the crane and follows Guthrie (David Carradine) through a large crowd with his Steadicam].” Quoted in Ferrara (2001: 27). The editorial supplements are mine.



as Lightman's *observer* but the difference is that the 'participating' camera is brought into the centre of the action as when James Wong Howe's handheld camera brings the viewer so close to the combatants in the boxing matches of *Body and Soul* (1947) that the camera appears to be registering the blows of the fighters (fig. 1-2).

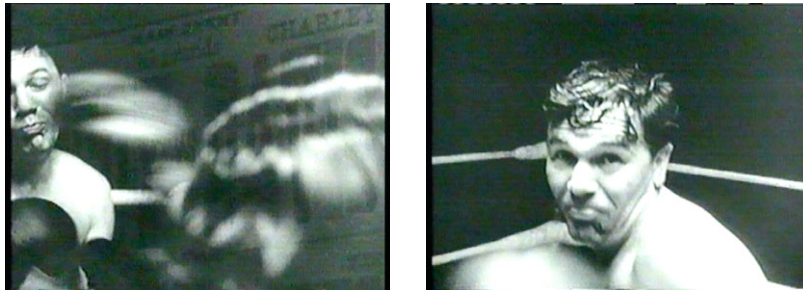


Fig. 1-2. *Body and Soul* (1947). A boxing match in *Body and Soul* features both types of participation. In the first shot Wong Howe throws his handheld camera into the flux of the action, letting it play the part of an unidentified participant. In the second shot the camera represents the p.o.v. of the boxer that Garfield's character is fighting.

Cinematographers even apply the anthropomorphic analogy to complex and autonomous camera movements:

The camera itself is very much a character in *Barton Fink* [...] We had some extremely bizarre shots, like the one that starts off under a bed, tracks through a room, goes into a bathroom and winds up going down into the sink drain. On *Fargo*, our approach was very different because we wanted the audience to feel like observers. We moved the camera a lot, but never in the way we did for *Barton Fink* or *The Hudsucker Proxy*. (Deakins in Silberg 2003b: 53)

Note that Roger Deakins distinguishes the 'character' strategy from the 'observer' strategy. Once the camera is identified as 'a character,' one can assign all sorts of qualities and sensibilities to it. Reflecting on his work on *Caught* (1949), Lee Garmes thinks of Max Ophuls' camera in terms of a discrete yet noticeable voyeuristic presence:

I think he is the only director I've worked with who had this technique of making the camera seem to be stealing a glance at the characters. He didn't stage his people 'to' the camera as everyone else does; you got the feeling the camera was eavesdropping, that it just happened to be there. (Greenberg & Higham 1967: 193)

The difference from Lightman's unseen observer may appear minimal but it is precisely the feeling of being subtly aware of the *act of eavesdropping* that distinguishes the two. The 'camera as character' perspective can also add nuances to various forms of handheld camera movement. Based on his experience of playing a principal character in *The Idiots* (Lars von Trier, 1999)

actor and theatre director Jens Albinus says the following about the role of the camera in Dogma films.

The camera is much more than a window or a gateway for the audience; in Dogma the camera is a character that has a temperament and an emotional life of its own. Sometimes the camera is a little inquisitive; sometimes it is a little inattentive. Sometimes the camera is there, sometimes it isn't but it is very much about creating landscapes that the camera can investigate. (Oxholm & Nielsen 2000: 16-17)<sup>20</sup>

Another film relying on extensive handheld camera movement such as *Le fils* (Dardenne bros., 2002) could then be said to have the camera acting as a different type of character, one that is persistent in its incessant trailing behind the neck of the father yet shy because it hesitates, peaking around corners when the father stops to perform a task.

### 1.3 Statistical Analysis of Style

According to Barry Salt, statistical analysis of stylistic parameters in film dates back to a brief investigation on shot lengths by the Reverend Dr. Stockton in 1912 (1992: 98, 142). As regards camera movement, Barry Salt himself was the first to conduct more extensive research of the matter from a statistical vantage point.

Salt first demonstrated his approach in a series of articles published in the mid-70s but has since collected his work in *Film Style and Technology: History and Analysis* (1983). The substantially expanded second edition of that book (1992) is the most extensive work in the field of film studies on statistical analysis of style. As regards camera movement, Salt suggests a method of tabulating the number of shots with pans, tilts, pans with tilt, tracking shots, tracking shots with pan, tracking shots with pan and tilt and crane movements per 500 shots.

However, it seems that Salt's statistical approach has been chiefly employed in the analysis of two other parameters, average shot length (ASL) and shot scale, for although each chapter of *Film Style and Technology* contains a short entry on camera movement trends within the selected period (the 1930s for instance), Salt provides no tables here. Furthermore, he does not indicate

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<sup>20</sup> I have taken the liberty of correcting a mistake in the translation of the interview from Danish to English. In the published interview it appears as though Albinus used the term 'participant' (da. deltager) yet he actually used the term 'character' (da. karakter).

that his claims are based on a specific sample of films so it remains unclear whether he has arrived at his conclusions by way of quantitative analysis or simply by means of extensive viewing, gathering information from craft journals and general impressions.<sup>21</sup> That said, the entries on camera movement in *Film Style and Technology* provide valuable guidelines for recognizing the very broadest of trends within camera movement history and since Salt has seen an awe-inspiring number of films, the entries occasionally point the reader towards virtually unknown and non-canonized films.

Beyond the short entries in each chapter of *Film Style and Technology*, there are examples in the same book as well as in specific articles where Salt clearly applies a statistical method to the study of camera movement. In these cases Salt undertakes studies of specific camera movement trends (late silent era versus early sound era for instance) by tabulating the number of shots with different types of camera movement per 500 shots. However, unlike the vast sample of films from which Salt has extracted average shot lengths (several thousands), his samples for the statistical study of camera movement are relatively modest: for instance 15 films (late silent versus early sound cinema), 25 films (Ophuls' films plus comparison sample) and 20 films (US films from 1999) (Salt 1974: 18-20; 1992: 223, 298; 2004: 77).

Salt applies quantitative analysis for a variety of purposes. First of all, his surveys cover a wide body of films enabling him to detect general trends in camera movement style. By combining his quantitative analyses with information on what equipment was used/available, Salt can sketch what the camera movement norms and conventions were at a particular point in time with regard to number and type and thereby assess whether the films of a particular director or a particular genre stand out on that basis. For instance, Salt applies this method in the final chapter of *Film Style and Technology* where he presents a case study of the films directed by Max Ophuls. Here, Salt presents a tabulation of camera movement types in all of Ophuls' feature films from *Die lachenden Erben* (1931) to *Lola Montès* (1955). By comparing the

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<sup>21</sup> Regardless of working method, Salt's sections on camera movements primarily concern the manner of staging and quantity: "In America this new fashion for camera movement took a year to really get going, but there are a few films such as von Stroheim's *The Merry Widow* made in 1925 which use one or two tracking shots with panning movement in which the camera moves with respect to a quasi-static scene." (p. 157), "... it was not uncommon to find 10 or more tracking shots, not to mention large amounts of panning, during the length of some of the last American silent films such as *The Red Dance* (Raoul Walsh, 1928)..." (p. 185), "Another approach to even greater take lengths involved increased camera mobility..." (p. 231).

numerical tabulation of camera movement in the early work of Ophuls to those of other German films of the period, Salt can objectively assess that Ophuls' films of the early thirties do not have as much camera movement as certain other German films produced at the time, for instance *Kameradschaft* (Pabst, 1931) or the musicals *Der Kongress tanzt* (Erik Charell, 1931) and *Ich bei Tag und Du bei Nacht* (Ludwig Berger, 1932). Salt can also show that "in fact, it only begins to appear in his films with *Die verkaufte Braut* and *Liebelei* (1933), and even then it does not surpass its source [...]" (Salt 1992: 297). The source in this regard is the German musical tradition from which Ophuls – according to Salt – derives his style.<sup>22</sup>

Other scholars have applied statistical style analysis to camera movement in a manner identical or similar to the one suggested by Salt. Lutz Bacher covers the same empirical ground as Salt, tabulating the number of shots with pans, tilts, pan with tilts, track, track with pan, crane and no camera movement per 500 shots in Ophuls' four American films as well as *Le plaisir* (1951) though his results sometimes differ significantly from those obtained by Salt. Whereas Salt counts zero crane shots per 500 shots in *Caught* (Salt 1992: 298), Bacher has counted no less than 49 per 500 shots (Bacher 1984: 754). One would think that Salt has registered a number of crane shots as tracking shots or tracks with pans but that does not seem to be the case. Salt has registered 30 tracking shots per 500 shots as opposed to Bacher's 12, but only 65 tracking shots with pans compared to Bacher's 106 (ibid./ibid.). Such discrepancies remind one to be cautious about the apparent objectivity of statistical inquiry.

Bacher supersedes Salt's analysis by supplying a temporal dimension to the quantification of camera movement. He does so by calculating the percentage of rhythmic long takes (which are continuously mobile) to long takes per se in Max Ophuls' American and late French films (1984: 4), thus giving a rough impression of the amount of screen time we spend watching a mobile frame vis-à-vis a frame that is static. Bacher thereby mitigates a caveat of numerical tabulation as hitherto practiced: it does not take into account the duration and speed of camera movement. This is unfortunate because duration and speed are essential to viewers' experience of mobility. Two films with the same average shot lengths could have 200 slow pans that take up the entire

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<sup>22</sup> One could include other German musicals of the period which contain complex mobile long takes: e.g. *Zwei Herzen im Dreiviertel Takt* (1930) and *Bomben auf Monte Carlo* (1931).

length of the shots or 200 fast pans that take up a fraction of the shots in which they occur. With the type of numerical tabulation that Salt conducts, the difference would not show in the statistical results.

Colin Crisp has quantified camera movement in a sample of French films that is substantially greater than those presented in Salt's tables (1993: 376-400). For the years 1930 to 1961, Crisp sampled 10-12 films from seven select periods. Crisp's periods range from three (1935-37) to eight (1954-61) years and his categories are different from Salt's in that he only counts three types of movement. These are "simple camera-head movements" (tilt and pan), "tracking shots (with or without crane)" and "complex camera movements involving both camera and camera-head" (Crisp 1993: 392). By implication the middle category consists of *pure* tracking shots and crane shots where no panning or tilting is involved. In order to distinguish tracking and crane shots from complex movement Crisp must be able to discern the exact staging of a crane shot and distinguish the movement of the arm and platform from the movement of the camera-head. According to Crisp's tabulations more than 50% of all tracking and crane shots in the period do not involve *any* panning or tilting. Based on my interview with dolly and crane grip Jimmy Leavens (Nielsen 2003d), I find this unlikely as almost every tracking or crane shot involves at least slight repositioning - even if this is barely noticeable on the screen.

Even if Crisp's observations are correct one must emphasize a general problem facing statistical analysis: classifying camera movements based on the manner, i.e. structure, of movement. The first problem is delimitation. Crisp does not give any indication as to where one should place handheld camera movement and aerial shots. A recent article by Salt reminds one of the problems associated with delimitation. Salt remarks on his categories: "I do not distinguish the different methods of supporting the camera, so that hand-held tracking and Steadicam tracking go in together with the traditional tracking with the camera on a dolly" (Salt 2004: 76). This is a peculiar way of reasoning for since Salt does not present a definition of crane shot's on-screen appearance - apparently a valid category - we must assume that the definition rests on the camera support used: a crane. Indeed, in *Film Style and Technology*, Salt writes the following of his category "Crane": "A category containing shots involving the use of a camera crane has also been included" (Salt 1992: 223). Apparently,

some camera supports provide valid categories whereas others do not. Maybe Salt associates certain patterns of movement with 'crane shot' that he considers to be self-explanatory. However, handheld movements and aerial shots also register as characteristic movement and there are camera movements carried out with the use of a camera crane that do not give away their means of support.<sup>23</sup>

It seems that Salt tries to negotiate a problem in typologizing camera movements that have become increasingly difficult as more and more novel means of producing a camera movement effect have opened up an ever-increasing range of structural variety: should one rely on *structural characteristics* or *means of producing* a camera movement effect? Neither is ideal. The sheer number of means calls for too many categories (pan heads, Steadicam, variety of cranes, SpaceCam, DiveCam, wires, dollies, virtual camera movement systems, CGI, zoom lenses etc). Furthermore, although camera supports have a bearing on the look of a shot, their versatility varies immensely. Some find a limited number of applications in film whereas others can be applied in a near to endless number of ways, for instance some Steadicam shots give away their means of support, whereas others look exactly like dolly shots. On the other hand, every camera movement is essentially unique from a structural viewpoint and any type of categorization is bound to be reductive.

These problems are all on display in the works cited above. Neither Salt's nor Crisp's categories tell us much about easily quantifiable structural parameters such as lateral versus axial movement, and this is sometimes a significant variable, for instance it marks an essential difference in the staging of camera movement in films directed by Max Ophuls vis-à-vis those directed by Paul Thomas Anderson. Furthermore, by lumping together handheld, Steadicam shots and dolly shots, Salt's framework overlooks significant structural variation. Anything from a bouncy handheld follow shot to a smooth push-in with a dolly could be included in the category "Tracking". In fact, his statistical framework could give the impression that a dogma film like *The Idiots* (1999) uses camera movement in much the same way as Max Ophuls' *Caught* (1948). This structural variation is not simply a question of minutia. Some

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<sup>23</sup> In locations with uneven ground it is often easier to carry out a smooth push-in qua a lightweight crane than it is to lay down tracks for a dolly, yet the actual movement does not indicate to us that the shot was filmed using a crane. See for instance the push-in on the tent in *The Village* (2004). This may also be the source of discrepancy between Salt's and Bacher's tabulations in *Caught* noted above.

commentators have attributed significant ideological implications to specific camera supports (e.g., Geuens 1993).

Salt claims to conduct analysis “in terms of how the films were put together” (1992: 297) but disregarding the structural difference of handheld versus dolly movement shows little sensitivity towards the creative process of filmmaking. Recently, Warren Buckland has applied statistical style analysis to *The English Patient* providing results for among other things camera movement. Compared to Salt, Buckland simplifies his categories – though not in the same manner as Crisp – listing only pan, track and crane (besides the category “still camera”). Remarkably, Buckland’s main text includes a quote from the film’s cinematographer John Seale on his practice of hiding zooms in pans, dolly shots or tracking shots (Elsaesser & Buckland 2002: 80-116).<sup>24</sup> Yet neither Buckland’s categories nor those of Barry Salt or Colin Crisp can accommodate Seale’s staging strategy. In Buckland’s quantification of the film’s camera movements this staging strategy simply vanishes.<sup>25</sup> Despite the claims to specificity and objectivity so often voiced against “impressionistic assertions” (Crisp 1993, 391) and “critical comment which is shot through with subjectivity” (Salt 1992, 297), statistical analysis is not free from subjective measures, as is indicated by the fact that Salt and Bacher come up with quite different results though having applied the same analytical framework to the same films. Furthermore, due to the problems of categorization involved in tabulating camera movements, statistical analysis can mislead as much as it can reveal – even about those few structural factors that it claims to investigate scientifically.

Apart from the problems of reduction and imprecision, statistical analysis does not tell us about the functions of the respective camera movements. Panning a landscape may be functionally analogous to specific crane shots rather than to other types of pans. A functional approach to camera movement would carve up the field in an entirely different way.

Naturally, statistical analysis of camera movement does not *have* to stand on its own and may be wedded with other analytical frameworks, for instance mise-en-scene criticism as it has been practiced in British film journals such as *Movie*. In this regard, the editor of the on-line film journal *Off-Screen*, Donato

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<sup>24</sup> Seale-quote: p. 95. Chart: p. 114.

<sup>25</sup> The zoom + camera move strategy can be found as early as in the Hunt sequence of *Love Me Tonight* (1932). It has also been pursued by Harold E. Stine & Robert Altman in *MASH* (1970) and Vilmos Zsigmond & Robert Altman in *The Long Goodbye* (1973).

Toraro, has launched a heuristics that he calls “contextualized statistical analysis” which can assist the “critical exploration of elements such as scene construction, narrative structure, theme, and filmic style” (2004).<sup>26</sup> However, in the article in question, Toraro concentrates on ASL and refrains from statistical survey of camera movement à la Salt and Crisp. Hence there is no statistical analysis of camera movement to be contextualized. Toraro does in fact note and interpret formal camera movement motifs in *Diary of a Country Priest* but in a manner much closer to a type of mise-en-scene criticism that is sensitive to matters of film style.

#### 1.4 The Art of Film

Textbooks that introduce or attempt to account for the art or language of film often devote a section to camera mobility.<sup>27</sup> These sections vary in terms of scope and depth. Some devote only one or two pages to the topic whereas others are more comprehensive. At times one can detect that these books subscribe to different theoretical frameworks (e.g., James Monaco’s semiotics-inspired *How to Read a Film* versus David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson’s neoformalist perspective in *Film Art – An Introduction*) but the general strategy pursued in the sections on camera movement is fairly uniform. Typically, the sections introduce a number of types (pan, tilt, track, crane and so forth) and then a number of well-known examples from canonized works, for instance films directed by D.W. Griffith (e.g., *Intolerance*), F.W. Murnau (e.g., *Der letzte Mann*), Jean Renoir (e.g., *Grand Illusion*), Max Ophuls (e.g., *La ronde*), Orson Welles (e.g., *Touch of Evil*), Jean-Luc Godard (e.g., *Week End*), Michael Snow (e.g., *La Région Centrale*), Martin Scorsese (e.g., *Taxi Driver*) or Alfred Hitchcock (e.g., *Psycho*, *Notorious* or *Young and Innocent*).<sup>28</sup> One will often find suggestions as to what a specific camera movement type is used for: “Panning is often used

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<sup>26</sup> Unfortunately, Anna Romatowska’s so-called “statistical” breakdown of *Pickpocket*, which Toraro refers to, is only statistical in its calculation of average shot lengths. It does not include statistical analysis or quantification of shot scale and camera movement.

<sup>27</sup> Some recent examples include Barsam (2004: 219-227), Phillips (2002: 86-92). Some well-known examples include Bordwell & Thompson (2004: 266-289), Gianetti (1993: 95-108), Monaco (2000: 96-100, 201-10), Prince (2004: 25-35), Kolker (2006: 78-80) and Kavin (1992: 211-220, 234-241). Other examples include Abrams, Bell & Udris (2001: 99-102). Dick (1990) and Sultanik (1995) also contain sections on moving shots. Some of these texts are available in newer editions.

<sup>28</sup> Occasionally, one will encounter an example from a not so well-known film, included for variation, because of structural and functional novelty or because it is representative of a specific paradigm of filmmaking.



to show the vastness of a location” (Phillips 2002: 86). Other times the author will suggest the functions or meanings of specific movements: “In *Seven Samurai* (1954), for example, to suggest the developing friendship and unity between the samurai and peasants, Kurosawa groups them in a circle and tracks the camera around its periphery” (Prince 2004: 33).

Many of these typically short sections on camera movement merely provide a few examples of the functional capabilities of the device but a few, such as Stephen Prince’s section in *Movies and Meaning* quoted above, *do* suggest a scope or frame-work of contribution. In the case of *Movies and Meaning*, camera movement can be used to “reveal detail, to convey the sensory experience of movement or to symbolically express thematic and narrative ideas” (2004: 34). Explicitly or implicitly most of these sections invoke a category of ‘expressive’ function exemplified by the arching movement in *Seven Samurai* but apart from giving an example or two, the presumption is that these types of functions are limitless in range and that no further subdivision is tenable.

One of the most comprehensive of the contributions is David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson’s section on camera movement in *Film Art – An Introduction*. *Film Art* suggests that we view camera movement as an aspect of the broader term *mobile framing* which includes zooms, CGI-produced ‘camera mobility’: “Mobile framing means that, within the image, the framing of the object changes. The mobile frame thus produces changes of camera angle, level, height, or distance *during* the shot” (2004: 266). Bordwell and Thompson’s section also operates with a fairly clear framework, though one that is different from Stephen Prince’s. The systematic aspect of the section does not evolve around a *functional taxonomy* but around *parameters of manipulation*: space, time and pattern. Rather than suggesting a functional taxonomy, the section exemplifies different ways in which camera movement can manipulate time and space in isolated moments or across the duration of films.

All in all, these sections tend to be suggestive but far from exhaustive. Occasionally, fresh and surprising examples are brought up for discussion as when Aaron Sultanik studies the dramatic potential of the moving camera by zoning in on examples in films that generally avoid camera movement or use it very sparingly such as Russian montage films directed by Vsevolod Pudovkin, Sergei Eisenstein and Dziga Vertov (1995: 47-48) or films directed by Yasujiro

Ozu (p. 48-50). Unfortunately, there is also a great deal of recycling of examples across this literature. Here one needs only to look at how many of these texts discuss the long-take along the country road to Oinville in *Week End* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1967): Prince (2004: 33), Sultanik (1995: 46), Monaco (2000: 209), Abrams & Bell & Udris (2001: 100) and many more.

## 1.5 Practical and Interpretive Criticism

Similar in strategy to those entries listed in 1.4 are a few short critical essays that take camera movement as their general topic. Examples include Raymond Durgnat's "The Restless Camera" (1968), Stig Björkman's "En fråga om frihet" (1974), Thorsten Jungstedt's "Kameran som rörde sig" (1974) and John Calhoun's "Putting the 'Move' in Movie" (2003). These authors do not feel as obliged to list camera movement types as the entries mentioned above but they *do* pick out camera movement highpoints and examples from canonized works in order to illustrate what they believe to be the aesthetic potential of this elusive device. Beyond speculating on the functions of camera movement in feature films, they simultaneously provide historical sketches of camera mobility, though their emphases vary: Jungstedt incorporates examples from precursors to film; Calhoun is the most thorough with regards to the technological development of camera supports. In "The Art of Film"-books, the historical dimension is not always as salient, though wide temporal and geographical representation is usually evident.

Another avenue pursued in a small number of articles is the localized study of camera movement within specific films or a relatively small and specific group of films. Examples include Richard Raskin's articles (1997, 1999) on camera movement in *Der Himmel über Berlin*, Tom Gunning, André Gaudreault and Ellen Dagrada's article (2000) on the camera movements in the Italian silent epic *Cabiria* (1914), Jon Gartenberg's article on camera movement in Edison and Biograph films (1980), Peter Rist's article on camera movement in Japanese silent films from the 1920s (2003), and Stanley J. Solomon's camera movement in films from the early to mid-sixties (1965-66). These articles contain localized studies of specific camera movements. The scholars tend to have selected camera movements for analysis and interpretation on the basis that the

movements in question are novel or idiosyncratic, or their analyses of them will propose that they are. For instance, Gaudreault, Gunning and Dagrada will claim that the *Cabiria* camera movements carried out on the 'carello' on a diagonal to the sets are unique in film history (2000: 207). Solomon will also claim a unique status to those camera movements that he investigates in *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* (1964), *Jules et Jim* (1962), *The Train* (1964) and *Il deserto rosso* (1964): "What is happening is not merely a change in technique but an essential transformation in the approach to visual expression" (1965-6: 19).

Yet another type of critical literature on film style focuses on the functions and implications of specific camera movement supports. The book by Serena Ferrara mentioned at the beginning of this chapter is unique in its scope and its dual perspective on practice and theory, though the theoretical sections of the book relate to camera movement as such whereas the craft and practice-oriented sections relate specifically to Steadicam or in one case, the PanaGlide. Jean-Pierre Geuens' article on the ideological implications of Steadicam shots (1993: 8-17) and Joseph Anderson's book-chapter on dolly shots versus zoom shots are other examples (2003: 11-21).

Camera movement is rarely afforded such generous space as in the texts mentioned above. Most often when camera movement is engaged with in a critical text, the movement itself is not the main topic but is instead woven into an account with a wider purpose. It may be integrated into an analysis and interpretation of a particular film or *oeuvre* or used to exemplify a point. Not surprisingly, these examples are most plentiful in analyses of films by directors who have a proclivity for camera movement such as F.W. Murnau, Max Ophuls, Jean Renoir, Otto Preminger and Orson Welles. Unlike the literature so far mentioned in this sketch, this particular category contains examples too numerous to mention so I will restrict myself to a few examples to indicate the scope and strategy.

First of all, the way in which camera movement is dealt with ranges from merely identifying its presence through description, analysis, interpretation and/or evaluation.<sup>29</sup> For instance, Charles Higham's *The Films of Orson Welles* (1970) often identifies and describes camera movements from films directed by

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<sup>29</sup> The latter four were laid out as activities of criticism by Monroe Beardsley (1981 [1958]).

Orson Welles<sup>30</sup> but rarely analyzes or interprets them. One finds descriptive passages such as “As Bernstein begins his story about life on *The Inquirer*, the camera glides down the side of *The Inquirer* building to a carriage [...]” and “[...] the Declaration of Principles is printed on the front page in close-up, the camera withdraws, then there is a quick dissolve to Leland, Bernstein, and Kane [...]” (Higham 1970b: 37). The function or meaning of these camera moves is not elaborated upon. Occasionally, Higham makes evaluative statements on the basis of purely descriptive passages:

[A] long held two-shot enables the point of the conversation to be fully grasped, and the welcome home is beautifully managed: a close-up of a cup as Carter read the welcome message, the cup carried forward, a cut to the door with Kane frame in it, then a reverse dolly shot of great length and ingenuity across the office, the camera staying stationary in a position below eye level, observing the group of editors from a distance. (p. 37-8).

Because Higham does not elaborate on the function or meaning of the dolly move, his evaluative statements only reflect on the technical staging of the shot and on what Higham takes to be good story telling technique. Obviously, scholars can account for the descriptive aspect of camera movement in a way that vastly exceeds simple observation by including information on production-historical circumstances: what type of crane was used, who called for this shot, did anyone at the front office oppose it due to production costs etc. Higham’s book does in some cases include production-historical circumstances but he does not always supply as much information as could have been unearthed.<sup>31</sup>

Higham’s book occasionally offers examples of interpretive criticism:

He [Leland, ed.] has become tragically senile; his incarceration in the hospital, the feeling of paralysis that comes with old age, and the terrible isolation of the sick are all conveyed with great economy by the use of an apparently stationary, but in fact almost imperceptibly moving, camera, the dolly pushed forward inch by inch as we get infinitesimally closer to the old man’s face (p. 38).

Higham applauds the simplicity and economy with which story information is relayed to the viewer by means of camera movement. However, Higham’s

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<sup>30</sup> Charles Higham (1970b). *The Films of Orson Welles* (Berkeley and L.A.: University of California Press). Occasionally, Higham also describes camera movements that did not end up in the final film as in his chapter on *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1942).

<sup>31</sup> If one were to focus on the technical staging of the low angle shot described above by Higham, one could have incorporated comments on the specific type of camera support applied as it is most likely Gregg Toland’s specially constructed Velocilator that was used for this shot. The Velocilator is described in more detail in Toland (1939: 215-8).

analysis remains unclear: how and why does this particular push-in perform the function supposedly ascribed to it? Surely, make-up, performance and set design also help convey “incarceration”, “the feeling of paralysis that comes with old age” and “the isolation of the sick” so what is the exact contribution of the camera move?

In response to the unique nature of individual camera movements in feature films, many critics and scholars have settled for individual interpretations: what does this particular camera movement contribute to the meaning of the scene in which it occurs? This has been a mainstay of film criticism since at least the late 1950s<sup>32</sup> and continues to this day. As in the few articles on individual camera movements there is also here a tendency to focus on structurally idiosyncratic movements such as the arcing shot or complex crane shots. The meanings ascribed to these camera movements range from explicit to abstract. A filmmaker may simply apply a structurally idiosyncratic camera movement in order to highlight a scene as being particularly significant within the narrative. This is what German cinematographer Michael Ballhaus claims to be the case for the 360 degree dolly movement that has come to be as much his signature move as that of the directors he has been working with (Pizzello 2007: 63).<sup>33</sup> The interpretive critic may note the structural idiosyncrasy of such a movement but will often extend his claims about its significance as exemplified here by Slavoj Žižek’s interpretation of an arcing shot in *La Double Vie de Véronique* (1991):

[...] the key scene of the film is the encounter of the two Véroniques in the large square in which a Solidarity demonstration is taking place. This encounter is rendered in a vertiginous circular shot reminiscent of the famous 360-degree shot from Hitchcock’s *Vertigo*. Afterwards, when the French Véronique is introduced, it becomes clear that the perplexity of the Polish Weronika at this moment results from her obscure awareness that she was about to have an impossible encounter with her double [...] Consequently, is this camera’s circular movement not to be read as signaling the danger of the ‘end of the world’, somehow like the standard scene in science-fiction films about alternative realities, in which the passage from one to another universe takes the shape of a terrifying primordial vortex threatening to swallow all consistent reality? The camera’s circular movement thus signals that we are on the verge of the vortex in which different realities mix, that this vortex is already exerting its influence: if we were to take one step further – that is to say, if the two Véroniques were actually to confront and recognize each other, reality would

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<sup>32</sup> See for instance the panel discussion on *Hiroshima mon amour* in *Cahiers du Cinéma* no. 97 (July 1959): 1-18. This is where Godard famously said that tracking shots are a question of morality.

<sup>33</sup> Ballhaus feels that his proclivity for the moving camera shots may have come from visiting the set of a family friend, Max Ophüls, while he was shooting *Lola Montès* (Pizzello 2007: 60).

disintegrate [...]. (Žižek 2001: 84)<sup>34</sup>

Interpreting individual camera movements on the basis of what went before and, as in the case of Žižek's interpretation, also on the basis of what comes after the shot suggests that every camera movement is unique. This is undoubtedly correct but does that lead one to the conclusion that any camera movement can mean anything?

The individual nature of camera movements does not render it impossible to point out functional similarities across bodies of film. Although it would appear that Žižek's interpretation could not apply to any other shot than the one he is discussing, he does in fact acknowledge a similarity to other camera movements (*Vertigo*)<sup>35</sup> and scenes (the proposed 'standard scene in science-fiction films'). In other words, the persistence of aesthetic traditions suggests that it is not altogether coincidental that *La Double Vie de Véronique* contains an arcing shot and not a parallel tracking shot at this particular point in the narrative. In fact, other filmmakers have used arcing shots to accentuate key moments in their narratives, Carl Th. Dreyer for instance, in *Ordet* (1955). Although one cannot encapsulate all interpretations of particular camera movements that a critic would want to make regarding a particular camera movement one can localize predominant functions.

Before looking at some rival hermeneutic models it should be pointed out that interpretations of camera movements are sometimes cast a little broader: for instance what does this camera movement *strategy* contribute to the meaning of this specific film? Examples abound: V.F. Perkins' account of a camera movement couplet in "Same Tune Again: Repetition and Framing in *Letter from an Unknown Woman*," Robin Wood's article on Michael Haneke's *Code Unknown* in *CineAction!*, Ed Gallafent's essay on mobile long takes in Hitchcock's *Under Capricorn* (1949) and Noël Carroll's article on *Kameradschaft*

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<sup>34</sup> The encounter is actually staged in a more complex manner than Žižek indicates. There is a counter clock-wise arcing shot of Weronika who, by turning, retains the same frontal position to the camera but the arcing shot is intercut with two shots of the French Veronique as she is about to leave on a bus. However, the turns taken by the *bus* are staged so as to close the circle.

<sup>35</sup> Although the on-screen appearance of the shot from *Vertigo* is that of an arcing shot, the circular movement in the background was actually a rear-projection process shot by cinematographer Robert Burks. See Bruce Kawin's fine observations about the intricacies of the shot and his subsequent interpretation of the shot as conveying obsession and loss of control. According to Kawin, Hitchcock also had the actors placed on a platform that was rotating during the shot though at a slower pace than the changing background thus creating a complex interplay of three types of movement in the shot (Kawin 1992: 238-242).

(1931) and *M* (1931).<sup>36</sup> Though one could raise objections to some of these analyses and interpretations – such as Gallafent’s failure to account for the contribution of the actual *movement* of the camera in those long takes that he analyzes – the general line of approach is perfectly legitimate and has produced valuable insights. *Camera movement strategy*-interpretations have become increasingly viable in recent years as even mainstream filmmakers claim to be designing camera movement according to a so-called “expressive scheme” (Salt 1992: 289). An expressive scheme is when a film systematically tailors a stylistic device to particular story action across the course of a film, such as circling around characters in one direction in scenes set in the past and in the reverse direction in scenes set in the present,<sup>37</sup> or when the entire camera movement strategy changes in the course of the film parallel to a development in the narrative. Cinematographer Stanley Cortez argues that there is such an overarching pattern in *The Bridge at Remagen* (John Guillermin, 1969):

When the men are on their way to the bridge to blow it up, which is their mission, they learn that they haven’t just got to blow it up, they have to take it by force [...] From that moment on, I decided to change the whole photographic concept, to parallel the change that had overtaken them. I spoke to John, and he agreed that once these men realized their changed mission, we should switch to hand-held cameras. The jerky hand-holds would convey their nervousness, to involve the audience in their unsteadiness. (Cortez in Higham 1970a: 118)<sup>38</sup>

The subsequent chapter will reveal how the source of such patterned use of camera movement originates in silent cinema.

As opposed to individual interpretations of individual camera movements, a few scholars have moved to the other end of the scale and proposed extremely broad functional categorizations of camera movements. For instance, according to Noël Burch there is basically one type of camera movement in film production in the Western world, namely expressive camera movement. The term ‘expressive’ is used in a much broader sense than we saw with Stephen Prince earlier. Expressive camera movement in Burch’s sense is aimed at

[...] integrating the succession of frames, the movements that link them, as ‘organically’ as possible into the diegesis, in terms of both external, physical,

<sup>36</sup> V.F. Perkins (2000), Robin Wood (2003), Ed Gallafent (2005), Noël Carroll (1978).

<sup>37</sup> This example is highlighted by David Bordwell (2006: 172). The original source is David Heuring. “Impeccable Images,” *AC* 81, 6 (June 2000): 92, 94.

<sup>38</sup> This is indeed evident in the film from approximately an hour and twenty minutes into the film and with varying intensity for the next ten minutes.

and 'inward' or psychological movement. It has always been considered particularly important to reconstitute the whole 'expressive' range of shot-sizes, as they figure in the editing codes *per se*. (Burch 1979: 225-6)<sup>39</sup>

An otherwise shrewd observer of stylistic practices, Burch's lumping together of camera movement in the Western world arises from his attempt to highlight an oppositional practice: camera movement in Japanese cinema before it was tainted by Western practice.

Clearly it is important to strike a balance so not to make aesthetic traditions out to be completely homogenous. Just as the arcing shot tends to be used to accentuate a key moment within the film, this is not the *only* function of the arcing shot. Art director Robert F. Boyle perfectly describes another function of the arcing shot popularized by Alfred Hitchcock: "Hitchcock liked to enclose these intimate scenes and in some of the other films he has had the camera even going around them [...] the idea being to get the visual effect of enclosing these people in a very intimate moment" (Fitzgerald 2000).<sup>40</sup> As already indicated by the example from *Vertigo*, Hitchcock himself actually varied his use of the arcing shot across his career as a filmmaker – the now cliché function described by Boyle is invoked by an 180 arcing movement at the beginning of *Suspicion* (1941) whereas the example from *Vertigo* both encloses Scotty and Madeleine, highlights the significance of the embrace within the film and may also be said to have abstract functions regarding the way it collapses space and time.<sup>41</sup> All these functional variations could be lumped under Burch's category of 'expressive camera movement' but they each play a significant role in shaping the viewer's experience of individual scenes and deserve to be distinguished from one another.

Although both historians and critics speak of a German tradition or more recently a Japanese tradition of camera movement, few scholars besides Burch have studied camera movement as a national group style with nationally specific ways of moving the camera. Nationality is more often erected as a general framework rather than as a determining factor. When critics and scholars have tried to account for camera movement strategies across a wider

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<sup>39</sup> Burch only exempts "the baroque style, such as that of Ophüls' late work."

<sup>40</sup> Robert F. Boyle to the camera in *Destination Hitchcock: The Making of 'North by Northwest'* (Peter Fitzgerald, 2000).

<sup>41</sup> The very structural complexity of the shot suggests other functional intentions. See short description footnoted earlier (Kawin 1992: 238-242).



body of films they have typically tried to account for directorial characteristics. An example is Robin Wood's book-chapter "Ewig hin der Liebe Glück" (1976). Here, Wood provides a list of some 22 of "the most striking stylistic features and recurrent motifs" in the films of Max Ophüls (1976: 117). The list includes everything from choice of setting to set design and Ophüls' emphasis on female characters. Throughout the text, Wood carefully qualifies his argument in dialectical fashion. This is a rhetorical device but one that he takes to be necessary in order to understand the layered meanings and fine nuances of Ophüls' art. Anticipating interconnectedness/context-is-everything arguments, Wood is quick to point out that a director's style is "more than the elements that go to compose it, its essence created indeed by the interaction of those elements" (ibid.). However, by providing the list Wood displays a better grasp of the individual components whose dynamic interrelationship he will later bring into play when interpreting Ophüls' tracking shots.

The first item on Wood's list is "The tracking-shot" and several other items on the list are indirectly or directly related to camera movement. Wood states that it has become commonplace among critics that "to discuss Ophüls is to discuss the meaning of his tracking shots" (ibid.). Wood himself *will* place a great deal of emphasis on the meaning of Ophüls' tracking shots, only he will not assume that they constitute the total meaning of Ophüls' films. First, Wood elaborates on Ophüls' "habitual practice" by singling out the parallel tracking shots in the Linz sequence ("a relatively relaxed scene at a lower pitch of emotional intensity") in *Letter from an Unknown Woman* (a film that is "poised stylistically midway between two films to which it is so closely related in theme and narrative movement"),<sup>42</sup> arguing that they "display a number of representative characteristics." He describes these as:

1. Their length in time and distance is unusual.
2. They display grace and elegance – one sees in them Ophüls' delight in "sensuous movement, the pleasure of creating beautiful and fluid images."
3. They suggest the interconnectedness of lives, the simultaneity of actions that impinge on each other.
4. They vary our spatial relationship to the characters by alternating the distance between camera and characters.
5. Intervening objects between camera and characters have the function of A) graceful ornamentation and "subtle distancing" or B) ironic juxtaposition
6. As the camera movements are variations on each other, "part repetition, part inversion" they display a 'musical form'.
7. They are structured circularly so that the characters are brought back to

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<sup>42</sup> The two films Wood refers to are *Liebelei* (1932) and *Madame de* (1953).

where they started.

(pp. 124-125)

In order to account for Ophuls' characteristic use of camera movement, Wood will further distinguish his practices by way of comparing them to those of fellow auteurs Otto Preminger, Alfred Hitchcock and Jean Renoir. There are several ways in which he could have done so, but Wood emphasizes the orchestration and co-ordination of character and camera movement as distinguishing characteristics. In brief he lays it out as follows:

- a) Hitchcock favors the "*subjective* tracking-shot, that places us in the actor's position and gives us the sensation of moving with him." (p. 125)
- b) Preminger's tracking shots (40s and 50s films) lack "the actively expressive, 'musical' dimension of Ophuls's." The "main ambition" of Preminger's tracking shots is to be "unobtrusive." Preminger's camera moves "to *watch* the character rather than to implicate us in his movements" and objects intervening between camera and character have no decorative function but simply "keep us at our distance." (p. 126)
- c) In Renoir's tracking shots the camera is "habitually at the service of the actors." The actor's are "free" and the viewer has the impression that "the action is worked out in collaboration with them and the camera-movements (which rarely have the conscious elegance of Ophuls's) are determined accordingly." (p. 131)
- d) Ophuls' tracking shots are both different from Hitchcock's "audience-participation techniques" and Preminger's "clinical objectivity and detachment." A specific sequence in *The Reckless Moment* looks shot à la Hitchcock but otherwise, subjective tracking shots are uncommon in Ophuls' films (pp. 125-6). And unlike Preminger, Ophuls' camera has "a much stronger tendency to move *with* the characters, beside them and at their pace." Consequently, Ophuls' way of moving the camera achieves a perfect balance between sympathy and detachment and elicits a "sense of closeness without identification." (p. 126) Ophuls' tracking shots are also different from Renoir's. The main difference vis-à-vis Renoir is that the characters are *unfree*. They are "trapped within the carefully predetermined movement" of the camera: "Perpetually in motion, they are perpetually imprisoned – even as a piece of music, once it has begun, must move to its predetermined close. Ultimately, Ophuls's tracking shots signify both Time and Destiny." (p. 131)

By means of this impressive account of camera movement strategies, Wood arrives at a taxonomy of sorts though it only maps out stylistic characteristics of a very general nature. One needs only to recall the receding camera movement in *Frenzy* (1972) that draws the viewer's vantage point away from an ensuing murder scene to note that Hitchcock may also put at least physical distance to the action.

Wood should be credited for providing nuances to the way camera and character movement are coordinated and the implications of these variations but rather than probing deeper into stylistic analysis - assuming for instance

that the above characteristics are a hypothesis that should be tested across bodies of film - he moves to a hermeneutic framework: Ophuls' camera movements signify Time and Destiny.

## 1.6 Central Tenets in Early Theoretical Writings

Camera movement has been theorized about as early as it has been written about in craft literature. Three of the central tenets in theorizing on camera movement concern the relationship of camera movement to montage, the ways in which camera movement relates to our own movement in space, camera movement as an authorial signature and the aesthetic and medium-specific capabilities of the device.

As the director of *Der letzte Mann* (1924), *Faust* (1926), *Sunrise* (1927) and *4 Devils* (1928), F.W. Murnau will forever hold a central place within the stylistic history of camera movement, but according to a letter<sup>43</sup> found by film historian Lotte Eisner he was also among the first to formulate in words the aesthetic capabilities of what was termed 'die entfesselte Kamera' (the unchained camera):

Father Christmas's magic wand could create the instrument which is more important than any fortuitous outside aid: a camera that can move freely in space. What I mean is one that at any moment can go anywhere, at any speed. A camera that outstrips present film technique and fulfills the cinema's ultimate artistic goal. Only with this essential instrument shall we be able to realize new possibilities, including one of the most promising, the 'architectural' film.

Murnau elaborates on the concept of the 'architectural film':

What I refer to is the fluid architecture of bodies with blood in their veins moving through mobile space; the interplay of lines rising, falling, disappearing; the encounter of surfaces, stimulation and its opposite, calm; construction and collapse; the formation and destruction of a hitherto almost unsuspected life; all this adds up to a symphony made up of the harmony of bodies and the rhythm of space; the play of pure movement, vigorous and abundant. All this we shall be able to create when the camera has at last been de-materialized. Eisner (1973:18)

The analogy to architecture has since been invoked by Carl Th. Dreyer and by

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<sup>43</sup> The letter is written on Decla Bioskop paper, which suggested to Eisner that it was written in 1922 or 1923 when Murnau was working for Decla Bioskop. Eisner suggests that the letter was written to one of Germany's major dailies for a Christmas special. The letter was probably written late 1923 for it was the draft for a piece that *was* published in *Die Filmwoche* no. 1 (1924) under the headline: "Neujahrswünsche." / "New Year's Wishes." Reprinted in Gehler & Kasten (1990).

critic/theorist Raymond Durgnat.<sup>44</sup> Dreyer likened his role as a director to that of an architect yet the analogy extends to the aesthetic properties of the two art forms themselves. Although not true of all camera movement specific examples – for instance in Dreyer's *Ordet* – in fact give an impression not unlike that of moving through an aesthetically shaped spatial structure in time. Murnau implicates both space and time here, but not in simple terms. Although the analogy to architecture suggests that he stresses the expressiveness of camera movement in a spatial sense (three-dimensional), “lines rising, falling, disappearing; the encounter of surfaces, stimulation and its opposite, calm; construction and collapse” could also refer to planar or graphic expressiveness. His analogies to music (‘symphony’ and ‘harmony’) invoke time but only in the sense of ‘visual rhythm organized over time’ and not as a quality in its own right as would Andrej Tarkovsky many years later in his stimulating book *Sculpting in Time* (1991 [1986]).

Lutz Bacher has persuasively demonstrated how Murnau's statement should be understood in the light of his background in art history and the possible influence of August Schmarsow, Alois Riegl, A. E. Brinckmann, Herman Sörgel and Adolphe Appia by way of Max Reinhardt (Bacher 1978: 211-5). Partly for that reason, it is difficult to ascertain whether this ‘architectonic’ form could actually be realized in narrative cinema or whether they were simply theoretical speculations with little concrete influence on the actual camera movement in the films he directed. However, Bacher does suggest that ‘encounter of surfaces’ alludes to the camera's penetration of different planes in the optic pyramid and may have explained Murnau's preference for axial camera movement (p. 216).

Another early commentator on camera movement, set designer Erno Metzner, contrasted camera movement to montage: “The director can dispose of a flowing and an abrupt transition from one camera angle to the other one” (Metzner 1933: 182).<sup>45</sup> According to Metzner, the cut had an abrupt quality to it. He described it as a “‘crack’.” Even though certain principles of editing such as cutting on movement could smooth over the transition, the “disagreeable effect” of a cut could only be “moderated.” Metzner argued that quite often the

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<sup>44</sup> As to Dreyer see the transcript of his lecture at Edinburgh Film Festival (1955) in Donald Skoller (1973: 178). As to Durgnat and his support and elaboration of Dreyer's analogy see “Architecture in, and of, the Movies,” in Durgnat (1976: 97-112).

<sup>45</sup> Metzner worked on a number of films directed by Georg Wilhelm Pabst such as *Tagebuch einer Verlorenen* (1929) and Pabst's first talking picture *Westfront 1918* (1930). [www.filmportal.de](http://www.filmportal.de)

abruptness of a cut was not recommendable when there was “no movement to facilitate the transition” (ibid.). Metzner was not closed-minded about this. In certain situations, he considered an abrupt transition to be perfectly justified. Camera movement was not inherently better than montage but in some scenes cuts would distract the viewer’s attention from the subject matter and the story line. Metzner imagined a scene where a character is giving a toast at a party whereupon the filmmaker would want to show the reactions of the guests. One would have to use several shots to show first the reaction of one guest then another. According to Metzner cutting from one to the other would distract from the speech. Instead Metzner imagines a tracking movement alongside the table “allowing the row of those sitting there to pass before the eyes uninterruptedly.” To support his assertion, Metzner posits a second tenet of theorizing about a camera movement: the analogy to our own movement in space. The lateral movement provides, so Metzner, “the feeling that one is oneself looking along a table, and the spectator forgets the technical proceeding which, by resorting to cuts would be *obtrusive*.” (ibid.)

Around the same time that Metzner wrote the article discussed above, Rudolf Arnheim contested such an analogy:

[I]t is well known that a feeling of giddiness is produced by watching a film that has been taken with the camera travelling very rapidly. This giddiness is caused by the eyes participating in a different world from that indicated by the kinesthetic reactions of the body, which is at rest. The eyes act as if the body as a whole were moving; whereas the other senses report that it is at rest.

Our sense of equilibrium when we are watching a film is dependent on what the eyes report and does not as in real life receive kinesthetic stimulation. Hence certain parallels which are sometimes drawn between the functioning of the human eye and that of the camera – are false. (1958 [1933]: 34).

When watching a shot on the screen photographed by a moving camera, our kinesthetic input and the information received by our eyes are incongruous. Hence the effect experienced in the cinema cannot be likened to that of moving through or orienting ourselves in the space around us. According to Arnheim this is not a disadvantage that must be ameliorated. These differences of experiencing reality and experiencing film are instead the very foundation on which to build an art form – and this, of course, is Arnheim’s underlying agenda. For film to be an art form the filmmaker must display *reality transformed*. Cartoons and Elseworld mise-en-scene are not suitable material for the artistic properties of film. It is better to photograph everyday objects

because their quality of being recognizable allows the filmmaker to enhance their artistic *transformation* on the cinema screen. According to Arnheim's description quoted above, witnessing a shot photographed by a moving camera also has this same-but-different quality and by these standards camera movement should be considered an essential resource of artistic use.

In his discussion of camera movement a number of functions crystallize, primarily the ability of camera movement to produce certain physical reactions in the spectator, which in Arnheim's view is the result of incongruous sensory input. However, he also recognizes - but does not make clear distinctions amongst them - what he terms expressive qualities of story world presentation and the effects produced in the spectator, i.e. that a camera movement can *convey* a character's dizziness without necessarily producing it in the spectator (p. 97, p. 111).

The above information appears in the segment of *Film as Art* that is adapted from "Film" (1933). In "The Thoughts That Made the Picture Move" (1933), also included in *Film as Art*, Promio's travelling shot along the grand canal (1896) led Arnheim to argue that "a pioneer considered the properties of the recording technique in a way that later on led to the development of art" (p. 139). But instead of the incongruity of sensory input, Arnheim gives another reason for its contribution to art: "[T]hat the camera was not simply a passive receiver of what was moving around in front of the lens, but could take an active part, for instance, by moving itself, was a first step in the direction of progress" (ibid.). This function of camera movement was not merely a call for interventionist technique that exceeded the modest goal of passive reproduction but was for Arnheim also bound up with another central tenet: The experience of watching a shot photographed by a moving camera was not only different from moving around in phenomenal reality, camera movement was also a specifically filmic device when compared to other art forms. Arnheim only highlights a few of the cinematically specific applications of camera movement and his main comparison case is the theatre. The ability to visually convey psychological states as they unfold and to elicit the accompanying physical reaction from viewers is one function that Arnheim finds to be cinematically specific. Another of Arnheim's examples is that in the theatre it is generally the spatial architecture of the stage that is static. The characters walk into and out of a theatrical space whereas in cinema the moving camera has the ability to

maintain focus on one character walking through rooms, up stairs, down stairs and so forth (1932: 133-4).

The specifically cinematic properties of camera movement has been a resilient tenet ever since and has been endorsed by a number of commentators (e.g., Scharff 1982: 134; Juel 2003). Juel argues that camera movement, along with editing, "radically separates the medium of film from other media" (2003, my translation). There are no pans in printed media, argues Juel.<sup>46</sup> By this account camera movement and editing constitute a film experience as a *film* experience – different from our experience of reality as well as other media. Although it is always gratifying when other scholars embrace a device that oneself considers to be significant, two reservations must be made. First, cinema does not have a monopoly on camera movement or the camera movement-effect. Camera movement has migrated to other media and one might even argue that camera movement preceded cinema in for instance Zoopraxiscope presentations (see Jungstedt's argument in 2.1). Furthermore, other devices are candidates for medium-specificity, for instance musical scoring and cinematic staging.<sup>47</sup>

Alexandre Astruc most succinctly formulated another central tenet on camera movement as an imprint of directorial style. In his seminal manifesto "The Birth of a New Avant-Garde: La Caméra-Style" he claimed that cinema could be as nuanced in expression as written language (1968 [1948]). Camera movement was central to the rhetoric of film language for Astruc, both as theorist and long-take practitioner. Originally, Astruc thought that film language could be analogous to written language; that the author of a film would someday soon have evolved cinematic figures such as a specific camera movement that would correspond to past and present tense. He later abandoned the exactitude of this analogy but retained his focus on the filmmaker's imprint. Most importantly, he suggested that camera movements could move beyond narrative function and introduce "that breach, that imperceptible tissue between the work and the author by which the latter takes a stance in relation to it" (Astruc 1948).<sup>48</sup>

Significantly, Astruc's 'breach' paves the way for auteurist readings of

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<sup>46</sup> Interestingly, a recent research project *has* actually attempted to show how Don DeLillo's *Underworld* relies on cinematic figures for textual transitions (Jacobsen 2002).

<sup>47</sup> I attempt to demonstrate this point with regards to *character movement* in a scene from Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope* (Nielsen 2003c).

<sup>48</sup> The quote is translated in Bacher (1978: 229).

camera movement, i.e. identifying specific types and functions of camera movement with particular directors. However, Astruc's breach implies *more* than an authorial signature. One can justifiably claim that Max Ophuls tends to have his camera moved laterally past foreground and background elements of the setting in a way that engenders visual rhythms but it is something else to claim that by moving the camera in this way, Ophuls takes a stance in relation to his subject matter.

Minimally, this latter claim would entail that the camera movement attributes particular qualities to the characters, for instance that the movement lends to them a graceful elegance. However, Astruc is even one step ahead of this claim because he suggests that the director can make *valuative* statements about his characters via camera movement, i.e. the camera movement informs us that *the director* considers them to be graceful. This layered communication introduces a rich complexity into the structure of film because one would have to tangle out when a camera movement is contributing to the telling of a story and when it is taking stances in relation to elements of that story world which it itself has helped to formulate. Counterpoint also becomes possible. For instance one can claim that from the point of view of relaying story information, the lateral camera movement lends elegance to the characters yet *simultaneously* one may detect the presence of a director who subtly communicates to us that *he* finds the characters superficial. Granted, few critics have argued for the presence of "double communication" in one and the same camera movement but the breach became immensely important to auteurist criticism and discussions of camera movement being a *visual* contribution of the director to the *written* source material upon which the film narrative was based.<sup>49</sup>

Astruc's breach also suggests a framework in which to understand Jean-Luc Godard's famous remark about tracking shots being "a question of morality."<sup>50</sup> This taps into the earlier critique voiced by Chaplin, i.e. the assumption that camera movement is a more actively manipulative gesture than a stationary set-up and that it calls attention to the hand of the filmmaker. James Monaco has since argued that acknowledging the breach rather than effacing it is a more honest gesture: "A tracking or crane shot need not necessarily shift interest from subject to camera; it can, rather, call attention to the relationship

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<sup>49</sup> This was central to British *mise-en-scene* criticism; see Gibbs (2001, 1999).

<sup>50</sup> Godard made the remark in a panel discussion of *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959): "Hiroshima, notre amour," *Cahiers du Cinéma* no. 97 (July 1959). Reprinted in Hillier (1985: 59-70).



between the two, which is arguably both more realistic and more ethical, since there is in fact a relationship" (Monaco 2000: 203).

Despite the connection to the breach described by Astruc as well as the nod to Luc Moullet's reverse argument, "morality is a question of tracking shots,"<sup>51</sup> the remark by Godard could hardly have been posed were it not for the theoretical writings of André Bazin.

## 1.7 Camera Movement Between Formalism and Realism

The ontology, psychology and aesthetics of André Bazin's theory of cinema are intricately interwoven. Therefore, one has to lay out some of its premises before explaining how camera movement comes into the equation.

First of all, the relationship of cinema to reality is central to Bazin and he uses it as a basis for redefining the history of cinema between 1920 and 1940. The central dividing line is not that of silent versus sound film but of two opposing trends: "Those directors who put their faith in the image and those who put their faith in reality." The former group he sub-divides into "those that relate to the plastics of the image and those that relate to the resources of montage." By putting one's faith in the image, Bazin refers to a style of filmmaking where "the representation on the screen adds to the object there represented." Bazin will favor a style of representation – and a style of camera movement – that does not add to the object represented on the screen but instead respects and preserves the "complex fabric of the objective world" (Bazin 1967: 15).

Paradoxically, the complex fabric of phenomenal reality often eludes us in our daily routines: When we drive our cars or bikes to work, our goal-orientation makes us concentrate on the cues relevant to our purposes; we may see 'red stop light' or 'car that will turn in front of me' but we may equally well ignore or even fail to register other data in our field of vision. The film camera does not have those cognitive filters, those "habits and preconceptions laid on it by my perception."<sup>52</sup> The camera will record – so Bazin – whatever the technical

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<sup>51</sup> Godard's line was part homage, part reversal of Luc Moullet's "morality is a question of tracking shots" in an article on Sam Fuller in *Cahiers du Cinéma* no. 93 (1959). Reprinted in Hillier (1985: 145-55).

<sup>52</sup> This passage appears in many different translations. This is the one that appears in Mitry (2000 [1963]: 169). In Perkins (1972: 31) the translation reads "the mental fog with which our

circumstances allow for: “For the first time, between the originating object and its reproduction there intervenes only the instrumentality of a nonliving agent” (Bazin 1967: 13). No doubt, it is true that the filmmaker makes countless choices regarding framing, lighting, aperture and film stock, but at one point he has to let go and let an instrument capture the image.

Bazin sees virtue in the mechanical aspect of cinematography and he will celebrate styles of cinematography that supply “an added measure of reality to the screen (Bazin 1971: 37). This is how most commentators read Bazin, but there is more to his theory than that. Bazin is actually suggesting that cinema qua the film camera’s unique capacity to mechanically record reality, can give something *back* to reality, or rather to the way in which we perceive it. Because we are immersed in phenomenal reality we do not notice it; *cinema* can make us notice it. This has important implications for Bazin’s preferences regarding camera movement. For one he will generally prefer camera movement to montage because it can preserve the spatio-temporal continuity of pro-filmic reality. Second, camera movement can help provide a ‘democracy of vision’ by refusing to forcefully direct the attention of the viewer. This argument is often voiced by Bazin in connection with static long takes – whether he applauds the multiplane action of depth-of-field long takes in *Citizen Kane* or the refusal to use camera movement or editing to let the viewer in on the ‘real’ narrative subtext of the kitchen scene in *The Magnificent Ambersons*.<sup>53</sup> However, camera movement is just as central to Bazin:

The care taken by Orson Welles not to crack this dramatic crystal led him to break with the usual practice of construction by using static shots of vertiginous duration (that of the kitchen dialogue between Aunt Fanny and George), but it would be a simple matter to show that the extended tracking shots arise from the same concern to follow an event in all its developments. (Bazin 1978: 73)<sup>54</sup>

According to Bazin, Jean Renoir’s films provide the best examples of this type of non-directed camera movement. Renoir seemed to move his camera in a way that effaced the boundaries of the frame and opened up to the world:

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perception blurs it” and Hugh Gray’s translation is “those piled up preconceptions, that spiritual dust and grime with which my eyes have covered it” (Bazin 1967: 15).

<sup>53</sup> The kitchen scene is discussed in Bazin (1978: 71-73). Bazin applauds the way that it is staged because by filling the scene with ‘pretext’ action - George’s gluttony - and by obstructing the viewer’s access to the development of the ‘real action’ - Fanny’s anxiety about Isabel’s relationship to Eugene whom she is in love with - the violence of Fanny’s emotional outbursts is given more force when it finally surfaces.

<sup>54</sup> Bazin argues that it is instead the performance of the actors and the lighting schemes that inflect the shots with narrative information. The article is from *L’Ecran Français* (November 19, 1946) and is quoted by Jonathan Rosenbaum in a footnote in Bazin (1978: 73).

Renoir saw clearly that the screen was simply the counterpart of the camera's viewfinder and therefore not a frame but its opposite: a mask whose function is as much to exclude reality as to reveal it; what it shows draws its value from what it conceals. (Quoted in Perkins 1972: 38)<sup>55</sup>

*Rules of the Game* (1939) is a key film to Renoir in this regard. As opposed to the principles of analytical montage, the camera in *Rules of the Game* does not forcefully direct the viewer's attention but seems instead to surge through the spaces of the chateau trying to take in as generous a view of the world as the camera will allow. A further means of facilitating a 'democracy of vision' is provided by the film's interplay of cinematography and mise-en-scene. While every camera movement by definition marks an interplay of cinematography and mise-en-scene, Renoir's is particularly significant because it fuses generous lateral movement with multiplane action: "In his films, the search after composition in depth is, in effect, a partial replacement of montage by frequent panning shots and entrances" (Bazin 1967: 34).<sup>56</sup> Combined, the lateral camera movements and the multiplane staging of the mise-en-scene suggest that Renoir is well aware that he cannot show the viewer all of this world at the same time, yet it indicates his insistence on extending his frame laterally and in depth, showing spectators as much as he can without forcefully directing us as to which of the simultaneous actions we should be looking at.<sup>57</sup>

A third function significant to Bazin is that not only can camera movement preserve the "spatial density of something real" (Bazin 1967: 48) it can also secure the authenticity of a specific event. This is particularly evident in Bazin's discussions of a scene in Pascal Lamorisse's *Crin Blanc* (1952).

It is of no consequence that the horse we see dragging Folco in the long shot is a double for *Crin Blanc*, nor even that for that dangerous shot, Lamorisse had himself doubled for the boy, but I am embarrassed that at the end of the sequence when the horse slows down and finally stops, the camera does not

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<sup>55</sup> Original source given as *Cahiers du Cinéma* no. 8 (January 1952): 26. I have removed Perkins' editorial inserts from the quote.

<sup>56</sup> It should be stressed that although there are examples to support Bazin's analysis of *La Règle*, the stylistic strategies of the film are quite diverse. E.g. three of the first encounters at the chateau are presented in shot-reverse shot structures: Christine and Lisette's discussion on men as friends or lovers; Christine and Robert's conversation on André Jurieux; the break-up scene between Robert and Genevieve.

<sup>57</sup> According to Bazin, Renoir's silent films developed a "considerable prowess for lengthy deep dolly shots," whereas his subsequent work aimed at "widening the screen – already deepened by the lenses – through lateral reframing. To this end panning and lateral dollying became his two main camera techniques" (Bazin 1974: 21).

show us, so that we are in no doubt about it, that the horse and child are in physical proximity. This could have been done in a panning shot or by pulling the camera back. (p. 48-9)

To Bazin the uninterrupted take is a prerequisite when “the essence of a scene demands the simultaneous presence of two or more factors in the action” (p. 50). Bazin termed this his ‘law of aesthetics’ and he also invoked it in situations where proximity of two factors was an index of danger.<sup>58</sup>

Surprisingly, Bazin would sometimes praise camera movements that do not compel the viewer “to make his own choice” (p. 92) such as “the astonishingly perspicacious mobility of the camera” (p. 69) in Jean Cocteau’s *Les Parents Terribles* (1948).<sup>59</sup> He would even claim that this mobility is evidence of an “inventiveness of expression which is the exact opposite of a passive recording of theater” (ibid.). Similarly, Jean Renoir’s versatile use of camera movement also created many challenges to Bazin’s theory, and Bazin sometimes went to great lengths in an attempt to legitimize a camera move that at first seemed to contradict his theory – on occasion camera moves that contemporary critics had discredited as ‘complicated and awkward.’<sup>60</sup> How does Bazin account for such conspicuous movements as the autonomous camera movement in *Le Crime de M. Lange* (1936) that leads up to Batala’s death? Instead of following Lange (Rene Lefevre) in a straight curve towards Batala (Jules Berry) and Valentine (Florelle), it abandons him and circles the courtyard counterclockwise before picking up Lange again as he finally approaches Batala and Valentine.

In this case, Bazin justified the camera movement on the basis of the courtyard’s importance in the original scenario entitled “On the Courtyard.” The courtyard, he argued, defined the “physical disposition of the set” and the circular move “brilliantly synthesizes the spatial structure of the film” (1974: 45-6).<sup>61</sup> Thus Bazin does not justify the camera move on the basis of its relation to reality but on the basis of its relation to set design and the scenario.

One to always qualify and modify his theoretical positions in view of

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<sup>58</sup> See for instance Bazin’s discussion of *Where No Vultures Fly* (1967: 49).

<sup>59</sup> Bacher was the first to notice this inconsistency in Bazin’s long take theory (1978: 194-197).

<sup>60</sup> Bazin’s own account of the film’s reception is in (1974: 43). He quotes Roger Leenhardt’s review in *L’Esprit*: “The direction, while touched with genius, still includes some of Renoir’s usual awkwardness. Oh, those zig-zagging pan shots! Are they due to a mistake or simply a lack of money?” (p. 42).

<sup>61</sup> Bazin’s own description of the camera movement as a 360 degree circular move that follows Lange through Batala’s former office through the composing room down the stairs and around the courtyard is a little imprecise.

empirical evidence, Bazin may have realized that the aesthetic strategy which he proposes will always be a minority strand and he will sometimes settle for the spatio-temporal continuity of long take staging even though it violates principles involved in 'the democracy of vision,' for instance by dictating the viewer's choice of focus, or counteracts "the reality of dramatic space," (Bazin 1967: 27) for instance by drawing the viewer's attention away from represented reality to the means of representation.

Among the many subsequent theoretical responses to Bazin's theory of camera movement and the long take, Jean Mitry and V.F. Perkins both counter Bazin by advancing theories that promote synthesis. According to Jean Mitry there is no *essential* difference between camera movement and montage. In a critique of Bazin's views on montage, Mitry claims that both camera movement and montage give context to the individual image: "[E]ven when a scene is shot with a moving camera instead of broken into small scenes, the montage effect is still at work interrelating the various image-objects which come into view" (Andrew 1976: 193).<sup>62</sup> Mitry saw the montage effect – and consequently camera movement – as the second part of cinema's three levels of signification: First, similar to Bazin, he argues that we cannot help but see the *objects represented on the screen* as analogous to or asymptotes of real objects; second, we cannot help but see in the *sequencing of images* – the narrative structuring – the hand of human agency; third, while simultaneously serving a narrative function and remaining faithful to the world of the story, the aesthetic patterning itself can move beyond these functions and create higher cinematic meanings which are poetic, abstract and symbolic. This latter type of artistic signification is exemplary of the masterworks of cinema.

Mitry has little to say about camera movements serving to create higher cinematic meanings. Instead he primarily discusses camera movement and editing as a form of sequencing which the filmmaker orchestrates into narrative form:

[T]he sequence of shots is harmonious and, of course, rhythmic, but also and more specifically it *constructs* the film; it ensures its development in terms of

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<sup>62</sup> Mitry's definition of montage includes more than in-camera editing. Mitry understands montage to be 'every technique that bestows upon the statically composed image a new significance.' This definition would include everything from a change of lighting occurring in the shot to a character suddenly turning her back to the camera.

theme, drama, psychology, and time. [...] [T]hey are as it were a series of organic cells helping to build up the film narration in the same way as the shots. There would therefore be (some) logic in referring to shots dependent on the movement of the camera as shot sequences. (Mitry 2000 [1963]: 174)

The parenthesis is significant because even though Mitry stresses that camera movement is simply one stylistic strategy among others without *inherent* ties to a cinematic ontology, he argues that 'the camera movement sequence' is also different from 'the edited sequence' and is better suited to some purposes than others.

Mitry's opposition to Bazin concerns the insistence on basing an aesthetics of film on "specific construction techniques" (p. 190). What starts out as a total diffusion of Bazin turns into a moderate adjustment once one follows Mitry's arguments on the psychological specificities of 'the camera movement sequence.' In actual fact, Mitry's account of the psychological implications of the mobile camera comes very close to embracing Bazin's 'Total Cinema,' i.e. a form of cinema which gives us a "recreation of the world in its own image" (1967: 21). See for instance how close Mitry comes to Bazin's position in a passage from a section called "The Psychology of the Tracking Shot":

Indeed, the moving camera has made it possible to 'actualize' the represented space, since the space in which we *effectively* move can only be a space *actually present*. Things are 'in the process of happening,' since we follow them in their very mobility, according to their continuous development. We move *with them* and therefore act (or feel as though we are acting) *at the same time as them*. The here and now presented to our *eyes* through editing is presented physically to our perception, our senses through the tracking shot. Thus the fact that, at the level of perception, extensiveness is replaced by intensiveness, structured information by information perceived by the senses, means that, at the level of film action, *presentification* is replaced by *actualization*.

For that reason, represented reality appears 'more true.' The authenticity the cinema gives to everything it touches becomes more apparent the more the drama seems to evolve in a 'present' reality in which we are in some way involved [...] Instead of being forced into a fictional reality, we experience a simulacrum of reality. (Mitry 2000 [1963]: 188-9)

If camera movement can make us experience a simulacrum of reality, what has then become of the hand of human agency that sequencing – and consequently camera movement – always invoked?

According to Mitry the one does not rule out the other. We can both experience a simulacrum of reality and understand this experience to be shaped by human agency. Mitry poses two explanations for this. First, the very nature of this opposition lies at the heart of what Mitry calls "film reality" (p. 75). In

fact, it invokes the distinction between the first and second part of signification but with the important addition that frame mobility is related to reality in a different way than the represented objects. Whereas Mitry understands the objects as having both an indexical (imprint) and iconic (semblance) relationship to reality, the tracking shot implies another relationship: The movement of the frame mimics not an object but a way of viewing. This is also a way in which Mitry's account differs from Bazin's. While Bazin stresses that cinema – by means of the objectivity of a mechanical recording device – can *reveal* of reality what our cognitive and perceptual dispositions make us prone to overlook, Mitry stresses that camera movement can *simulate* the way in which we experience reality and simultaneously *involve* us in the actualization of the dramatic space.<sup>63</sup> It seems that to Mitry camera movement per definition involves the viewer “in the process of happening” and automatically results in more active participation: If we do not feel as active participants then it is no fault of the mobile cinematography but of the (lack of) credibility of performance or plot situation (Mitry 2000 [1963]: 189).<sup>64</sup>

Second, the two contradictory types of engagement tend to be displaced from each other temporally. Mitry argues that our *experience* of camera movement does not prevent us from also viewing tracking shots as a set of conventions and hence a mediated and shaped experience, but that we tend to understand the hand of human agency *after the fact* and not *while* experiencing a camera movement:

Involved through the modalities of the drama ‘taking place,’ we can only make our judgments after the fact. Our powers of anticipation and distanciation are concerned only with the ‘time of the sequence,’ never the ‘time of the film.’ Involved in the course of events, we are dragged along by them (rather than enthralled), much as we are by actions in real life. (p. 189)

Although Mitry ‘only’ views the application of tracking shots as a matter of stylistic choice on the part of the filmmaker, one can clearly see that capturing a scene by means of a tracking shot has quite specific implications for our psychological experience of film. However, these provide no reason for camera

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<sup>63</sup> Serene Ferrara draws much the same conclusion in her book on the Steadicam when she argues that camera movement can generate “the sense of creation” of the film (2001: 8).

<sup>64</sup> That idea that camera movement can enable the spectator to become a more active participant in the actions was voiced in craft literature early on. See Stull (1933: 6).

movement to be pursued in the service of fulfilling an *essence* of cinema. Instead it depends on the specific demands of the storyline.

Apart from the psychology of camera movement, Mitry also discusses specific camera movements as well as the historical development of their functions in cinema. Unfortunately, neither Mitry's analyses of specific camera movements nor his evaluative criteria are organized according to a systematic and coherent theory of style such as we find in V.F. Perkins' *Film as Film* (discussed below). In fact, Mitry's arguments raised in connection with concrete examples are the weakest link in his argument, particularly when he attempts to put functions into a historical context. For instance he argues that camera movements before *Der letzte Mann* merely depicted settings or followed characters. However, as Jon Gartenberg (1980) and Tom Gunning (1986) have persuasively argued, early tracking shots in Edison films from 1903 – for instance *Hooligan in Jail* – were actually reflexive rather than descriptive. Even the famous tracking shots from *Cabiria* (1914) which can be said to show off the impressive sets are *also* in the service of creating a volumetric three-dimensional effect that is an attraction in its own right rather than a mere description of locale.

Mitry *does* make noteworthy observations on the functions of camera movements. For instance he distinguishes a selective from a descriptive function. Although Mitry does not present these in a clear and systematic way, one can induce that he thinks of two modalities of descriptive camera movement: The mode he associates with early cinema of describing locations or following characters, and a more mature mode of describing character relationships and 'constructing the space of the drama.' To these he adds movements that have psychological value, by which he means movements that translate psychological states. His example is the famous camera move through the marsh in *Sunrise* (1927):

The sinuous curve of the track following him as he walks down through the rushes, the sudden revelation of the marsh as he walks toward the woman, translate both his movement and his feelings – his hesitation and finally his astonishment – and have the effect of making the audience share his feelings, experiencing them at the same time as the character. (p. 184).



Generally, Mitry's discussion of specific camera movements<sup>65</sup> is actually very similar to the sections in introductory books to the art or language of film which highlight well-known examples from canonized films, and his motivational recommendations (p. 185-6) echo those voiced in craft literature. Besides *Der letzte Mann* and *Sunrise*, Mitry mentions the crane-like shots in the Babylon-episode of *Intolerance* (1916), the series of movements that locate the main character in King Vidor's *The Crowd* (1928), the ascension in Murnau's *Faust* (1926), a push-in from Hitchcock's *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943), the buggy ride and ball scenes of *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1942) and the opening camera movement of *Madame de* (1953) directed by Max Ophuls. However, given that Mitry's original text was published in 1963, one should keep in mind that his observations preceded many of the contributions mentioned in section 1.4 and 1.5.

V.F. Perkins' would use Bazin's analysis of Renoir's open frame staging (quoted above) as a springboard for his own positions on style, including camera movement: "This is accurate and illuminating about one aspect of Renoir's style [...] But it is false and restrictive as a general binding definition of the screen's *true nature*" (1972: 38-9). Consequently, no application of camera movement should be ruled out on the basis of a purported essence of cinema. To Perkins, film criticism – as well as the theory that informs it - should not be prescriptive in an a priori sense. Because of the "embarrassing richness of the cinema's aptitudes" (p. 60) film is per definition *impure* in the best sense of the word (p. 69-70). Therefore criticism should remain open to *all* possible manifestations of style and by implication all possible ways of moving the camera. In this regard Perkins is on par with Mitry who also wanted to promote a wide palette of stylistic choice before demonstrating how the use of different stylistic devices function in relation to specific cinematic worlds. Mitry's comment "We do not condemn the use of adjectives because a certain writer uses them incorrectly!" (Mitry 2000 [1963]: 173) is almost echoed by Perkins:

I do not believe that the film (or any other medium) has an essence which we can usefully invoke to justify our criteria. We do not deduce the standards relevant to Rembrandt from the essence of paint; nor does the nature of words impose a method of judging ballads and novels. (1972: 59)

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<sup>65</sup> I am referring to the discussions presented in the section 'The Moving Camera,' "Aesthetics and Psychology," p. 183-186.

However, while both Mitry and Perkins may be said to relinquish *prescriptive* criteria based on the essence of *cinema*, Perkins only does so in order to establish *evaluative* criteria for judging the value and worth of *films*. As a contrast to justifying criteria based on cinematic essence, Perkins advocates criteria invoked by specific *types* of film and the filmmaker's *artistic possibilities*:

Criticism and its theory are concerned with the interplay of available resources and desirable functions. They attempt to establish what the medium is good for. They cannot establish what is good for the medium, because the question is senseless. (p. 59)

For a camera movement – as well as other devices – to have a ‘desirable function’ it must be *credible* before it can be *significant*. It must be motivated by the world of the story and not intellectually imposed from outside. And since Perkins’ claims and criteria are only posed in regard to “photographic fiction,”<sup>66</sup> the story worlds that Perkins engages with generally pretend to be ‘real worlds’:

The impurity of the medium is consummated by a decision to project a world which is both reproduced and imagined, a creation and a copy. Committed to this impurity, the film-maker is also committed to maintaining a balance between its elements. His aim is to organize the world to the point where it becomes most meaningful but to resist ordering it out of all resemblance to the real world which it attempts to evoke. (pp. 69-70)

To illustrate the difference as regards camera movement, Perkins compares the opening minutes of John Frankenheimer's *The Train* (1964) to a particular follow shot in Otto Preminger's *The Cardinal* (1963). According to Perkins a scene at the beginning of *The Train* at the German headquarters contains “convulsive movements” which are successful in evoking a mood of panic and chaos as the Germans are preparing to withdraw, yet the camera movements are imposed from outside the world of the story and therefore lack motivation: “They do not seem to spring from a view of the events portrayed. Given that the camera is to be used to heighten the atmosphere of panic, there still seems to be no reason in this sequence to move it in one direction rather than any of a dozen others” (p. 87).<sup>67</sup> Perkins advocates expressive ways of moving the camera but only when

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<sup>66</sup> ‘Photographic fiction films’ are posed midway between the most “rigorous forms of documentary” on one hand and the “most controlled vision” of fantasy, cartoons or other painterly forms of expression on the other (Perkins 1972: 60).

<sup>67</sup> It should be noted that the proposed convulsiveness is not produced by jerky handheld movement or otherwise erratic movement of the apparatus itself. In fact, it is primarily hectic movement *within* the camera's field of vision rather than the smooth tracking and panning of

these are motivated from *within* the action of the story world. Perkins' counterexample is a camera movement from *The Cardinal* (fig. 3-5) that follows the cardinal/Stephen Fermoye (Tom Tryon) and Annemarie (Romy Schneider) as they cycle down a hillside: "The camera turns to follow their descent as they glide round a bend in the road, its movement embracing a wide, sinking arc until it comes to rest on the huge open landscape spread out before them" (p. 87).



Fig. 3-5. *The Cardinal* (1963).

Perkins describes this commentative function of the movement as follows: "The movement, amplified by the composer's expansive waltz theme, conveys to us the exhilaration and release that Fermoye discovers in his relationship with the girl, his sense of new and attractive possibilities opening up for him" (ibid.). Perkins advocates the movement because the filmmaker has given *significant form* to possibilities (emotional resonances etc.) already latent in the story world. He has respected the photographic base of film by representing a world that has the likeness of reality, yet inflected the shot slightly to enhance his story: "[T]he shot exists in the context of the story as a simple and uncluttered record of the way in which the young couple spend their time together" (p. 88). It is one of the examples which Perkins advocates because it achieves a perfect synthesis of "photographic realism and dramatic illusion" (p. 61).

Perkins goes so far as to suggest that a camera movement is likely to be unsuccessful in dramatic fiction unless we are already familiar with the type of movement:

[T]he mobility of the camera seems to have been tied, initially, to the presentation of mobile settings, like cars and railway carriages, whose static frames could stabilize the shifting background. Once the audience had become accustomed to these effects, the way was prepared for an independently mobile image which would not disconcert the spectator by presenting him with a

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the camera itself which can be said to produce such an effect. Add to this the non-diegetic music.

world gone adrift. (p. 73)<sup>68</sup>

If we are familiar with the type of movement then we can understand the action of the sequence without becoming aware of the device as an exterior comment on the action.

Perkins' position which one could term 'realist expressivity' has been challenged by many other scholars and critics, for instance by Stefan Scharff:

An elegantly executed camera movement emphasizes cinema illusion by taking the viewer on a magical trip which may cover vast territory – over mountains, buildings, or fields – or offer a minuscule introspection – exploring the 'landscape' of a physiognomy by slowly circling in close-up around a human face. In either instance the 'trip' gives a view normally impossible, but accessible uniquely through cinema. (1982: 134).<sup>69</sup>

Thus Scharff heralds what one could call 'privileged viewing positions' that are uncommon in daily life, and he furthermore suggests that camera movement should not be viewed in the context of reality but "within a framework of aesthetic originality" (1982: 134). Scharff's reworking of Perkins is made most explicit by the fact that he uses the same term 'significant form' but *unhinges* it from a relationship to represented reality (p. 135). Although Scharff argues that camera movement must fit into 'structures of compatibility,' this does not lay any claim on realistic motivation: The story worlds of Scharff do not have the strong ties to reality that they have in Perkins' work.

## 1.8 Camera Movement and Semiotics

Relatively little has been written on camera movement from a semiotic vantage point in the form of systematic studies of camera movement as a feature of interpersonal communication. Christian Metz includes it as one of "the basic figures of semiotics of cinema" along with montage, shot scale, image/speech-

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<sup>68</sup> This line of reasoning is also pursued by Perkins in relation to set design. See for instance his critique of staging a scene in an underground air-raid shelter in Franklin Schaffner's *The Best Man* (1964). See Perkins (1972: 92).

<sup>69</sup> Note also that Scharff's position is different from Arnheim's. Whereas Arnheim argued that the incongruity of kinesthetic impulses and sensory data received by the eye was the cause of experiencing camera movement differently from the experience of mobility in reality, Scharff argues that the difference relates to paths of movement, i.e. the continuous series of privileged viewing positions presented to the viewer.

relationships and sequences and writes of it as one among a series of “large syntactic units” (1999 [1974]: 69). Metz claimed that because of its procedures of denotation, cinema should be considered as a specific language and that the study of cinematographic expressiveness could be studied from the vantage point of linguistics. A scholar who has pursued this line of inquiry in recent times is Brian O’Leary who has studied camera movements in the films of Howard Hawks from the vantage point of functional linguistics based not on Christian Metz but on the work of M. A. K. Halliday, Michael Colin and Theo van Leeuwen (O’Leary 2003b: 7-30).<sup>70</sup> In order to schematize the functions of camera movement in Hawks’ films O’Leary invokes a series of linguistic terms such as Halliday’s three metafunctions:

1. Ideational – functions to describe the relationship between actants (e.g., agents, objects) fulfilling roles
2. Interpersonal – expresses the attitude of the producer of the message towards the proposition
3. Textual – “concerns the surface manner in which a stretch of discourse is structured as a series of messages” (p. 11)

O’Leary limits his study to point three, the textual function, or what one could call the intrafilmic function. Thus O’Leary will not study different ways that camera movement can navigate Alexandre Astruc’s ‘gap’ between the film and the filmmaker who takes a stance in relation it. Excluded from O’Leary’s study are the ways a filmmaker can use camera movement to make evaluative statements about a specific character, for instance signaling with whom we are to sympathize. This would be interpersonal. In other words O’Leary studies camera movement from the vantage point of a ‘flat’ communication model and brackets the presence of intending authorial agents outside or behind the text. This limited focus is refreshing since O’Leary can then concentrate on the surface-components of the text instead of assuming that the images will abide by preconceived underlying organizational principles.

But the above description only tells us that ‘textual’ is a *category* of communication and not about the *manner* of interaction. Even at the surface level of cinematic discourse we need to know more about which ‘democratic’ parameters are in dynamic interaction. In other words, how does camera movement interact with other stylistic parameters (performance, music, mise-en-scene)?

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<sup>70</sup> O’Leary pursued a similar line of inquiry (2003a: 197-222).

While O'Leary will actually look at structure<sup>71</sup> of camera movement afresh, he does not try to look for new functions of camera movement but instead applies four textual concepts launched by Colin:

1. Recursivity – again not a function but a *feature* of language “which states that the same rules can apply at different levels of organization.” (p. 11)
2. Progression/Cohesion – camera movements that move the story forward and movements that remind the viewer where we have been.
3. Expansion/Concatenation – camera movements that create thematic development.
4. Branching/Embedding – camera movements that function analogous to the adding of a relative clause at the beginning/end or middle of a sentence.

O'Leary struggles to match camera movement types to linguistic function and comes up with one or two functions per type: for instance descriptive pans and pans of accompaniment. In the face of directional variety (i.e. axial, lateral, vertical etc), he abandons it as a parameter of classification and instead resorts to his predetermined linguistic functions as *a basis for differentiating directional variety*: “a movement that results in embedding will always be treated as a zoom out” (2003: 16). Furthermore, he will also treat lateral trucking shots as pans of accompaniment and p.o.v. trucking shots as either dolly-in, if there is forward motion, or dolly-out shots if the camera retreats (p. 19). I would argue that this is not a recommendable way of doing functional analysis, i.e. deciding on pre-determined functions and then letting these dictate how to statistically divide movements. One would remain more receptive to input by the actual examples if one first accumulated the different types of camera movement and then analyzed their functions.

Needless to say the decision to collapse p.o.v. trucking shots with objective push-ins is reductive. The functions of a subjective and objective dolly or trucking shot are *essentially* different due to this very fact. But O'Leary does not want to test whether these functions represent the functional scope of camera movement. Instead he uses them as a basis from which to “identify the ‘unmarked’ form of filmmaking, some set of conventions that can lay claim to being the default norm for the entire industry” (p. 12).

First, O'Leary wants to test certain predictions on camera movement within the classical paradigm and he focuses on the same Unbiased Sample that

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<sup>71</sup> Structure is here meant to refer to direction (i.e. lateral, axial, vertical) and to manner of movement (i.e. ‘swooping’ aerial, ‘edgy’ handheld, ‘floaty’ Steadicam movement).

David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson and Janet Staiger (1985) used as a basis for their study of classical cinema. In the process, he loses sight of some of his functional distinctions in favor of questions such as ‘will pans outnumber tilts?’ ‘Will there be more pans to the right than to the left?’ More than investigating a default norm of the industry it appears that O’Leary is interested in unearthing universal properties of visual communication in film. This is an interesting field of research but it is not *functional* research.

Among other things, O’Leary comes to the conclusion that right pans outnumber left pans and that this finding supports the assertion that “reading film images is influenced by the same mental processes involved in writing and reading language” (p. 22). If that were the case, O’Leary could do a comparative study of Japanese film to test whether those findings equally match the structure of written Japanese. Second, O’Leary wants to compare the statistical results of the unbiased sample to the results found in films directed by Howard Hawks. O’Leary comes to the conclusion that “Hawks used the same devices in the same ways as the others, but he used them less often” (2003: 25). If the preferred structure of movement is the key area of study it is difficult to see what O’Leary’s functional linguistics-approach adds to these findings that statistical analysis of the Barry Salt-type could not do equally well.

## **1.9 Phenomenology and The Camera Movement Effect**

The opening paragraphs of 1.5 made mention of a handful of critical texts on camera movement. These texts sought to elucidate the functions and meanings of camera movement based on specific films within film history. A few scholars have also theorized on the interfilmic phenomenon of the camera movement effect – sometimes with little reference to actual films. As discussed earlier, Rudolf Arnheim made a significant contribution in this regard. The scholarly texts discussed below challenge his views.

One of these texts is Vivian Sobchack’s “Toward Inhabited Space: The Semiotic Structure of Camera Movement” (1982). The title of Sobchack’s article is slightly misleading for one will not find a discussion entrenched in traditional semiotic concepts. Instead Sobchack discusses camera movement in the tradition of Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s existential phenomenology. Despite the

air of novelty posed in her argumentation, Sobchack actually joins a long tradition of thinking about camera movement in relation to our own movement in space, yet she does in fact do a unique spin on this relation. First, she addresses the need to describe and account for the phenomenon of camera movement on the screen as it is experienced and understood by viewers. She argues that camera movement is not understood or experienced as movement within a geometric space but always as embodied activity (Sobchack 1982: 318). Sobchack goes so far as to say that camera movement is unproblematic and taken for granted because it is as natural to us as our own physical movement in space. More precisely, it echoes the movement – or motility – of our own consciousness as it is “embodied in the world and able to accomplish and express the tasks and projects of living” (ibid.). According to Sobchack camera movement is “prereflectively understood as always meaningfully-directed, as *intentional*” (ibid.) because we understand the moving camera as a non-specified but present human subject, not ourselves, not a narrator, but an anonymous Other.

In a book-chapter on the experiential difference between zooms and dolly shots, Joseph D. Anderson also discusses the on-screen effect of camera movement versus that of our own movement in space (Anderson 2003: 11-21):

Screen size makes a substantial difference in our experience of self-motion. When actually moving through the real world the visual flow over the periphery of our vision provides us with information for our own movement. Motion pictures provide much the same information if the screen we are watching is large enough to fill a major portion of our visual field. (2003: 17-18).

Anderson draws our attention to the fact that whether we *look at* camera movement or experience it as though we are moving along with the camera, depends on viewing circumstances. He then suggests that when we view camera movement in a theater “we may at times feel that we are moving through the diegetic space of the movie” whereas when viewing camera movement on a small television screen “the motion often appears to be contained in the box” (p. 18). Significantly, he footnotes this suggestion and argues: “This and other variables that effect [sic] the perception of dollies and zooms should be studied empirically” (note 7, p. 20). Indeed, Anderson’s claim could be extended to incorporate the perception of any type of camera movement. For instance, it could be illuminating to study camera movement



and saccadic eye movement in order to demonstrate exactly how specific camera movements affect the way in which we direct our eyes in the frame. However, such studies cannot encapsulate the wealth of functions that camera movements serve within narrative cinema. How would one empirically test whether a camera movement establishes the geography of a specific scene? By focusing instead on camera movement as a compositional strategy one can only make modest claims about their functions but at least one is not limited by what is empirically testable. Asking spectators about a formal property of a film - such as camera movement - is likely to produce imprecise answers since most camera movements are designed to evade our attention. One must be a 'perverse' spectator to get to the bottom of the organizational principles and strategies of camera movement.

David Bordwell's article "Camera Movement and Cinematic Space" (1977) is in its intentions similar to Sobchack's in that Bordwell also wants to investigate the viewer's perception of camera movement on the screen. However, Bordwell posits his question within a different framework. Whereas Sobchack speaks out on behalf of the relationship of Screen versus Viewer, Bordwell more modestly asks "how camera movement 'asks' to be read perceptually" (1977: 20).

He argues that accounting for camera movement in relation to the profilmic event - i.e. how the camera was actually moved in production - does not specify to us the "camera-movement effect" (p. 21). Referring to shots captured by a moving camera that do not look like camera movements (fig. 6-8) as well as camera-movement effects that were not produced by camera movement, for instance in animated cartoons, he argues that "we need another model for describing camera movement, one that does not rely on a conception of some profilmic event through which, around which, toward which the camera is moved" (ibid.). He then seeks to identify the perceptual cues of the camera movement effect, confining himself to visual cues. In everyday life there are several other cues besides visual ones. Bordwell identifies "kinesthetic cues, bodily movement cues, tactile cues, labyrinthine cues, cues for balance and gravity" (ibid.). Specific viewing conditions can supply some of these cues (he mentions "Hale's Tours" and Disney World's "Trip to the Moon" ride) but usually cinema makes do with visual and auditory cues. This variability of cues is glossed over by Sobchack and her account cannot specify a difference

between camera movement watched on a TV set, a regular theatrical screen or in an IMAX theatre.

Passive locomotion as opposed to active locomotion is the everyday situation that offers the closest analogy to the viewing situation, Bordwell argues, and the primary cue for recognizing the camera movement effect is “monocular movement parallax.” He quotes Helmholtz’s definition of the concept:

[O]bjects that are at rest by the wayside [when walking in a countryside with our eyes fixed on the horizon, ed.] appear to glide past us in our field of view in the opposite direction to that in which we are advancing. More distant objects do the same way, only more slowly, while very remote bodies like the stars remain permanent positions in the fields of view. Evidently, under these circumstances, the apparent angular velocities of objects in the field of view will be inversely proportional to their real distances away; and consequently, safe conclusions can be drawn as to the real distance of the body. (ibid.)

Bordwell then goes on to argue as follows:

For the camera movement effect to occur, monocular movement parallax must be read from *the entire visual field*. If only a part or item in the visual field yields that differential angular velocity across time, then camera movement will not be specified – only the movement of that object will be specified.” (p. 22, my emphasis)

Sobchack might claim that Bordwell's explanation of the camera movement effect is experientially insufficient but this is as close to a definition of the *on-screen appearance* of camera movement as one can come. It also explains why certain cinematographers will try to hide the movement of the camera (the entire visual field) by following moving action (maintaining a point of relative stasis within the visual field).



Fig. 6-8. *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946). William Wyler explains the idea behind visualizing how Fred (Dana Andrews) relived a WW2-experience: “We started moving our dolly in toward the nose of the B-17, through which we could see Fred Derry seated at the bombardier’s post. This shot moves in, from a low angle, and as it moved in, it created the illusion of the plane coming toward the camera, as if for a take-off.” (Wyler in Koszarski 1977: 111)

### 1.10 Production History & Visual Style: Rhythmic and Expressive Movement

A number of researchers such as Kevin Brownlow, Lotte Eisner, Robert Carringer, Barry Salt, Kristin Thompson, David Bordwell and others have provided valuable insights into the interrelationship of production history and visual style. Nevertheless, the following section will focus on the work of Lutz Bacher because of his specific focus on camera movement aesthetics and production history and not least because he has suggested a taxonomy of camera movements which has stimulated the functional taxonomy to the nexus of the analytical model that I will propose in chapter 3.

Lutz Bacher's work on long take camera movement, *The Mobile Mise-en-scene* (1978), has already been mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Subsequent to that work, Bacher devoted himself more fully to the study of one director: Max Ophuls. In Bacher's PhD dissertation as well as in his book *Max Ophuls in the Hollywood Studios* (1996) he investigates the influence of production historical circumstances on visual style arguing that the visual style of Ophuls' American films would be more akin to his later – and more critically acclaimed – French films were it not for the fact that his later so characteristic mobile long takes were opposed or filtered out in his American films.<sup>72</sup> In order to account for the difference of camera movement style in his American and his late French films, Bacher first identifies what its characteristics are. Elaborating on the work of Noël Burch, Brian Henderson and Jean Mitry,<sup>73</sup> Bacher defines two kinds of mobile long takes: *expressive* and *rhythmic*.

Bacher borrows the term expressive from Burch and Henderson but adds nuance to the definition by drawing attention to two slightly different kinds of expressive movement: "[E]xpressive long takes are shots during which the camera moves to vary angle, height, or distance more or less immediately for emphasis, variation of character dominance, or to connect or relate characters or

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<sup>72</sup> Paradoxically, Ophuls' experience in the Hollywood studios also *helped* him arrive at his later style (Bacher 2002).

<sup>73</sup> Bacher only mentions Burch and Henderson in his PhD dissertation (1984: 3-4) but the first type of expressive movement is similar to the linkage function which Mitry mentions in *Aesthetics and Psychology* (2000 [1963]: 185) and the second type is similar to the montage within a shot that Mitry describes in *S.M. Eisenstein* (1962: 73). Furthermore, this second category of stringing together different compositional stops in one shot qua the interplay of camera and character movement is actually a variation on Eisenstein's *mise-en-shot* where the different compositional stops are brought about by character movement in relation to a stationary camera. *Mise-en-shot* is described at length in Nizny (1962: 93-139).

objects to one another" (Bacher 1996: 5).<sup>74</sup>

All expressive camera movements serve narrative functions: They add dramatic emphasis to a shot; they direct the attention of the viewer; they act as a narrative thread. In short, they contribute to the telling of the story. According to Bacher, the number of stops or points of transitional rest is in close correlation with the expressiveness of a specific movement because each can be made to correspond to "a field size and camera angle that is related to the subject matter required by the diegesis at that point" (Bacher 1982: 41-2). Consequently, the breakdown of action into shots within an expressive camera movement will be very similar to the découpage of a scene to be assembled in the editing room. Hence, one of the best examples of expressive camera movement is Hitchcock's *Rope* (1948): "[T]his film was, in a sense, pre-cut. The mobility of the camera and the movement of the players closely followed my usual cutting practice. In other words, I maintained the rule of varying the size of the image in relation to its emotional importance within a given episode" (Hitchcock in Truffaut 1985: 180).

Rhythmic camera movement, on the other hand, is an Ophülsian trademark (though not completely unique to Ophüls):

Rhythmic long takes feature lengthy camera movements, predominantly in a lateral direction, without camera stops or significant immediate changes in camera angle or distance; they contribute to the meanings and moods of scenes primarily by the rhythms they engender through movements past foreground or background elements of the setting but also by the momentary juxtaposition of the moving subject with elements of the setting. The amount of narrative content they carry varies but is often minimal. (Bacher 2002: 2)

Although there may be brief juxtapositions of the moving subject with elements of the setting or other narrative functions, the characteristic quality of rhythmic camera movement is that it elicits visual pleasure.

Bacher's expressive/rhythmic "taxonomy" is primarily a way of distinguishing between mobile long takes, not camera movement per se. However, Bacher also stresses that rhythmic movement may be replaced by expressive movement within a single shot (ibid.). Hence the expressive/rhythmic distinction becomes applicable to shorter segments of camera movement.

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<sup>74</sup> Note that Bacher does not use expressive in the sense of 'magnifying feelingful qualities' which will be launched in the subsequent section.

Bacher's distinction usefully offers a larger frame of reference for understanding the functions of camera movement, but for a functional study of camera movement *per se* the rhythmic/expressive categorization is not sufficient and needs to be qualified. First of all, distinguishing between two camera movements becomes a question of deciding when we are looking at a rhythmic movement and when we are looking at an expressive one. However, if examined closely Bacher's way of distinguishing between the two types actually rests on both structural, narrative and perceptual distinctions:

1. Structural distinctions - differences in the actual movement of the camera in relation to the elements in front of the lens (how the frame of the image moves in relation to the motive).
2. Narrative distinctions - does the camera movement serve a narrative function or not?
3. Perceptual distinctions - does the camera movement elicit visual pleasure or does it direct the attention of the viewer? (i.e. two different *intended* perceptual reactions).

The ability to term a camera movement rhythmic or narrative-expressive presupposes that the specific movement is different on all three levels. One could argue that narrative-expressive camera movement and rhythmic camera movement elicit two incompatible types of viewer engagement. However, this way of distinguishing does not stand up in the light of empirical evidence.

For instance, after inquiring about the whereabouts of her sweetheart Boris (Aleksy Batalov) in *The Cranes are Flying* (1957), a lateral camera move follows Veronika (Tatyana Samojlova) out of the phone booth and connects her to her mother-in-law (fig. 9-12). While connecting the two characters the camera movement simultaneously elicits visual pleasure by gliding past a row of diagonally shaped and neatly spaced iron caltrops in the foreground of the shot.



Fig 9-12. *The Cranes are Flying* (1957). As with Ophüls, objects are spaced in a patterned sequence between camera and subject but the glistening wet diagonal iron caltrops resemble a constructivist sculpture parked in a desolate city square and could hardly be more different from the ornamental and opulent décor that intervenes between the camera and the characters in Ophüls' late French films.

This would not fit into the expressive vs. rhythmic categories. From a narrative viewpoint, the camera movement would be described as expressive but in terms

of visual perception, it would be termed rhythmic (even though the interspersed objects produce an atmosphere that is certainly different to that invoked by Ophuls). Beyond these functions the camera move also establishes the geography of the scene, which was not apparent to us at the outset of the shot where we only saw the phone and a close-up of Veronika. In my view, this example illustrates that camera movements are essentially multifunctional. Consequently, one should propose a model that takes into consideration the multifunctional potential of each individual camera movement.

The second point is that one should elaborate on the functional potential of camera movement, particularly within the enormous category of "expressive" movement. In its umbrella-like grasp the term invites the same interpretive negligence that has befallen continuity editing. Just because one has established that there is continuity across a cut does not mean that one has exhausted the function of the cut. Likewise with narrative-expressive movement: We need to suggest more specific functional categories than 'narrative function.' In fact, there are major functional arenas that fall within the category of narrative-expressive camera movement: crane shots that establish places, pans that put a character and an object in a meaningful relationship to one another, a push-in that communicates the mental or emotional state of a character.

One should also point out that focusing on camera stops runs the risk of equating narrative-expressive camera movement with editing. Alfred Hitchcock certainly contributed to this equation in his discussion with Truffaut on camera movement in *Rope* (quoted above). It is true that if one takes a frame grab of all the camera stops in the film and puts them next to each other, the result is somewhat similar to a decoupage of a Hitchcock film that was to be assembled in the editing room (as I can think of no Hitchcock film that does not make use of camera movement, this Hitchcock film is naturally a theoretical construction). In any case, boiling down camera movement to the camera stops contained in a single shot leaves out one essential thing: movement. Even in cases where a camera move clearly directs attention and points out a detail to the viewer as when Brandon (John Dall) appears to grab hold of his gun in *Rope*, the movement toward Brandon's coat pocket builds up tension in a manner that a cut could not achieve. What you have in-between the camera stops is not simply dead footage. On the other hand, one should not neglect the significance of the anticipated stasis and resolution involved in camera mobility: where will this

movement lead us, upon which detail will the move finally come to dwell? It is the interplay of movement and stops that is significant. The camera-stops are charged with meaning by the movement that sought them out and camera movement gains tension qua the assumption that the movement will eventually rest upon a specific motive.

### 1.11 The Poetics of Cinema and the Functions of Film Style

The bounds of the research perspective known as a poetics of cinema have yet to be clearly demarcated. When David Bordwell first advanced this research perspective in an article entitled “Lowering the Stakes: Prospects for a Historical Poetics of Cinema” (1983: 5-18), he first set out to describe the recent developments in film studies that it was a reaction to:

One indication of the vigor of film study in the 1970s was the speed with which theorists moved to confront and assimilate insights from other disciplines. Every few months, it seemed, literary theory, semiology, feminism, linguistics, marxism, psychoanalysis, and anthropology furnished provocative new ideas. One result of this trend was a tendency to frame ever more totalized accounts of cinema [...] By the early 1980s, film research came to resemble a reckless poker game in which the ante was constantly rising. A decent theory of cinema, it seemed, would have to include an abstract explanation of everything that might ever have impinged upon or been presupposed by any cinematic phenomenon. (Bordwell 1983: 5)

As opposed to the classical film theories of André Bazin or Sergei Eisenstein that were intrinsically bound up with film style, the new ‘theoretical vigor’ had the unfortunate effect of neglecting the concrete sounds and images themselves. To some extent Bazin *changed* the way Jean Renoir made films and there was a varied interaction between Eisenstein’s theory and his own filmmaking. The new theoretical programs supplanted this dynamic interrelationship of theory and style and the films themselves often came to serve not as evidence but as “a source of occasional examples” (ibid.: 6). Although contemporary film studies – particularly in the realm of reception – has embraced other theoretical frameworks such as cognitivism and emotive theories these have also tended to “relegate the film itself to the same shadowy margins wherein it was abandoned under the former theoretical regime,” as Asbjørn Grønstad aptly puts it (Grønstad 2002).

A poetics of cinema as envisioned in Bordwell’s 1983-article argues that

there is value in both small-scale theorizing as well as localized lines of inquiry - later summed up in the phrase “middle-level research” (Bordwell & Carroll 1996: 26) - and that the work of the Russian Formalists offered useful suggestions for such procedures.<sup>75</sup> Bordwell summed these up in four questions:

1. “What are the properties and functions of film form, especially in its aesthetic aspects?”
2. What aspects of the spectator’s activity can be explained with reference to film form?
3. How may we analyze films in order to bring their formal operations to light?
4. How may we situate film form and spectatorial activity in historical terms?” (1983: 7)

In a more recent article entitled “Transcultural Spaces: Toward a Poetics of Chinese Film” (2001), Bordwell has modified these questions slightly, clarifying the divisions between them:

1. “By what principles are the films created as distinctive wholes – narratives, or other kinds of wholes. Call this domain the poetics of overarching form” (2001: 9).
2. “How is the medium deployed in a film or body of films? Call this stylistics” (2001: 9).
3. “How do form and style shape the uptake of spectators? Call this the theory of spectatorial activity” (2001: 9-10).
4. “How, over time, do form and style exhibit patterns of continuity and change, and how might we best explain these patterns? Call this historical poetics” (2001: 10).

Compared to the theories of language, communication or the human psyche embraced by film studies in the mid-1970s, these four questions are modest. They do not address issues of cultural or sexual identity or ideology but they are still so broad that *many* research questions would fit into one of them. Cinematic poetics is a way of asking questions and Bordwell argues that it is a research *perspective* that can accommodate many different theories of narration and style (Nielsen 2004a). Nevertheless, to readers aware of Bordwell’s own work, it is easy to see that he has developed ways of answering these questions. The most relevant questions for this dissertation are the first in the 1983-listing and second in the 2001-listing: “What are the properties and functions of film form, especially in its aesthetic aspects?” and “How is the medium deployed in a film or body of films?” The newest formulation clarifies the distinction

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<sup>75</sup> In fact, the collection of articles *Poetika Kino* (Moscow-Leningrad: Kinopechat', 1927) edited by Boris Eikhenbaum inspired the name of the perspective. The volume contains contributions by Eikhenbaum, Tynianov, Y., Shklovsky et al. It has recently appeared in German translation.



between form and stylistics. To Bordwell's way of thinking film form includes both stylistics and overarching formal systems (narrative, categorical, rhetorical, abstract, associational).<sup>76</sup> Stylistics is the study of cinematic techniques operating within the system of film form. The questions are put rather broadly here but studying Bordwell's work since 1983 gives one a clearer indication as to what strategies *he* pursues in order to answer those very questions - also with regard to camera movement.

An important presupposition also inspired by the Russian Formalists is that a film can assign "distinct (if often multiple) functions to any one component" (1983: 9). How this operates in a single film is elucidated by the account of style in *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* (1985). A chapter written by Bordwell argues that one can talk of three levels of generality (Bordwell, Staiger, Thompson 1985: 3-11). The first is the level of devices (such as camera movement) and the second is the level of systems. Bordwell claims that classical cinema operates with a system of time, a system of space and a system of narrative causality. The third level is the interrelationship of these three systems. Again borrowing from the Russian Formalists, this time Roman Jakobson's notion of the Dominant function (Jakobson 1960), Bordwell argues that there is a hierarchy of importance and that narrative causality is the most important of these (p. 6). Already in the 1983-article one sees how he conceives of the multiple functions of a camera movement: "For example, in classical Hollywood cinema, moving the camera in to a close-up of an actor not only enlarges a causally significant detail but also provides cues for temporal continuity and a three-dimensional scenographic space" (1983: 9). Although not made explicit here this brief analysis actually singles out three functions operating within each of the three systems: Enlarging the causally significant detail (narrative causality), temporal continuity (time), three-dimensional scenographic space (space). In this example there is no conflict between the functions operating within the three systems but a given example might disrupt the Classical representation of space in the name of narrative causality.<sup>77</sup>

Although *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* dedicates individual chapters to time, space and narrative causality in Classical cinema (chapters 2, 4-5) neither

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<sup>76</sup> See the model of Film Form in Bordwell & Thompson (2004): 175.

<sup>77</sup> See Vance Kepley, Jr's article on spatial articulation in the restaurant scene in *His Girl Friday* (1940) for an example of such a conflict (1983: 50-58).

of these are presented as segregated and autonomous systems.<sup>78</sup> David Bordwell invariably describes each parameter *in relation* to the others. In somewhat neglecting or passing over that second level of generality, the text suggests that the relevant context for studying stylistic parameters such as camera movement is fundamentally the *interrelationship* of these three systems.

Yet the main problem in accounting for the functions of camera movement with regards to the three-level model lies elsewhere. Narrative causality – the dominant – becomes somewhat of a straightjacket for determining the functional scope of camera movement. From the vantage point of comedy versus narrative, Dirk Eitzen (1999: 84-99) and Donald Crafton (1995: 106-19) both argue that there is much more to classical cinema than narrative. To the question “Is there anything in narrative cinema that is not narrational?”, Donald Crafton replies “Yes, the gag” (1995: 107). So what system legitimizes a camera movement that does not facilitate narrative causality but the performance of a gag? Eitzen on the other hand stresses that the chief aim of the classical Hollywood film is not to engage the viewer in solving story problems (filling plotted gaps, rearranging events into chronological order, anticipating future actions etc) but to elicit emotional responses (1999: 86-91): “What the average moviegoer wants most of all from movies is not narrative per se but strong and concentrated affective responses” (p. 91). Crafton’s account reminds us that there is more to classical cinema than narrative and Eitzen’s even challenges the dominance of narrative causality.

If a camera movement does not serve narrative causality in *His Girl Friday* (1940), is it then a non-classical stylistic element in an otherwise classical narrative construction? Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson are perfectly aware of the diversity of style in the classical film but they *do not* alter the three-level model described earlier in order to accommodate camera movements that disregard narrative causality or camera movements whose function is in excess of its contribution to the on-going narrative events.

Facing this diversity and the task of defining the bounds of difference, Bordwell<sup>79</sup> argues that a classical narrative film engages a number of *motivational categories* in order to unify itself: “Motivation is the process by

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<sup>78</sup> Elsewhere (Bordwell 1995: 60) we are told that neoclassical criteria are significant and that the system of time stresses unity (temporal continuity or consistently periodic) and that the system of space stresses unity of space (spatial continuity, consistency and clarity, i.e. clearly articulated surroundings).

<sup>79</sup> David Bordwell is credited as being responsible for this section of the book.

which a narrative justifies its story material and the plot's presentation of that story material" (Bordwell, Staiger, Thompson 1985: 19). Since Bordwell considers style to be "the tangible texture of the film, the perceptual surface we encounter as we watch and listen, and that surface is our point of departure in moving to plot, theme, feeling - everything else that matters to us" (2005: 32)<sup>80</sup> it is possible to use these motivational categories to explain how particular stylistic practices justify themselves within the classical paradigm. In sum he argues that four types of motivation apply to classical cinema: compositional, realistic, intertextual and artistic.

Deducing from the definitions laid out in *The Classical Hollywood Cinema*, a camera movement can be said to be compositionally motivated if it transmits narrative information; a camera movement can be realistically motivated if for instance it represents the way a character experiences an event (just like a flashback can be said to stem from a character's memory); it can be intertextually motivated if the viewer has been 'trained' to associate a specific genre or filmmaker with specific types of camera movement, and it can be artistically motivated if it displays an appreciation of its own artifice. These motivational categories often operate in unison. Generally, artistically motivated camera movements will also be motivated generically (intertextual) or compositionally (narrative) or else their appearance will be "isolated and intermittent" (Bordwell, Staiger, Thompson 1985: 21).

This is all well and good, but inadvertently the motivational categories reveal the three-level model itself to be wholly inadequate of accounting for the various functions of camera movements. If the systems of time, space and narrative causality cannot contain intertextually or artistically motivated camera movements, it is hardly the best foundation on which to erect a taxonomy of functions. Another reason for remaining skeptic about the three-level framework is that it is meant to elucidate the formal system of a specific group of films: classical Hollywood cinema. The framework does not necessarily apply to art cinema narration or other types of films.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> According to Bordwell his conception of style is not a new one. The bifurcation of style and other formal systems such as the narrative system (the film's syuzhet patterning & the viewer's fabula construction) found in schemas in e.g. *Narration in the Fiction Film* (1985: 50) and *Film Art: an Introduction*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (2004: 175) was never meant to downplay the significance of style to the narrative system but a way of positioning the stylistic and narrative processes in relation to one another. See Nielsen (2005).

<sup>81</sup> The Russian Formalists might even be skeptical about discussing art cinema narration by means of the same hierarchy of systems: "What is striking about Russian Formalist criticism is

Since the appearance of *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* and *Narration in the Fiction Film* in 1985 Bordwell has scaled down his contributions to “the poetics of overarching form” (maybe thinking he got it right the first time around).<sup>82</sup> Bordwell’s work has always shown an interest in style<sup>83</sup> but in recent years this endeavor has intensified, testified by various articles and books such as *On the History of Film Style* (1997), *Visual Style in Cinema* (2001), *Figures Traced in Light* (2005) and the second section of *The Way Hollywood Tells It* (2006). Perhaps this intensified interest in devices (particularly staging) and stylistic history has provoked a new way of thinking about style for in *Figures Traced in Light* Bordwell launches a set of four functions for style *per se*, i.e. four functions that cut across different narrative paradigms (i.e. art cinema narration, historical-materialist narration, classical narration, parametric narration) as well as the systems of space, time and narrative causality. Bordwell does not claim that his functional taxonomy is exhaustive but suggests that style serves four basic functions in narrative cinema. He terms these denotative, expressive, decorative and symbolic.

The denotative function of style is when style serves “to *denote* a fictional or nonfictional realm of actions, agents, and circumstances” (Bordwell 2005: 33). The denotative function includes

[...] the description of settings and characters, the account given of their motives, the presentation of dialogue and movement. In storytelling cinema, the denotative functions of style are everywhere evident. Each shot presents a slice of space and a segment of time, a set of persons and places that we are to take as part of a fictional or nonfictional world. (ibid.)

The denotative function of style serves to make the audiovisual information intelligible to the viewer though the norms and convention tied to this practice

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that it provides no set of procedures to which every film can be subjected [...] The Formalist critic approaches any task armed only with general principles, not specific procedures” (Bordwell 1983: 12-3). Since the three levels of generality are introduced as “we can analyze the classical Hollywood style at three levels” (Bordwell, Staiger & Thompson 1985: 6) it is arguably closer to being an analytical procedure than a general principle.

<sup>82</sup> Bordwell’s work on contemporary American cinema has in fact argued for the *resilience* of the *overarching* modes and norms identified in *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* (1985a) and the chapter on Classical cinema in *Narration in the Fiction Film* (1985b). He argues that change has mostly occurred within the realm of stylistics (2006: 119).

<sup>83</sup> He has contributed to the literature on camera movement at least since 1977. The section in *Film Art: An Introduction* and the short essay “Camera Movement and Cinematic Space” have already been described but he has also contributed to the critical analysis of camera movement, for instance in a book on Carl Th. Dreyer (1981). Bordwell has also written on camera movement from a production historical perspective. For instance his short article “Camera Movement and The Coming of Sound” (1984 [1977]) suggests that camera supports developed to help move the heavier sound cameras around *between* set-ups may well have provided an impetus for moving the camera around *during* shots.

may have altered significantly over time and across place. Within most traditions of filmmaking the denotative function of style serves to bring narrative information across to the viewer: "The denotative function of style conveys things to us that we need to know in order to understand the ensuing dramatic action." Similarly, one must emphasize that the denotative function is the most pervasive of the four: "[T]he denotative level is the most imported because all the other functions build upon that" (Nielsen 2004b). As it is the most pervasive of the four, Bordwell suggests that it should be one's customary point of departure when analyzing film style.

The slightly divergent descriptions that Bordwell has given of the expressive function is evidence of the tentative nature of the model.<sup>84</sup> The following is a collection of five quotes containing descriptions and examples of the expressive function.

Style need not only denote concrete objects and persons; it can display *expressive* qualities too. A great deal of musical style is devoted to representing emotional states, such as majesty, sprightliness, or menace. Abstract Expressionist paintings are often taken to represent turbulence or anxiety. In most films expressive qualities can be carried by light, color, performance, music, and certain camera movements such as the blurry swirl that can express vertigo. (Bordwell 2005: 34)

In fact, many of them [philosophers, ed.] put expression at the center of their conception of art and see expressive qualities as the main reasons why art exists. That is, to put into formal design the expressive emotional states. (Quoted in Nielsen 2004b)

[W]hat we want to do here is to understand style as being used to magnify the expressive features within the scene or to add an expressive layer to the scene. (ibid.)

We can distinguish between style *presenting* feelingful qualities ('The shot exudes sadness') and *causing* feelings in the perceiver ('The shot makes me sad'). [Bordwell will concentrate on the former.] (Bordwell 2005: 34)

There are other camera movements which are expressive such as when a character is running and we have the character's point-of-view and the bouncy camera is trying to convey something like the feeling of what it is like to run. (Quoted in Nielsen 2004b)

There are a number of problems relating to the definition of the expressive function which will be dealt with below.

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<sup>84</sup> Despite the tentative nature of the definitions, it is clear that Bordwell applies the term expressive in a different sense than did Burch, Bacher and Henderson. In central ways their use of expressive includes what Bordwell would term denotative: e.g. directing attention by means of camera moves that present a series of different shot sizes.

Film style is occasionally staged so as to engage us for its own sake by which Bordwell means “that the style develops its own patterns independent of or not necessarily arising from the dramatic action” (ibid.). This is the decorative function. This use of style ranges from the one-off flourishes of a Busby Berkeley musical number to the playful patterning found in films directed by Yasujiro Ozu. In the latter case, the decorative function of style can sometimes result in what Bordwell has elsewhere termed *parametric narration* (1985: 274-310): “I would argue that parametric narration is a highly self-conscious and organized use of the decorative or ornamental function of style” (Nielsen 2005).

The fourth and final function is the one that seems the least interesting to Bordwell and consequently his description is rather brief. By symbolic, Bordwell means that style is used to convey or call forth abstract concepts or meanings. In *Figures Traced in Light* he does not mention any concrete examples though he has on another occasion mentioned a fictive example where a character holds out his arms in a way that forms a crucifix.<sup>85</sup> One might add here that Bordwell also considers performance to be a stylistic device even though it has certain characteristics that other techniques do not.

The book in which the taxonomy of functions for film style was launched, *Figures Traced in Light* (2005), studies cinematic staging as it is crafted in the films of Louis Feuillade, Kenji Mizoguchi, Theo Angelopoulos and Hou Hsiao-Hsien. Two chapters bookend these studies and they are particularly pertinent to this project. They concern style and stylistics and here Bordwell attempts to carve out the ways in which we can account for the functions of style in narrative cinema. Even though camera movement is not the center of his study, some of the examples make it clear that camera movement is clearly one of the stylistic devices that can be understood in light of the functions proposed.

The advantages of the taxonomy is that it is relational, i.e. that it presumes that any device may serve several of the proposed functions simultaneously. By taking into consideration the multifunctional nature of film style the taxonomy counters the objections raised in the last sections regarding narrative-expressive and rhythmic movement. Bordwell’s analyses of specific staging strategies demonstrate how some or all of the four functions are at play

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<sup>85</sup> When presenting the four functions to his class *A Poetics of Cinema* on March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2004.

at one and the same time. Furthermore, Bordwell also suggests ways in which these functions can relate to camera movement:

I've separated out these various functions for analytical purposes; in actual cases any particular technique can serve several functions at once. New Hollywood's intensified continuity provides many instances. Intercutting the camera movements tracking in toward two stationary characters can be at once denotative (magnifying facial reactions), expressive (signaling a growing tension in the scene), and mildly decorative (creating a parallel repetition of the stylistic device). (2005: 35)

The disadvantage is that these functions are still relatively loosely defined. For instance with regards to the expressive function at least three questions remain unclear:

1. What *kind* of inflection are we dealing with, i.e. what is the nature of the inflection?
2. What is the '*it*' that is being inflected?
3. What is the *outcome* of the inflection of that original '*it*'?

The answer to the first question remains unclear because Bordwell uses a whole host of verbs in order to describe the nature of the inflection: 'display', 'carry', 'convey', 'present', 'represent', 'magnify', 'add'. Bordwell actually uses 'display' and 'present' in a sense that does not refer to the *function* of a stylistic device but to the *outcome* as seen in a shot wherein a stylistic device was used expressively. In other words – it does not provide an answer to the contribution of style (whether that contribution is one of transformation or transmission). In fact, were it only for 'present' and 'display,' the *character of inflection* appears to be much the same as when style functions denotatively, only here it is another class of pre-existing qualities that are being denoted, not realm of actions, agents or dialogue but so-called feelingful qualities.

'Carry', 'represent' and 'convey' are used in ways that *do* describe the character of inflection but they imply that style simply *transmits* pre-existing qualities of the dramatic action. 'Magnify' implies that there are *already* expressive features in the scene. For instance one can take as an example the crane up-movement from *Shawshank Redemption* (Frank Darabont, 1994) of Tim Robbins' character shouting at the heavens where the movement could be said to function expressively by magnifying his actions. 'Add' is the verb which allots the most *constitutive* role to style for it assumes that the *specific character of expressive inflection* can contribute something to the shot that does not convey or represent but *exceed* denotated action: "the camera work may be denoting it a

certain way but the music is bringing out expressive values that are not present in the dramatic action as such" (Nielsen 2004b).

What is the 'it' that is being inflected expressively? The logical answer would be "whatever has been denoted beforehand" but by using the phrases such as 'represent' and 'carry' Bordwell actually downplays the constitutive role of style and instead implies that expressive style is a vessel of states or qualities that are somehow already present in the dramatic action. After all you cannot *carry* something across that is not already there. The thing being represented, carried across – or displayed or presented – are 'emotional states', 'expressive qualities' or 'feelingful qualities.' Yet if style only transmits these states and qualities, how did they enter the dramatic action in the first place?

Bordwell's reverse-engineering approach (discussed below) would imply that the quality is a pre-stylistic entity that is part of the profilmic event, i.e. a quality which the filmmaker is turning in his mind, trying to think of ways in which he or she can bring it across to the viewer by cinematic means. Yet at other times style seems to have already shaped – either denotatively or expressively – the quality about to be inflected *a second time*. For instance as a shot develops, an ominous style of music is introduced which is in turn expressive of the menace already lent to the shot by creeping Steadicam-movements.

A possible explication of the problem is provided by the following comment:

[T]he denotative and the expressive, are often closely welded together. So for instance *performance* is a borderline case. If we count the actor's performance as part of the style of the film – and it seems to me that we should – there are expressive values there from the very beginning because acting or performance is letting us know what feelingful qualities are at stake in the scene. (Nielsen 2004b)

If emotional states, expressive and feelingful qualities are introduced by performance, then it would make sense to investigate how the more mechanical of stylistic devices such as cinematography and lighting can be expressive of the actor's performance. If that is the case it should have been made more explicit because the expressive function of style could in fact inflect both denoted action and denoted action *already* inflected expressively.



Although a term such as decorative may be said to suggest graphic structure rather than function, the terms themselves are not the central issue here, definitions are. Bordwell's own comments reveal that decorative staging strategies can have completely different functions:

Even the abstract pattern-making of decorative processes can build up frustration ("why is this technique repeated when it doesn't seem to have a representational purpose?") and satisfaction ("now I discern the overarching design"). (Bordwell 2005: 35)

It's aesthetically pleasing and decoration is. If you think of decoration in all cultures, it takes a functional object that is used for other purposes and embroiders it. So you have a jug. The jug's purpose is to carry water but why would anyone then paint a zig-zag pattern on the jug? Well, it's aesthetically pleasing! It doesn't have anything to do with the water; it doesn't represent the water or the ritual functions of the jug in society. Well, it might have but it wouldn't have to. (Nielsen 2005)

While the term *decorative* may adequately describe a compositional strategy (or, if you like, a function of style in relation to the film), it seems to harbor inherently contradictory functions in relation to the viewer: Building up frustration and being aesthetically pleasurable.

Bordwell's four functions represent a taxonomy that was not present in the literature at the on-set of this project. As illustrated by the discussion above certain factors prevent me from accepting it whole-heartedly as a framework for camera movement but it offers many fruitful suggestions as to how one could formulate a taxonomy of functions for camera movement. Some of these reservations stem from the fact that the focus of this dissertation is a single stylistic device as opposed to all of film style. Others are of a more general nature.

### 1.12 The Issue of Style: Poetics versus Interpretive Criticism

If cinematic poetics is a call for a lowering of the stakes and a return to the style of the medium itself, then how is it different from the stylistically sensitive practical and interpretive criticism that is generally and broadly described as British mise-en-scene criticism?<sup>86</sup> It should be stated that most interpretive criticism shows no or only perfunctory commitment to the stylistic parameters at play. British mise-en-scene criticism, on the other hand, has always staked a claim for the production of knowledge on style. This tradition took its formative steps in the journals *Sequence* (1946-51/2) and *Oxford Opinion* (no. 38-45: 1960-1) but found its most influential outlet in the journal *Movie* (1962 -).<sup>87</sup> Some of the contributors have already been mentioned: V.F. Perkins and Robin Wood. Others include Ian Cameron, Mark Shivas, Charles Barr, Michael Walker, Douglas Pye, Laura Mulvey and Paul Mayersberg. *Movie* continues to appear though irregularly and infrequently. The journal *CineAction!* is now the primary outlet for mise-en-scene criticism.

Both programs have claimed to be a minority strand within contemporary film studies today. The skepticism towards stylistic analysis as such is summed up in the following quote from Gibbs and Pye who reference opinions voiced at the *Style and Meaning Conference* at the University of Reading in 2000:

One feeling voiced was that to renew a focus on interpretation and style was to turn the clock back to the bad old days, before film studies was placed on a sounder, more rigorous, even a more *scientific* footing. Returning to these

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<sup>86</sup> The very definition of mise-en-scene itself is part of the dispute. In *Film Art*, Bordwell and Thompson give a precise definition of mise-en-scene: the orchestration of the elements within the camera's optic pyramid. This 'theatrical' use of the word enables them to clearly distinguish - from a filmmaking perspective - mise-en-scene from cinematography: Everything having to do with the manipulation of the camera, including camera movement. John Gibbs criticizes their use of the term (2002: 54) for being too narrow. It is correct that these divisions appear slightly artificial from an analytical perspective, for instance with regard to color and lighting which by their definition belongs more to the art of mise-en-scene than to cinematography, but knowing the sum of the parts that make up visual expression does not preclude the student from simply studying 'the meaning of color' in a given film.

<sup>87</sup> For an introduction to the school of British mise-en-scene criticism see John Gibbs (2002). Gibbs has also written an un-published PhD thesis on British mise-en-scene criticism: *'It Was Never All in the Script...': Mise-en-scène and the Interpretation of Visual Style in British Film Journals, 1946-78*. University of Reading, 1999. See also Gibbs (2001) and Bordwell (1989: 48-53) and (2005: 12-3). It is also important to mention that far from all contributions in *Movie* are detailed analyses of film style.

questions appeared to disregard more recent emphases in the field, and was to be in some way reactionary. (Gibbs & Pye 2005: 2)

Bordwell also laments the disrepute of stylistic analysis in the field in *On The History of Film Style*:

Since the rise of the new trends in film theory during the 1960s, exploring the history of style has been routinely condemned as “empiricist” and “formalist.” The student of technique has been accused of naively trusting in data rather than in concepts and of locking film away from what really matters – society, ideology, culture. (Bordwell 1997: 5)

On the face of it both programs appear to endorse the significance of style as here voiced by Bordwell: “Style is not simply window-dressing draped over a script; it is the very flesh of the work” (1997: 8). However, I wish to single out important differences regarding analytical procedures, the role of interpretation and the contribution of style.

This is made somewhat more difficult by the fact that proponents of each perspective have set out to differentiate the two and in doing so either misconstrued the difference or banalized the contribution of the other program.<sup>88</sup> As I will show later, Gibbs and Pye (2005: 1-15) are guilty of the first misnomer whereas Bordwell is guilty of the second (1989: 263-4).

Ultimately, both perspectives have something to offer and it is one of the tasks of this dissertation to prove that the differences can be bridged. British *mise-en-scene* criticism is not a completely uniform school of criticism so in order to exemplify the approaches to stylistic analysis and interpretation one must rely on texts by different authors to develop a fuller picture of their approach to style: combined, John Gibbs’ and Douglas Pye’s article on Otto Preminger’s *Bonjour Tristesse* (1958) and Robin Wood’s chapter on *Letter From an Unknown Woman*,<sup>89</sup> already described at length, exemplify the most important strategies of stylistic analysis within the tradition.

The first difference I will highlight is one of objectives and analytical procedure. Interestingly, Bordwell has excellently formulated a defense of the kind of stylistically informed analyses and interpretations of themes, character development and character relations that have such an important place within

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<sup>88</sup> In putting down the contribution of V.F. Perkins’ analysis of *Psycho* to his being a more “skillful writer” than others, underestimates the savvy of his interpretive strategies.

<sup>89</sup> John Gibbs & Douglas Pye. “Revisiting Preminger: *Bonjour Tristesse* (1958) and Close Reading,” in *Style and Meaning* (2005): 108-26. Robin Wood (1976: 114-32).

the tradition of mise-en-scene criticism: "Style is the tangible texture of the film, the perceptual surface we encounter as we watch and listen, and that surface is our point of departure in moving to plot, theme, feeling--everything else that matters to us" (Bordwell 2005: 32). One of the points of Gibbs and Pye's article on *Bonjour Tristesse* is exactly to study how stylistic choices guide the spectator's "epistemic access to motive and feeling" (Gibbs & Pye 2005: 120). Although this apparently is why style is significant, Bordwell's *own* commitment to hooking style up with theme and feeling is often half-hearted. Take for instance this analysis of camera movement in the films of Yasujiro Ozu:

Ozu did not eliminate camera movements from his style. He narrowed their range by absolutely refusing certain sorts, such as the pans that were fundamental to the 'calligraphic' style. Such movements would make the compositions too unstable. Ozu subordinated camera movements to visual design by favoring tracking shots that kept the composition constant – such as travelling back to follow walking or bicycling characters, or tracking forward down a corridor, or gliding laterally left or right to create an orderly procession of planes. (Bordwell 1988: 80)

Bordwell takes a keener interest in how a specific camera movement relates to other formal properties of the film itself (formal patterns and the interrelationship with *other* properties of style such as visual design) and of group styles or paradigms in circulation (the calligraphic style). As his precise description of analytical and interpretive practices in *Making Meaning* reveals, he is perfectly aware of the *option* of interpreting relations of camera movement and characterization (psychological and emotional states, interrelationship etc.), yet he usually restrains from making that move.

The mise-en-scene critic will typically be more eager to 'place the reader in the scene' in terms of introducing the emotional tensions or laying out the nuances of psychological and emotional states harbored by the characters. Only in that context will they interpret the significance of a camera movement. Preceding Gibbs' and Pye's comments about the mobile (and static) long takes in *Bonjour Tristesse* is a piling up of contextual information: the scene in question is placed in the overall structure of the narrative, there is a summary of the interrelationship of the characters in the film, a description of the concrete actions and dialogue in the scene, a suggestion of the thoughts and feelings that the two characters are *likely* to have and an extended analysis of gesture and vocal delivery in the scene (pp. 108-10, 111-8).

Granted, the issue of performance is the central topic for Gibbs and Pye

but the analytical strategy is symptomatic of the way in which mise-en-scene criticism is at pains to contextualize a given choice of camera technique. By the time Gibbs and Pye will have something to say about camera movement the reader is thoroughly 'placed in the scene.' What they ultimately have to say about camera movement is rather modest and very much on par with Robin Wood's description of camera movement in Otto Preminger's films (see 1.5). Wood claimed that Preminger follows the action with the camera at a distance and in extended takes in order to be unobtrusive and to "*watch* the character rather than to implicate us in his movements" (1976: 126). As to the three small agaves, described by Gibbs and Pye, that intervene between the camera and the characters, Wood might say that they have no decorative function as in Ophuls but "keep us at our distance" (ibid.). Gibbs and Pye make a similar point by arguing that the viewer's access to the characters is restricted (2005: 118). They do not quite make the interpretive leap that Wood did from the analysis of a camera movement in Ophuls' films to statements about them signifying both Time and Destiny (Wood 1976: 131). However, they will suggest that Preminger's shooting style signifies that he does not claim to *know* his characters (2005: 118).

The poetics proposed by Bordwell will generally avoid making interpretive leaps from analyses of select camera movement. Bordwell has something else to offer. For one he has contributed immensely to the study of style within the perspective of historical poetics.<sup>90</sup> Instead of extended interpretations on the use of a long take camera movement in a given scene, he has dedicated his work to describing the stylistic norms - often transcultural norms - of a large group of films: Japanese cinema, Chinese cinema, Hong Kong cinema, an international tradition of depth staging from 1908-20, contemporary Hollywood and classical Hollywood cinema for instance. Even in articles and books on individual films and filmmakers the awareness and knowledge of those norms is a constant comparative framework for the analysis of concrete examples.<sup>91</sup> Often the knowledge of the norms and traditions appears to precede the analyses made of a specific stylistic choice such as when in *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema* he can compare Ozu's camera movement strategies to a

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<sup>90</sup> Other scholars such as Charlie Keil, Charles Musser, Tom Gunning, Barry Salt and Colin Crisp have taken on the task of surveying group styles in a historical perspective.

<sup>91</sup> See for instance David Bordwell: "Up Close and Impersonal: Hal Hartley and the Persistence of Tradition," 16:9 no. 12 (2005): [www.16-9.dk/2005-06/side11\\_inenglish.htm](http://www.16-9.dk/2005-06/side11_inenglish.htm)

‘calligraphic’ style identified earlier in the book.

In the British tradition of interpretation of visual style there is at best a tacit sense of the stylistic norms and traditions within which a specific device is mounted. If a specific device, say a camera movement, is discussed within a contextual framework, it is usually an auteurist framework and not an interpersonal group style (such as the calligraphic style identified in Japanese cinema by Bordwell). The reluctance on the part of Gibbs and Pye for instance to adopt Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson’s definition of the classical paradigm (1985) as a comparative framework for the analysis of *Bonjour Tristesse* comes from not finding enough room for resistance within the conceptual frameworks suggested in the book. But given their focus on Preminger’s long take staging, Gibbs and Pye could equally well draw on the statistical results provided by Barry Salt’s work (1992) or Lutz Bacher’s historical account if they wanted to clarify Preminger’s place within a stylistic tradition of long take filmmaking.

What Gibbs and Pye actually do in the article is to adopt the notion of “modes of nonomniscience” from George O. Wilson’s *Narration in Light* (1986: 82) – a book which comes to represent “contemporary film theory” (Pye & Gibbs 2005: 121). The notion that Hollywood cinema is overly communicative and explicable is challenged, so they argue, by the nonomniscience of Preminger’s style, i.e. the way it restricts the spectator’s access to information. However, Gibbs and Pye first have to face the fact that there are *also* camera movements in Preminger’s films that challenge their claims. Not every camera move is an unobtrusive follow shot, not every camera move is restrictive and detached. In a mobile long take that occurs approximately eleven minutes into *Fallen Angel* (1945) a combined dolly and pan move brings us from a profile two shot to a medium close-up of June Mills (Alice Faye). The camera movement does not restrict the spectator’s access to information. On the contrary, it accentuates a facial expression that *communicates* to the viewer that her sister Clara (Anne Revere) will oblige her wish and go with her to Professor Madley’s calling-of-the-spirits show (fig.13-5). Five minutes later the camera pushes in to a close-up of Stella (Linda Darnell) *suggesting* thought processes that her facial expression conceals from us (fig. 16-8).



Fig. 13-5. *Fallen Angel* (1945). Instead of restricting the viewer's access to June's facial expression, the camera moves in to accentuate it.



Fig. 16-8. *Fallen Angel* (1945). The camera pushes in to a close-up of Stella (Linda Darnell) suggesting thought processes that her facial expression conceals from us after this conversation. Stella: "What was it, four beers?" Eric: "Three beers and a cup of coffee." Eric insists on change, wraps up the notes, tosses the coins on the counter and leaves. The encounter is rich in subtext and insinuation allowing spectators to ascribe a number of thoughts and emotions to Stella's reaction.

There are many other examples in this film alone where the camera moves independently of moving action, even a crane shot that invokes the presence of spirits at Madley's show. In a passage by Bordwell on Otto Preminger in *The Classical Hollywood Cinema*, he largely subscribes to the reading suggested by Gibbs and Pye but argues that Preminger remains within classical bounds showing how his "almost inexpressive" style is not completely representative of his overall output: "Preminger will often claim his *droit du seigneur* at the end of a film by an overt camera movement" (Bordwell, Staiger & Thompson 1985: 79, 80).

It is not significant here whether Preminger remains within classical bounds or not. In fact, one could claim that fluctuating between the extreme poles of non-interventionist style and overt style is highly idiosyncratic. As the two more moderate examples of commentative camera movements suggest, Preminger occasionally treads a middle-ground. The fault is not so much Bordwell's in this case for the *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* offers a conceptual framework for assessing these fluctuations.<sup>92</sup> Perhaps in focusing closely on the significance of stylistic choices in individual scenes Gibbs and Pye lose

<sup>92</sup> See in particular chapter 2, 3 and 7 (Bordwell, Staiger & Thompson 1985).

overview of the functional scope of camera movement in the films as a whole.

Another likely source of such imprecision is that the primary interest of mise-en-scene criticism is not stylistic norms. Instead mise-en-scene critics will focus closely on the significance of a few examples attempting to forge links between stylistic devices and characterization.<sup>93</sup>

When the women enter the villa Preminger begins by maintaining the use of long takes, with two extended, mobile shots, lasting sixty-five seconds, in which Anne begins to explore the room, the maid brings in the luggage and Cecile opens the dress box containing the present Anne has brought her. Even here, though, the cut between these two shots is used to underline an early stage of the tension between Cecile and Anne that will be central to the rest of the scene. (Gibbs & Pye 2005: 118-9)

Gibbs and Pye assign significant form to particular devices such as mobile long takes and shot/reverse shot editing. Although they rely on the well-known interpretive strategy referred to as “same-frame heuristics” (Bordwell 1989: 178) one should acknowledge that this heuristics is not as mechanistic and uniform as suggested by the critics quoted by Bordwell (pp. 178-9), i.e. long take equals ‘unity’ and shot/reverse shot equals ‘conflict’ or ‘tension’. True, Gibbs and Pye offer a standard reading of shot/reverse shot-editing without even considering the exact timing of the cuts<sup>94</sup> but the meaning assigned to the long takes is not easily subsumed under the cliché ‘to reunite characters’ (Elsaesser & Buckland 2002: 89-90). As Robin Wood pointed out, same frame-heuristics is an important strategy for mise-en-scene criticism but always needs to be qualified and modified according to the relevant context: “Camera movement connects, editing separates: the apparent truism, like most textbook rules, has some foundation in elementary practice but needs drastic qualification when confronted with the work of a major artist” (1976: 143).

What is admirable about the stylistically informed interpretations of subject matter performed by Gibbs, Pye, Perkins and others is the depth and nuance but also its way of enriching the experience of watching movies.

A difference between the poetics perspective and mise-en-scene criticism that has been exaggerated is the issue of interpretation. Gibbs and Pye lament that Bordwell seeks to produce knowledge on style without resorting to

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<sup>93</sup> For a critique of same-frame heuristics see Bordwell (1989): 251-2.

<sup>94</sup> For an analysis of the expressive function (in Bordwell’s as well as Gibbs and Pye’s definition (p. 118) of the term) that *does* take into consideration the exact timing of the cuts as well as the significance of a character’s changing presence in the frame, see the discussion of a scene in *Day of Wrath* (Carl Th. Dreyer, 1943) in Nielsen (2004b): [www.16-9.dk/2004-09/side11\\_inenglish.htm](http://www.16-9.dk/2004-09/side11_inenglish.htm)



interpretation thereby severing style from “the impurities of meaning” (2005: 10). However, this rests on a misunderstanding or lack of knowledge concerning Bordwell’s use of the terms ‘interpretation,’ ‘function’ and ‘meaning.’

Bordwell does not disconnect style and meaning but in fact relates different functions of style to different types of meaning. Bordwell’s functional taxonomy has already been described and as opposed to Gibbs and Pye, Bordwell actually has a well-defined working definition of meaning, and of interpretation as well. One may object to it but it is quite clear. Furthermore, they can quite easily be hooked up to the four functions of style discussed previously.<sup>95</sup>

In brief Bordwell suggests that critics and spectators can construct four types of meaning (referential, explicit, implicit and symptomatic) and he furthermore suggests that comprehension guides the construction of the first two (literal meanings) and interpretation guides the construction of the last two (abstract meanings). In brief a spectator makes referential meanings when he or she constructs knowledge about the fictional story world presented on the screen. In narrative cinema this activity primarily amounts to making sense of the on-going story. Explicit meaning is the conceptual ‘point’ of an image, scene or story which the film can be said to be communicating intentionally: i.e. “There is no place like home,” would be the ‘point’ of *The Wizard of Oz* (Victor Fleming, 1939). When spectators or critics make implicit meanings, they ascribe meanings to a film, which it communicates indirectly. A popular way of assigning implicit meanings to films is to map thematic clusters onto it that the film only implicitly communicates. That sanity and madness cannot easily be distinguished is an implicit meaning that the critic can make of *Psycho*. With regards to referential, explicit and to some extent also implicit meanings, one can still argue that the film more or less ‘knows’ what it is communicating. Meanings that a film can be said to divulge involuntarily are referred to as symptomatic (or repressed) meanings. Arguing that *The Lady and the Tramp* (1955) is about racial relations in mid-1950s America would be to assign a symptomatic or repressed meaning to the film.<sup>96</sup>

In terms of critical activity one could make a distinction between *analysis*

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<sup>95</sup> For examples of these connections between stylistic functions and meaning see Nielsen (2005).

<sup>96</sup> Bordwell’s definitions can be found in *Making Meaning* (1989: 8-13), see also Branigan (1993: 10-2).

and *interpretation*. Unearthing how a film invites the reader to construct referential and explicit meanings could be referred to as an *analytic* activity whereas the construction of implicit and symptomatic meanings is fundamentally an interpretive activity. That such a seemingly basic component as comprehension guides the viewer's construction of referential and explicit meanings does not mean that it is uninteresting to study the way compositional strategies invite the viewer to construct those meanings from films. And if one wants – as does Bordwell – to investigate this realm one would first look at the denotative functions of style, secondarily at the expressive and decorative functions of style. The denotative function of style is the workhorse of a film's comprehensibility and hence the basis on which spectators locate a film's referential and explicit meanings: for instance how do stylistic choices render a character as unsympathetic? The style of a film also conveys seemingly obvious facets in ways that spectators and scholars alike rarely notice. Cinematic poetics as Bordwell envisions the perspective is no easy task. One must possess knowledge of the craft of filmmaking, a sensitivity to stylistic traditions and analytical rigor.

In Bordwell's view interpretive criticism of style is largely about locating symbolic functions of style and hooking these up to implicit and symptomatic meanings (Nielsen 2004c). But by suggesting that the interpretive critic – presumably including the mise-en-scene critic – takes the view that a film's "implicit and/or systematic meanings [...] determine the films' use of subject matter, ideas, structure, and style," (pp. 263-4) Bordwell takes a too reductive view of the way in which mise-en-scene criticism interprets style. As will be argued below, Gibbs and Pye point out they think of style as performing a constitutive function rather than serving as a vehicle or transmitter of meaning. Bordwell also neglects a role of style that is central to British mise-en-scene criticism, here defined by Robin Wood: "The function of style in a work of art is not simply that of embodying the artist's vision; an important aspect of style is the defining of a relationship between the work and its audience: in the cinema, between the spectator and the characters and action on the screen" (Wood 1976: 125). Although Gibbs and Pye's analysis of *Bonjour Tristesse* does suggest shot/reverse shot-editing can convey tension, their analysis also has a further objective of showing stylistic parameters (mobile and static long take filming, distance to figures) define a relationship between spectator and the viewer, in

the case of Preminger a restricted access to the characters.

A final but significant difference between Bordwell's position on style and that of mise-en-scene criticism relates to the contribution of style. In the introduction to *Style and Meaning*, Gibbs and Pye claim that "to pursue his vision of the study of stylistic history, Bordwell erects another version of the age old style/content dichotomy, where style can be studied free of the impurities of meaning" (2005: 10). They elaborate their critique and claim to set their own perspective on style aside from Bordwell's arguing that for them "style is constitutive" (p. 11). 'Constitutive' is a very important phrase in their argument but also for the approach to camera movement adopted in the subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

Gibbs and Pye are seemingly oblivious to the fact that in building up to their endorsement of the constitutive role<sup>97</sup> of style they almost copy Bordwell's defense of style quoted above: "Interpretation has to be rooted in the concrete details of the text (its style) because it is only through these that we gain access to the film's subjects" (p. 10).

One of the important distinctions relating to style is that of expressivist versus commentative heuristics.<sup>98</sup> According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary,<sup>99</sup> heuristics is "a method of solving problems by learning from past experience and investigating practical ways of finding a solution." David Bordwell made this distinction to account for ways in which film critics engage with, analyze and interpret films and the split can also usefully be invoked in those instances where filmmakers discuss and explain their choice of aesthetic strategy. Most importantly the distinction also represents different views on the contribution of style in cinema. From the point of view of expressivist heuristics style will be said to have the function of *reflecting* something, for instance a pull-back represents a character's state of mind, a smooth tracking shot reflects the romantic mood of a scene. In this case other aspects of the work are said to be reflected in the stylistic treatment. This is a bulls' eye-explanation where a device such as camera movement is placed in the outer rings of a concentric

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<sup>97</sup> The term function could equally well be used here but since the following chapter will use the term at a lower level of generality I use role here for the sake of clarity.

<sup>98</sup> This distinction itself arrives from Bordwell's analysis of interpretive criticism in *Making Meaning* (1989: 181-6). It is also described in Elsaesser & Buckland (1992: 87-8).

<sup>99</sup> Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, 5<sup>th</sup> edition (Oxford: Oxford UP 1995).

circle. What style reflects varies but can mainly be put down to subject matter or a verbal synopsis of what the scene 'is about.' One of the reasons why the *Movie* critics focused on mise-en-scene was that they - through analyzing and interpreting the device over which the director exercised most control - could show how a given auteur exceeded the words in the script.<sup>100</sup>

Commentative heuristics on the other hand assumes that a camera movement can actively assign meaning to a shot. Bordwell quotes the following passage on the beach scene in *Magnificent Obsession* (1954) from Michael Stern's book on Douglas Sirk (1979) to illustrate this:

It is a relatively stationary tableau and yet Sirk's camera consistently asserts its presence by readjusting to – or sometimes leading – every small movement the relatively active Judy makes. She turns over, she sits up, she leans forward – and each time the camera moves with her. The effect of these movements is to deprive the character of any sense of force or will. (Stern quoted in Bordwell 1989: 183)

In this case camera movement is not merely said to reflect the actions and attributes of a character but to actively shape the viewer's understanding of them. As to Bordwell's position in this regard he does not, as suggested by Gibbs and Pye, submit to either one or the other account but wants to retain the distinction as an historical and paradigmatic variable. In other words, it is a question of *which* film we are looking at: "I would say that there *are* traditions in which the texture of the work plays a constitutive role in the work to a greater degree and other traditions where it really is secondary" (Bordwell in Nielsen 2005). I agree with Bordwell that the intensity of contribution varies from film to film but I share Gibbs and Pye's assumption that style is constitutive *regardless* of what paradigm of filmmaking we are dealing with.

Nevertheless, we are still left with a number of unresolved questions. Gibbs and Pye suggest that Bordwell erects a version of the age old style/content dichotomy. Must we tackle that discussion yet again, one may ask? We may never arrive at a satisfactory consensus on this issue but rather than letting implicit differences remain unearthed, one can try to account for the *different ways* of defining, resolving or diversifying that dichotomy. This is important

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<sup>100</sup> The title of John Gibbs' PhD thesis on mise-en-scene criticism is particularly telling in this regard: *'It Was Never All in the Script...': Mise-en-scène and the Interpretation of Visual Style in British Film Journals, 1946-78.*

because assessing the contribution of camera movement to cinema *depends* on such decisions, whether they are explicit or implicit.

As already stated, Bordwell argues that there are two levels of organization, or two operations, within the system of film form, formal systems (narrative etc) and stylistic systems.

So one way to look at it is to say: "okay, there are two levels of organization of a film." One level is action-based with agents and situations and the activities they pursue and so forth. This is an overarching formal system, and narrative is one of these formal systems. Another level is the audio-visual patterning of the film itself. And the two mesh. There is a coincidence between them. That is, the way you organize the texture of the film medium is connected to the organization of this large-scale formal entity you have, be it narrative or non-narrative. (Bordwell in Nielsen 2005)

This is fairly clear but how does Gibbs and Pye's "content" come into the picture? First of all, Bordwell does not endorse the notion of "content" in the first place but takes the stance suggested by the Russian Formalists in distinguishing instead between *form* and *material* (Bordwell 1983: 8-9). The artwork consists of "shaped substances," writes Bordwell, and concludes:

All formalists insisted on the determining role of formal construction, the relations among parts. Any element, no matter how arresting, could not be studied outside of its relations with the other components in the work. This led to the radical insight that what has traditionally been conceived as content was no more or no less than those materials necessary to achieve an overall formal purpose. (p. 9)

When Bordwell writes of stylistic devices such as camera movement they are discussed *within the context* of the overall system of film form as laid out schematically in Bordwell and Thompson (2004: 175). Invariably narrative form becomes the context for discussing camera movement whether camera movement substantiates causal relationships, runs parallel to the overall narrative progression or retards it:

By placing emphasis and making comparisons, the mobile frame in *Grand Illusion* becomes as important as the mise-en-scene. The camera carves into space to create connections that enrich the film's narrative form. Renoir has found imaginative ways to make the mobile frame sustain and elaborate a system of narrative relationships. (Bordwell and Thompson 2004: 280)<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Granted, Bordwell co-authored *Film Art* with Kristin Thompson but the essential strategy is very much the same as in articles and books written by Bordwell, and – despite some differences regarding their view of cinematic excess – Thompson is very much in line with Bordwell.

In *Walk Cheerfully*, *Early Summer*, and *Flavor of Green Tea over Rice*, Ozu 'geometrizes' camera movements, making them create distinct semi-autonomous patterns laid over the syuzhet. (Bordwell 1988: 80)

Together, mise-en-scène, camera movement, and the long take [in *Ordet*] create retarding, narratively empty passages which stress sheer duration, consecutiveness rather than causality. (Bordwell 1981: 152)

But where is the concept of *material* in all of this? One way of explaining it is that both style and narrative form give shape to *material* so that the form/content dichotomy is actually replaced by two dichotomies: narrative form/material and style/material. In terms of style, Bordwell places himself in the situation of a filmmaker: how would I handle this problem were I a filmmaker? In that case material would be *intentions to be realized* by style whether these are narrative intentions or intentions of parametric design. In a strange way, however, Bordwells analytical procedures suggest that in some traditions narrative form is the material of style (commentative heuristics) and in others style is the material of narrative form (expressivist heuristics).

Perhaps in arguing that Bordwell wants to study style "free of the impurities of meaning," Gibbs and Pye (2005: 10) suggest that stylistic parameters such as camera movement are not fully accounted for because their contributions to film are felt to be trapped within the context of film form. Judging from the three quotes above it certainly appears as though style, camera movement included, must be discussed with regards to its various ways of interacting with the orchestration of narrative information (syuzhet-construction) or as an independent force free of meaning but not necessarily of function (e.g., decorative functions).

However, Bordwell has not exhausted the notion of a material against which the contribution of style is measured. Because one does not get a sense of the full width and breadth of the realms (the material) over which style exudes a shaping power one feels deprived of a full understanding of what a stylistic device produces meaning in relation to. In Gibbs and Pye's article this was less of a problem because they were at pains to lay out the full context against which the contribution of a stylistic choice could be assessed. Borrowing a heading for one of the chapters in V.F. Perkins' *Film as Film* (1972), Gibbs and Pye claim that interpreting style is looking at the "how" rather than the "what" (2005: 10). Ironically, their strongest asset compared to the poetics perspective is their careful rendition of the "what" that the "how" of style is related to. The context

against which Bordwell assesses the contribution of a stylistic device is somewhat meager when compared to Gibbs and Pye. He is more interested in exploring how filmmakers by means of for instance arcing shots can resolve the dinner table conundrum rather than what significance this specific camera movement has in *this specific* dinner table scene (2006: 135).

Although Bordwell has on several occasions pressed for middle-level-research or ‘a lowering of the stakes’, he never writes that one should dispense with interpretive strategies, yet studying the work on style that he actually practices it is evident that he endorses another avenue of research that does not focus on assigning implicit or symbolic meanings to cinematic texts. An example of the type of interpretative strategy he sets poetics apart from would be Robin Wood’s reading of camera movement in the films of Max Ophuls as signifying Time and Destiny. Even more alien to the perspective would be the type of implicit and symptomatic meanings that Jean-Pierre Geuens assigns to Steadicam movements: “As a made-to-order companion, the floating, impersonal, inhuman presence penetrates space, appropriating it for the decentered, transnational, postindustrial corporate state of the late twentieth century” (Geuens 1993: 16). Bordwell proposes an approach that puts less emphasis on interpretation and more emphasis on exceptionally close viewings *and* a more rigorous interrogation of the full scope of the stylistic palette being studied (Bordwell 1997).<sup>102</sup>

There is something to be said for both historical poetics, stylistics and for the detailed analysis and interpretation of visual style pursued by the mise-en-scene critics. Publications from both perspectives have strived to distinguish their approaches from one another. Too little has been done to mesh the advantages offered by the two perspectives. The advantage of cinematic poetics is that it yields more fine-grained answers in relation to norms and functions of style, i.e. Geuens’ symptomatic reading turns a blind eye to the fact that

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<sup>102</sup> Focusing on the elaboration of norms invariably means soliciting trade journals, how-to craft books and interviews with filmmakers. Although Gibbs and Pye - representing mise-en-scene criticism – claim to find common ground with Bordwell’s approach to style in the “attempt to understand style in terms of specific problems encountered by filmmakers and the solutions they find” (2005: 10), I have never seen one of the *Movie* critics listed above quote a trade journal and in those cases where a filmmaker’s comments are enlisted (such as Robin Wood quoting Hitchcock on *Psycho* (1989 [1965]: 142), the critic will typically demonstrate how a filmmaker’s comments belittle the artfulness and complexity of the film rather than fully committing themselves to understanding filmmaking on the filmmakers’ own terms.

Steadicam movements can serve many different functions: accompaniment, optical p.o.v. and situational inflection for example (for definitions see chapter 3). Mise-en-scene criticism on the other hand has something to offer in giving more depth and width to the concrete context in which a camera movement exudes its shaping power.

The following chapter 2 is primarily a work of historical poetics. It traces the history of camera movement from a structural and functional perspective. Rather than merely sketching the history of camera movement according to generalized functions the chapter will combine surveys of pertinent trends and durable norms with extended analyses hoping to acknowledge the specificity of aesthetic and narrative functions engaged by individual camera movements.



## 2 Camera Movement in a Historical Perspective

Whereas chapter 1 addressed the literature on camera movement, the following chapter delineates the history of the device itself. Many valuable contributions to the history of camera movement have been made at more local levels (e.g., Japanese silent films, films from 1900-06 etc). A few texts have also provided historical surveys of camera movement (e.g., Bacher 1978: 7-114, Salt 1992). This chapter covers a historical span that is wider than that discussed elsewhere, starting as it does at the beginning of cinema and concluding in 2006. One of the contributions of this chapter is to present a more comprehensive account of camera movement by sinking in the valuable work of other researchers and combining it with my own observations. Although a structural history of camera movement will emerge, this will not stand on its own. The main contribution of the chapter in relation to the existing literature is to describe both salient trends and durable norms of camera movement in relation to aesthetic and narrative functions.

A fully-fledged history of camera movement that traces *all* the causes, continuities and changes of camera movement is beyond the scope of this dissertation but tenuous claims will be made about the functional contribution in different paradigms and genres of filmmaking. Throughout the chapter the most significant strategies of staging camera mobility will be exemplified by both individual and comparative analyses. I will also revisit some camera movements that commentators and historians have singled out to test their claims from the vantage point of functional analysis.

Although there will be made occasional references to particular camera supports, the chapter privileges the aesthetic history of camera movement. The historical development of camera movement technology has been discussed in other works, most notably in Lutz Bacher's *The Mobile Mise-en-Scene* (1978) and Barry Salt's *Film Style & Technology: History & Analysis* (1992), but also by David Samuelson in "A Brief History of Camera Mobility" (2003) as well as in a number of other works such as Kenneth McGowan's *Behind the Screen* (1965), select sections of Kevin Brownlow's *The Parade's Gone By* (1968) to name just a few examples. Their main sources of information are typically craft journals such as *American Cinematographer*, *Journal of the Society of Motion Picture*

*Engineers* as well as actual production records. I encourage the reader to consult these sources for more detail on the interplay of camera movement technology and aesthetics.

## 2.1 Primitives and Pioneers

Not unlike other accounts of stylistic parameters, the claim that ‘everything happened early on’ is resilient in relation to camera movement. In some accounts the history of the device even takes its first seminal steps before the birth of cinema. Thorsten Jungstedt argues that the most important precursor to the mobile camera – and to the history of cinema as such – was the demonstration of the Zoopraxiscope in San Francisco on May 4 1880 (1974: 167). Twelve sequentially captured still photographs of a galloping horse were transposed onto a glass disc. When light was projected through the rotating disc and a counter-rotating shutter, the images flashed briefly onto the screen giving the spectators the impression of following a photographed – not animated – galloping horse while it was in motion (much like a parallel tracking shot).<sup>103</sup>

Since the earliest motion picture cameras did not have panning heads and since specialized equipment for moving the camera had not yet been developed, the viewing positions and the structure of movement were facilitated by the spectrum of available camera supports. Since these in large part consisted of the available means of transportation the function of the camera movement was strongly tied to the spectator’s familiarity with the camera support and the viewing positions it had to offer. Never to have seen the house fronts in Venice from a boat traveling up the Grand Canal, the view of Paris as seen going up the escalator inside the Eiffel Tower, or an image of Jerusalem and its inhabitants as seen from the rear platform of a departing train must have increased the novelty of the moving viewpoint these three Lumière-films presented to the viewer (fig. 19-22).

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<sup>103</sup> These are Muybridge’s famous serial photographs which proved that a horse did not always have a hoof on the ground while galloping. The series of 12 photographs were set off by the horse itself as it galloped past the cameras and broke strings that set off the capture mechanism (Jungstedt 1974: 167).

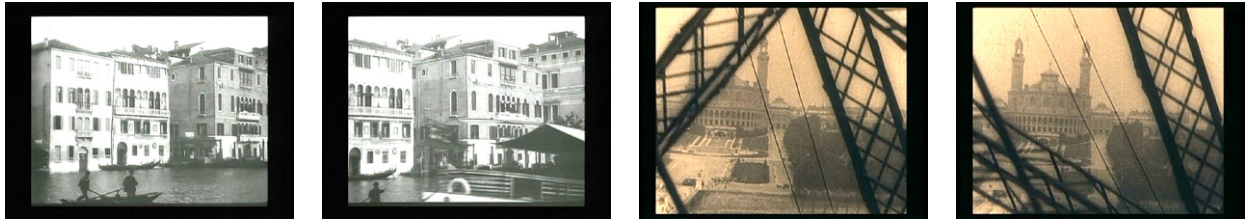


Fig. 19-22. *Panorama du Gran Canal pris d'un bateau* (1896) & *Le Tour Eiffel* (1900). The former view of the house fronts in Venice shot by Lumière-photographer Alexandre Promio is likely to be the first travelling shot in the history of cinema. Promio was nervous about Louis Lumière's response but it was enthusiastic. He even encouraged other photographers to capture such 'panoramas' (Fremaux, 1996; Arnheim 1958 [1933]: 138-9). The third film not illustrated here is *Départ de Jérusalem en chemin de fer* (1896).

The train was the most popular camera support in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century and two sub-categories of train mobility already indicated a branching out of two functions: mobile shots filmed from the side of the train were known as "panoramas" whereas mobile shots filmed from the front of the train were known as "phantom rides" (Salt 1992: 32). The scenic motivation displayed by the former illustrates that camera movement could articulate a *spatial layout* whereas the latter instantiates *virtuosity of transport*, i.e. the thrill of being offered spectacular viewing positions.<sup>104</sup>

### 2.1.1 Panning Movement in Early Cinema

Robert W. Paul's 1897-invention of what Barry Salt has referred to as the "first real panning head" for a tripod fulfilled a pragmatic function that was to prove even more pervasive than the two mentioned above: following moving action. Paul constructed the device because he wanted to follow the processions at Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in one shot. Although Paul put the panning head on the market it was hardly used prior to 1900 (Salt 1992: 32).

Whereas traveling shots taken from the front of a moving vehicle (e.g., train or tram) were generally not taken over from the 'phantom ride'-genre to fictional films<sup>105</sup> the use of panning shots for panorama films paved the way for a merging of the distinct genre of the panorama film with story films. *Rube and Mandy at Coney Island* (Edwin Porter, Edison Co., August 1903) exemplifies this

<sup>104</sup> Films with the camera mounted at the front of the train could also serve the function of laying out scenery. This was one of Biograph's advertised items for its 1897-'phantom ride'-film *The Haverstraw Tunnel* (1897): "A remarkably interesting view taken from the front end of a locomotive on one of the most picturesque bits of track along the Hudson. The train passes through the tunnel, and the view of the gradually increasing opening, as the train emerges from the opposite side, is particularly novel." *AFI Catalogue*.

<sup>105</sup> They reappeared in chase sequences ca. 1912 but woven into a more varied series of shots (Salt 1992: 47).

interplay as the camera not only pans extensively to follow the comic performance of Rube and Mandy as they move around the amusement park but also to lay bare for the spectator a panoramic view of Coney Island:

In several scenes the performers' improvisations forced Porter to accommodate the unexpected by following the action with his camera. In another scene, the actors' movements around the amusement park enabled the camera to photograph a "circular panorama. (Musser 1991: 249-250)

There is an intersection of the camera serving characterological and spatial functions. On the one hand the pans are follow shots. On the other hand the performers are subservient to what Charles Musser refers to as a "scenic impulse" during the panoramic movement (p. 250). Musser also suggests that the film can be seen to combine in one film what some exhibitors assembled in a program: showing a film of a travel or scenic view and then a short comedy (p. 249).

Naturally, a panning head made it easier to synchronize camera movement to moving action than shooting with a stationary camera from a train or boat but it was also a more flexible tool in establishing the setting for a dramatic event. This is evidenced in an earlier seminal instance of panorama films merging with dramatic films: *Execution of Czolgosz with Panorama of Auburn Prison* (Edwin Porter, Edison Co., November 1901). In this film which restages the execution of President McKinley's assassin, a series of panning movements do not follow moving action but establish the main setting while leading the viewer to the spatial heart of the drama (fig. 23-5):

[T]he panning technique is integrated into the narrative and into a sophisticated exterior-interior editing structure. The panorama which begins the film is of the outside of the prison walls, from which dissolves ensue to the prison courtyard, then to Czolgosz outside his cell, and finally, to his execution. The dissolves create an illusion of temporal simultaneity and the panning movement serves to bring the viewer into the drama in the prison's interior in what begins as an otherwise ordinary panorama film. (Gartenberg 1982: 173)

Nevertheless, as the inclusion of "panorama" in the title suggests, these panning shots are still considered a heterogenous element – though a commendable and saleable one.<sup>106</sup> Furthermore, the inclusion of "Coney Island" and "Auburn Prison" in these titles also clarify that the spatial articulation was

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<sup>106</sup> The heterogeneity of these pans is illustrated by the fact that exhibitors could purchase the film with or without the opening panoramas (Musser 1991: 188).

still tied to real locations rather than self-contained narrative spaces.<sup>107</sup>

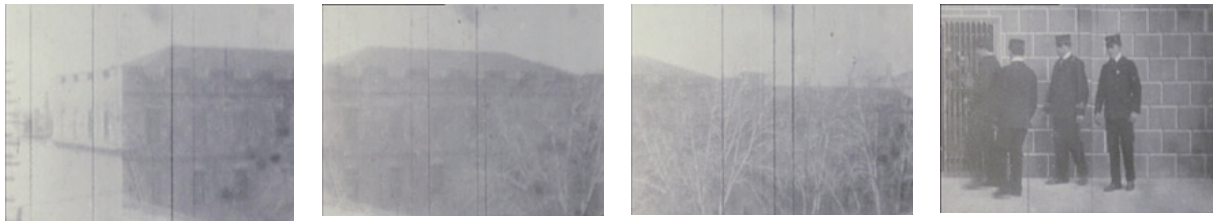


Fig. 23-5. *Execution of Czolgosz with Panorama of Auburn Prison*. The last of three opening panoramas dissolves into an interior shot of the prison set.

### 2.1.2 The Mobile Point-of-View Shot and The First Dolly Movements

Although the point-of-view shot had been launched at least as early as 1900 by G.A. Smith in *Grandma's Reading Glass* and *As Seen Through a Telescope*, the mobile point-of-view shot followed only shortly after. Ferdinand Zecca's *Ce que je vois de mon sixieme/Scenes from my balcony* from 1901 is likely to be the first example (Colman 1982b: 79-80).<sup>108</sup> The film features a man who spies on his neighbors through a telescope and a pan over the roofs as seen from his balcony simulates his point-of-view (a circular matte suggests a telescopic view).

Perhaps it is a matter of historical coincidence related to the small percentage of films preserved from these early years but it appears that a few of the slightly more novel functions of camera movement occurred in the early years of cinema and were either not picked up or substantially improved upon for a number of years. For example the one-shot film *Love in the Suburbs* (Biograph, September 1900) contains a leftward pan that not only accompanies a woman and two men following her but serves a revelatory function by incorporating a character into shot who has significance to the story of the film:

<sup>107</sup> Although filmmakers operating in the classical paradigm undoubtedly use camera movement to articulate a narrative space of their own making or transform 'real' locations into distinct fictional spaces, it would be misleading to think of the development of spatial layout functions as a detachment or secession from a commitment to pro-filmic spaces. This commitment has always been an aspect of cinema from *Panorama du Grand Canal vu d'un bateau* (1896) to Wim Wenders' *Der Himmel über Berlin* (1986). One must still make distinctions between different ways of making viewers engage with pro-filmic spaces – the pro-filmically 'real' Coney Island presented in *Rube and Mandy at Coney Island* is put on display in a more direct way than are New Zealand landscapes in e.g the aerial shots of the *Lord of the Rings*-trilogy (2001, 2002, 2003).

<sup>108</sup> There is doubt as to the date of its first release. It had its US release in October 1904 (AFI catalogue) but it was listed in the Pathé Catalogue in 1903 (Colman 1982b: 80). In Colman it is placed among the 1901-releases and 1901 is also the release date given by the International Movie Database.

As she moves left, they move left, and the camera pans left. When she stops, they stop, and the camera stops. Then, as the camera pans further, a policeman enters the image and he wards off the two gentlemen. Two important advances in narrative cinema are established in this one-shot film. First, when the camera makes its first jerky pan, the concept of film space is extended beyond the immediate field of vision. Second, the tension in the narrative of the film is resolved as the camera pans through the movement of the policeman from offscreen space into the field of vision. (Gartenberg 1980: 2)

Just as astounding was a series of three films that started with the action in long shot but then had the camera dollying forwards toward a closer shot of the characters as they were grimacing (fig. 26-7). The first of these was *Hooligan in Jail* (September 25, 1903):

In this film, a prisoner is seated at a table in a long view of the interior of a prison cell. The guard enters the room, and leaves him his food. Then a fascinating change takes place. In order to get a closer view of his facial expressions, as the prisoner sits eating and making grimaces, the camera dollies in instead of resorting to editing. (Gartenberg 1982: 171)

What is most surprising about the dolly shots in these three *facial expression films*, which aside from *Hooligan in Jail* include *A Subject for the Rogue's Gallery* and *Photographing a Female Crook* (both January 1904), is their insularity. Push-ins were not only unprecedented, according to Barry Salt these three push-ins “seem to have had no progeny, and conclude the matter of tracking on static scenes for the next several years” (Salt 1992: 47).

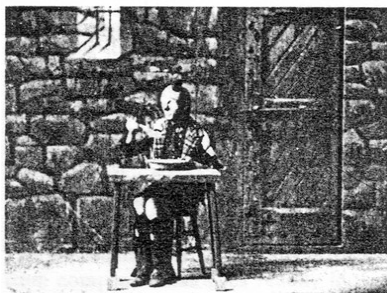


Fig. 26-7. *Hooligan in Jail* (1903).

There are at least two reasons why the push-ins in facial expression films tie in well with Tom Gunning's claim that early cinema up until 1906-07 is best thought of as a cinema of attractions – a filmic paradigm that has closer ties with the *presentational* arts of vaudeville, political cartoons and circus acts than with the *representational* classical narrative cinema (1986: 63-70). First of all, the push-in itself stands out as a novelty. Second, the direct audience address of the hooligan is an element of non-continuous style as the actions of the hooligan do not try to sustain the illusion that he inhabits an autonomous fictional world

created for spectators' voyeuristic gaze (Gunning 1982: 222).<sup>109</sup>

The push-in on the hooligan varies from the many statically photographed films of the era but significantly its function *also* varies from its conventionalized use in classical narrative cinema. To some extent the difference is pointed out by Gunning but his polarity of functions is not quite on the mark. Gunning argues that this push-in is not – as opposed to its function in classical cinema – a device expressive of narrative tension (1990: 58). However, in its conventionalized form the push-in is not merely a dramatic intensifier, but is also psychologically suggestive, i.e. aided by a performative or musical cue the push-in customarily underscores or suggests psychological activity occurring within the mind of the character that the camera is advancing towards. The push-ins in facial expression films are markedly different on precisely this point. Indeed, the push-in from *Hooligan in Jail* could be read to substantiate the increased well-being brought about by the food the hooligan is consuming but the push-in does not really invite the viewer inside his mind. The hooligan is not given individual psychological features but is a stock character whose grimacing is a comic performance, and it is this *presentational comic performance* which the push-in ultimately facilitates.

Why were these push-ins not imitated or developed in the following years? They may of course have been applied in films that are now lost but we may look for more proximate causes. Production technology could also have been a hindrance but this is difficult to assess because of the lack of documentation regarding the 'dolly' used. However, if the novelty of the movement would have been sufficiently appreciated by the paying public, these technical obstacles could surely have been overcome.

The most likely cause emerges if one takes into consideration the stylistic alternatives at the time as well as the generic functions of the facial expression film and the general characteristics of the cinema of attractions. In the classical cinema the push-in could add or magnify psychological expressivity at particular moments. This contribution was valued within the classical paradigm but psychological depth was neither integral to the cinema of attractions nor to the particular comedy genre of facial expression films. Beyond its own status as attraction the functional contribution of the push-ins may simply have been too

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<sup>109</sup> It is worth noting that some definitions of classical Hollywood cinema do not take presentational glances towards the camera to be in any way un-classical. See Nielsen (2005) and chapter 7 in Bordwell, Staiger, Thompson (1985).

slight to validate the extra effort. After all, the push-in does not add to what is presumably the prime function of facial expression films: to elicit amusement or laughs. In long shot the comic performance was less intelligible so simply starting the shot in close-up – as indeed other films of the genre such as *A Dull Razor* (Edison Co., February 1900) and *Facial Expressions* (Edison Co., January 1902) had already done (Gartenberg 1980: 3) – was sufficient. If one wanted to establish the setting for the film before focusing on the comic performance of the hooligan, then another stylistic strategy had already been introduced in films made at the Edison Company as well by other directors such as Britain's G.A. Smith in *Mary Jane's Mishap* (1903): the cut-in.

The push-in *does* add a sense of spatial depth to the shot that the cut-in does not but if we look at *Hooligan in Jail*, other aspects of the shot suggest that it was not staged *for the sake* of depth inducement: The film takes place in a prison cell with no decor for the camera to pass on its way to the hooligan and the composition is flat and planimetric (staged perpendicular to the prison wall behind the hooligan). One may also speculate that depth inducement *was* a criterion of value but that staging of movement along a diagonal towards the camera was seen to be a better, easier or cheaper technique than moving the camera. Diagonal compositions and figure movement in Lumière-films was already a first step in that direction and staging diagonal movement towards the camera would certainly become a much more popular way of lending depth to images than camera movement for many years to come.

### **2.1.3 Follow Shots and the Boundaries of the Frame**

Despite these examples of the more extensive panorama pan, the revelatory and tension-releasing pan, the subjective pans and the dolly-in, the most common function of camera movement in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century was to follow moving action. There were a few isolated instances of parallel tracking shots taken of one moving car from another from around 1903 and onwards (Salt 1992: 47) but parallel tracking shots not taken from automobiles were extremely rare in these years. Nevertheless, it appears that filmmakers would occasionally take the trouble of staging them for particularly novel effects such as when an overhead tracking shot in Ferdinand Zecca's *La Course des sergents de*



*ville/The Policeman's Little Run* (1907) is made to look as an ascending crane shot following the dog and policemen climbing up the wall of a building.

Brief pans were by far the most common way of following moving action. These reframing pans were more often applied in actuality filming than in fiction films (Salt 1992: 46) - undoubtedly because it is more difficult to set up and pre-plan a shot so that people and vehicles will move within the bounds of a stationary frame. A few fiction films such as the first version of *L'Arroseur arrosé* (June 10, 1895) that scream for reframing but contain none testify to the imperative and fundamental nature of reframing.<sup>110</sup> The Cinematographe did not have a panning head at this time but it did not take long for fictional films to adopt reframing movements to accommodate moving action.

Curiously, reframing pans in fiction films were almost exclusively used on exterior shots (Gartenberg 1982: 172; Salt 1992: 46).<sup>111</sup> This was the case with *Love in the Suburbs* for example and according to Jon Gartenberg it was an established *convention* in filmmaking during the period of 1900 and 1906 that panning shots were not used in films shot in a studio (1982: 172).

With the exterior-bound norms of panning, it is in one sense surprising that the push-ins in the facial expression films from 1903-04 were filmed in interior studio sets. In another sense it is to be expected because of locale, the situations portrayed as well as the time, imperturbability and composure needed for set-up and shot execution. Nevertheless it raises interesting questions with respect to the relationship of camera movement to off-screen space. Contrary to the pan that opens up the bounds of the frame, the push-ins does not expand the field of view but singles out a motive within it. Most likely pans were avoided on interior shots because they would give away the boundaries of the set but perhaps early cinema operated with two different concepts of cinematic space: a theatrical tied to interior shots where the frame boundaries were taken to represent the actual boundaries of the playing space, and a Bazinian space on exterior shots where the boundaries of the frame only functioned in relation to what they excluded. This question remains to be

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<sup>110</sup> See Henrik Juel's on-line essay *Kamerabevælgelsernes fænomenologi* for a discussion of this film and the missing reframing pan: [akira.ruc.dk/~hjuel/](http://akira.ruc.dk/~hjuel/)

<sup>111</sup> A rare example of a pan in a studio set occurs in *Bombardement of Taku Forts, By the Allied Fleets* (August 1900). Five years later in French Pathé-films such as *Cendrillon* (1905), *La poule de aux oeufs d'or* (1905) and *Au pays noir* (1905) (Holman 1982b: 196, 130, 134, 149) a short-lived mini-trend of follow pans in studio sets served to establish or reveal spatial layout (Brewster 1990: 46) but also to communicate a sense of *grandeur*. The trend was short-lived and did not migrate from Pathé-films to other countries and production companies (Salt 1992: 46).

investigated in another study but what we *can* say is that reframing movements – both the small repositioning pans and the longer follow pans – can be seen to be the first step in the history of directional camera movement, i.e. camera movements that inform the spectator where to concentrate his attention.

#### 2.1.4 The Narrative Integration of Pans

The norms and motivations for panning were still not completely codified according to specific narrative functions (fig. 28-35) around 1904-1906 but panning was becoming increasingly better integrated with fictional narratives. In *The Lost Child* (Biograph, October 1904) and *Stolen by Gypsies* (Edison Co., July 1905) pans implicate the viewer in the narrative so that he knows “more about what is transpiring than the protagonists in the film.” (Gartenberg 1982: 176). As the mother in the former film walks into the house, the spectator sees that her child climbs into a dog kennel. As she comes back out again and looks around for the child, a leftward pan follows the now desperate mother to the picket fence where she spots a suspicious character whom she thinks has abducted her child. Dramatic tension is created by the simultaneously achieved functions of *accompaniment* (the mother) and *concealment* (the child in the dog kennel). The pan makes creative use of the camera’s – and the spectator’s – superior knowledge. It charges the shot with tension and suspense in the Hitchcockian sense by following the mother and – unbeknownst to her but apparent to the spectator – leaving the small child behind in off-screen space.



Fig. 28-30. *The Suburbanite* (1904)



Fig. 31-35. *The Suburbanite* (1904) is a short comedy about the misfortunes of a family who decide to leave their domicile in order to move to the suburbs. The first pan (fig. 28-30) in the film is motivated narratively because it moves in synch with the suburbanite amidst a party of ten and thus signals that it is *his* story. The second pan (fig. 31-3) is generically motivated because it facilitates a gag. The pan follows the



lateral movement of the tailboard *and* elegantly anticipates the dropped tailboard (the first of a series of accidents connected to the transportation of furniture into the new house). However, another pan (fig. 34-5) fails to accommodate back and forth player movement and leaves a 'dead spot' in the frame.

Around 1905-6 both Edison and Biograph films begin to make creative use of increased distance during panning which allows for "more movement to be incorporated into the field of vision." (p. 176). The greater distance also made it possible for the film *Maniac Chase* (Edison, October 7, 1904) to incorporate attractive scenery into the shot resulting in a more "aesthetic pan" (ibid.). Finally, it also allowed for more extended choreography of character and camera movement because the interplay can be modulated across several shot scales, for instance by having characters approaching a panning camera from long shot to close-up.

More inventive uses of pans make a brief appearance in Edwin Porter's trickfilm *Dream of a Rarebit Fiend* (1906) where the physical and psychological state of a drunken man is conveyed by means of rapid panning movements superimposed on images of the man wandering around the city.

### 2.1.5 From A Cinema of Attractions to A Cinema of Narrative Integration

By 1906 many of the primary and durable functions of camera movement had already been launched but in terms of frequency, camera movements as such were still rare. Since several scholars such as Tom Gunning and Noël Burch have suggested that a paradigmatic shift occurs around 1906-07, it might be

worthwhile to consider the functional implications such a proposed shift could have had for camera movement. To recapitulate, Gunning argues there is a transition from an exhibitionist mode of *presentation* (the cinema of attractions) to a voyeuristic mode of *representation* where the audience is encouraged to engage with a self-contained fictional diegesis (a cinema of narrative integration). Gunning only tenuously proposes that this paradigmatic shift occurs in the years 1906 to 1907 and argues that the 'attraction'-element resurfaces throughout narrative cinema (1986: 63-70).<sup>112</sup> Furthermore, Gunning also stresses that there are films before this date that tell stories but that "this task was secondary, at least until about 1904" (1991: 6). Furthermore, the stories told up until 1906-07 had little delineation of character psychology. One may think of the 'flat' character types in a story film like *The Suburbanite* in this regard.

Kristin Thompson does not pinpoint an exact date but argues that by 1909 "a narrative is not something to be placed in front of an audience, but something to be 'given' or 'told'" (Bordwell, Staiger, Thompson: 1985: 174). Along the same lines, Gunning argues that D.W. Griffith's chief contribution to narrative cinema around 1908-09 comes in the form of a *narrator system* which is an intensification of the norms of a cinema of narrative integration (1991: 25-6). The narrator system has as a central component the funneling of narratives through character psychology. What one sees to an unprecedented degree in these films of Griffith's is an intensification of the way in which emotions, thoughts and memories create motivations for character action which then propels the narrative forward (p. 27).

There are some indications of small-scale structural and functional discontinuity across the transitional years. In relation to the narrative functions of panning movements, Charlie Keil notes a "tempering of its wide use after 1906 as part of a gradual shift toward finding different ways to employ isolated devices for storytelling purposes" (Keil 2001: 162). Keil does not specify which uses were tempered, but judging from Barry Salt's work on the period 1906-1913 (1992: 82-3) the above-mentioned examples from *Dream of a Rarebit Fiend* could serve as an example, as could the panoramic follow shots in *Rube and*

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<sup>112</sup> In *D.W. Griffith and the Origins of American Narrative Cinema* (1991) Gunning writes that the shift occurs "around 1908" (p. 6).

*Mandy at Coney Island* (1903) and particularly the autonomous movement as seen in *Execution of Czolgosz with Panorama of Auburn Prison* (1901).

Panoramic movement was not as much integrated into fiction films as it was tolerated for a short period of time when the heterogeneity of films was not recognized as a problem: There was no detrimental contradiction about *Rube and Mandy at Coney Island* being *both* a fictional narrative *and* a panorama of Coney Island because the filmmaker did not intend to construct a self-enclosed fictional universe for the action to take place in. The tendency to temper such panoramas in narrative films during the transitional years from 1906 to 1913 may be the result of an increasing tendency to situate narratives in self-contained fictional worlds. Another reason for the tempering of scenic pans is suggested by Kristin Thompson who argues that panning simply was not as necessary in fiction films. In scenic views and topical films panning was essential because it added depth cues that differentiated them from lantern slides of those same sights but in fiction films the figures provided the main interest and action could usually be staged within the bounds of a static frame (Bordwell, Staiger, Thompson 1985: 227).

Practical, financial and formal considerations may also have deterred filmmakers from situating their narratives in famous venues whose scenic value could be laid out in panning movements. Nevertheless, one would think that panning moves laying out renowned *sites* in the panorama film could not only *migrate* to narrative films as heterogenous elements but be *integrated* into them by being employed to lay-out scenic views of *diegetic spaces*. This was a function partially engaged in *Maniac Chase* (1904) but the commitment to spatial articulation was attenuated by the camera's focus on the escaped convict. *Autonomous* panning moves that only laid out a diegetic space were very rare in this period. Tom Gunning mentions two films by D.W. Griffith - *The Ingrate* (1908) and *Ingomar* (1908) – which have as their opening shots panoramic movements but the autonomous panning shots in question were brief (1991: 210) and examples as extensive as those in *Execution of Czolgosz with Panorama of Auburn Prison* were rare:

The extensive pans over the landscape (not following action), which begin and end Griffith's *The Country Doctor* (1909), are completely exceptional in his work, and I have not seen anything else of this nature except the 270 degree pan round the deck of a liner in the middle of *Captured by Bedouins* (Sidney Olcott, 1912). (Salt 1992: 82).

In *The Drive for Life* (1909) and *The Massacre* (1912) a pan added by the cameraman was even trimmed in editing, presumably to maintain a swift narrative pace (Salt 1992: 82). At this time in American cinema spatial layout-pans and atmospheric pans play second fiddle to increasingly tighter editing and swift storytelling.

Charlie Keil notes that autonomous pans as such did not cease to be applied with the decline of panorama films and mentions examples of panning movement being used for other purposes such as revealing “deliberately withheld narrative information” (*An Irish Hero*, 1909; *The Hebrew Fugitive*, 1908), directing attention to a main character by picking him out of a large crowd (*Sporting Blood*, 1909), and serving as an alternative to contiguity editing (*The Two Sons*, 1909). Keil also cites examples of more elaborate follow pans (2001: 159-64).

Based on my own viewing as well as the functional and structural descriptions of pans by Jon Gartenberg for the years 1900-1906 (Edison and Biograph films), Charlie Keil’s examples for the years 1907-1913 (American films in general) and Barry Salt’s work on the years 1900-1913 (1992), there is also substantial functional *continuity* across the proposed shift from a cinema of attractions to a cinema of narrative integration. A substantial number of camera movements from 1906 up until the early teens modify and ameliorate previously established functions. The relative continuity is undoubtedly due to the fact that some of the basic functions such as *reframing*, *accompaniment*, *spatial layout* and *reveal* operate at such a low level of generality that they are shared by different paradigms of filmmaking.

## 2.2 International Experimentation: Classical Cinema Around the Bend

In the early teens a few seminal examples suggest that camera movement was beginning to be recognized as a tool that could convey psychological states - from both external and internal vantage points. *Kri-Kri e il Tango* (1913) contains an example of the former: Both camera and characters circle wildly around a room (both are placed on a turntable) to *suggest* the dizziness of the tango dancers without mediating their experience directly. An example of the latter is found in *The Story of the Glove* (Sidney Drew, 1915) where the physical and

psychological state of a drunken man is mediated directly by applying wobbly handheld movement to his p.o.v. shot (Salt 1992: 132).

The push-in began to resurface in the mid-teens but now refunctionalized to narratives where characters are given more psychological depth. In *The Passer-by* (Oscar Apfel, 1912) a push-in leads the spectator into the interior world of a character and consequently assigns the ensuing flashback to his recollections. The camera pushes in to close shot of the passer-by (Marc McDermott) addressing a table before a dissolve carries the spectator over to a flashback of the story that he is narrating. Within the flashback the first shot is a pull-back from a close-up of the passer-by as a younger man. When exiting the flashback the process is reversed. There is still evidence to suggest that these stylistic patterns were not codified yet. For instance the Danish film *Evangeliiemandens liv* (Holger Madsen, 1915) combines a dissolve and push-in to lead into flashback but the movement occurs *within* the flashback whereas the sequence concludes by dissolving into yet another push-in *outside* the events portrayed in flashback. Although the overall understanding of the flashback is hardly jeopardized the variant from *Evangeliiemandens liv* does less to suggest a *mediated* (i.e. going-into-and-out-of-the mind) flashback.

Without ascribing too much symptomatic significance to the example from *Evangeliiemandens liv* it nevertheless exemplifies an intriguing but brief interval of experimentation regarding autonomous and intricate tracking shots that is most pronounced from 1914 to 1916. Geographically, the trend is widespread. Italian, American, Scandinavian and Russian cinema all provide examples though it is difficult to ascertain to what degree these national trends are interrelated.

Before exaggerating the import of the mid-teens camera movement trend(s), it should be noted that the vast majority of shots were still taken in long shot with a static camera. Nevertheless, narrative films of the mid-teens do feature a rich variety of autonomous camera movement – i.e. a camera that moves independent of moving action - as well as axial movements (both follow shots and autonomous movements) that break the 9- or 12-foot-line that so often separated the camera from the players in those years. To name a few examples from various countries: the brief forward-moving tracking shot at the beginning of Yevgeni Bauer's debut film *Sumerki zhenskoi dushi / Twilight of a Woman's Soul* (1913) that follows Vera (Vera Dubovskaja) from a chair to a table, the several



diagonal and axial movements in *Cabiria* (1914), the pull-back in *The Vagabond* (Charles Chaplin, 1916) from the painting of “The Living Shamrock” to the wider spatial context of an art exhibit, the receding follow shot in David Harum (Allan Dwan, 1915),<sup>113</sup> the push-in on the dancer in background as luxury-obsessed Mary (Yelena Smirnova) and her suitor have their dinner in the foreground in *Ditya bolshogo goroda/ Child of the Big City* (Yevgeni Bauer, 1914), the receding tracking shot that follows the mute dancer Gizella (Vera Karalli) inside the morbid artist’s house in *Umirayushchii Lebed/The Dying Swan* (Yevgeni Bauer, 1917), the more than three minute long receding tracking shot in *Posle smerti/ After Death* (1915) (fig. 36-8) as well as the numerous examples of autonomous camera movements or intricate follow shots in *The Second-in-Command* (William J. Bowman 1915), *Regeneration* (Raoul Walsh, 1915), and of course the crane-like shots in D.W. Griffith’s *Intolerance* (1916). One of the most remarkable of these mid-teens camera movements will be analyzed at length in chapter 4: a pull-back from *Hævnenes Nat* (Benjamin Christensen, 1916).



Fig. 36-8. *After Death* (1915). The receding tracking shot pulls both the viewer’s vantage point and the protagonist deeper and deeper into an unknown and enigmatic space that he feels hesitant about entering.

### 2.2.1 The *Cabiria* Movement

The film that historians almost unanimously cite as a highpoint in the tracking trend of the mid-teens is the Italian epic *Cabiria* directed by Giovanni Pastrone (Bacher 1978: 8; Cook 1996: 57-8; Salt 1992: 82, 126-7). A few British films from the early teens which contain brief push-ins may have influenced Giovanni Pastrone: Salt cites examples from *An Old Soldier* (1910), *Church and State* (?) and *The Deception* (Bert Haldene, 1912) (Salt 1992: 82). However, there were a number of pre-cursors such as the push-in from Edison’s *The House of Cards* (1909) which initially moves towards a violinist but at the end of the move has

<sup>113</sup> See Dwan’s description of the camera movement in Bogdanovich (1997: 68).



instead directed our attention to the protagonist seated next to the musician (Keil 2001: 160). Keil's example may be the first push-in of some duration in time and space since the facial expressions films of 1903-4. Although released shortly before *Cabiria*'s premiere in Turin, Benjamin Christensen's directorial debut *Det hemmelighedsfulde X* (1914) also contains a very brief push-in that accentuates the hug of mother and son shortly after hearing about his father's arrest.

While the filmic sources of influence on *Cabiria* remain unclear, there is wide agreement that the camera movements in *Cabiria* on the other hand were noticed and had an effect on other filmmakers: "*Cabiria* (Giovanni Pastrone, 1914, Italy) especially caught filmmakers' attention and the slow track independent of figure movement came to be known as the '*Cabiria* movement' (Thompson 1985: 228). According to Barry Salt *Cabiria* even started a world wide vogue of camera movement: "In 1915 and 1916 every bright young director had to have one or two '*Cabiria* movements' in one of his films, but they used them slightly differently to Pastrone." (1992: 127). Some filmmakers such as cinematographer Hal Mohr have even gone on record heralding the camera movements in *Cabiria* and admitting to emulating the movement in his own films.<sup>114</sup>

However, there is disagreement among film historians as to what exactly constitutes a '*Cabiria* movement' and how the camera movements in the film feature in the overall history of the device. Keeping Salt's last phrase in mind it is useful to distinguish the actual camera movements in *Cabiria* from the type of camera movements that it helped to popularize. Salt refers to the latter category of '*Cabiria* movement' as one in which there is "tracking towards and away from groups of actors who were not moving a great deal," (what he refers to as '*tracking on quasi-static scenes*') before specifying that in the actual film the camera movements were "of a fairly limited extent, slow and do not end too close to the actors"; Salt also points out that they were different from later examples because the shots "were made moving inwards on a diagonal to his sets." (1992: 126-27). All the examples that Salt mentions as 'off-spring' are axial movements, i.e. camera movements that move either forwards or backwards

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<sup>114</sup> Hal Mohr on *Cabiria*: "[I]n this they had a shot in which the camera traveled through this tremendous palace – it looked like it was floating on air. I couldn't figure out how the hell they'd done this, but I made up my mind that in my next picture I was going to do this" (Maltin 1978: 77). David A. Cook suggests that the camera movements in *Cabiria* may have influenced D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915) and *Intolerance* (1916) in particular (1996: 57-8).

(1992: 127). Yuriy Tsivian on the other hand seems to think of 'Cabiria movements' as "a slow lateral (or lateral-diagonal) travelling shot unmotivated by figure movement within the frame." (1994: 205). At this stage in Tsivian's argument there is at least a parenthetical reference to diagonal movement but a few paragraphs later the 'Cabiria movement' comes to represent only lateral movement (205-6). With Salt's account in mind this becomes particularly confusing because Tsivian goes on to argue that camera movement in Russian films of the mid-teens, particularly those directed by Yevgeni Bauer, shows *no* sign of influence from *Cabiria* because Bauer's preferred movement is the track-in and to a lesser extent the track-back. On the other hand, Bauer's *Child of the Big City* (1914) pops up on Salt's list of *Cabiria* heirs precisely for this reason. Who is right?

A shot analysis of *Cabiria* reveals 57 camera movements.<sup>115</sup> The most extensive camera movement in the film is a little over 50 seconds long and only nine camera movements in the film are sustained for more than twenty seconds. All of these are moderate in tempo but they vary quite significantly in terms of structure. On the whole the shot analysis favors Salt's account. *Cabiria* does in fact contain five lateral tracking shots but they are outnumbered by 32 tracking shots of a diagonal nature (seventeen that move forward along a diagonal and fifteen that move backward along a diagonal route) as well as axial tracking shots (nine push-ins and four pull-backs). These statistical numbers make Tsivian out to be a less keen observer than he really is for the oblique direction of these 32 examples is sometimes only just noticeable. Nevertheless, it is precisely this diagonal movement which is so unusual in Pastrone's film and brings out a certain stereoscopic or volumetric effect in his impressive settings. This is also true in scenes where the volumetric effect is achieved so subtly that one only senses a certain spatial plasticity in the frame but not the camera movement itself (fig. 39-41).

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<sup>115</sup> This number excludes a dozen minute movements that can barely be registered but does not exclude repositioning pans or tilts as long as they are two seconds or longer. The shot analysis is based on the restoration by Eighteen Frames Inc., Prof. Charles Affron, 1990 (Kino on Video, 2000) with a running time of 123 min. According to the opening titles this edition "contains all available footage and is presented at the correct projection speed." However, there are other restored prints of the film that I have been unable to see. The most recent restoration by *Museo del Cinema di Torino* was shown at the 25<sup>th</sup> *Giornate del cinema muto* in October 2006. This print has a running time of 180 minutes. A number of camera movements are, by classical standards, rather abruptly cut off by intertitles in the Affron-version. This may be different in other restorations of the film.



Fig. 39-41. *Cabiria* (1914). One hardly notices that the camera is moving closer in on a diagonal towards Fulvius and Maciste because the tracking movement is extremely slow and because tilting keeps Maciste's chair in the same position in relation to the bottom right corner of the frame. However, the shot carries a subtle stereoscopic – or volumetric – effect but one must cast one's eyes at the changing relationship of the pillar to the background in order to register how Pastore manages to enhance the impression of volume and three-dimensionality. The 'flat' pillar is given more dimensionality during the move and the wall behind the guests seems to float around them.

If anything the discrepancy in Tsivian and Salt's accounts about the actual camera movements in the film should warn us that it is even more slippery and misleading to think of the *Cabiria*-type of movement as a homogenous entity. Elena Dagrada, Tom Gunning and André Gaudreault go furthest in this direction and argue that the *carello* movements in the film should not be thought of as a role model for later camera movement trends because it is endowed with characteristics that render it unique in the history of cinema (2000: 207-23). The authors actually argue that they should not even be viewed within the history of camera movement (p. 207). This last point overstates the idiosyncrasy of the device for the volumetric effect created by camera movement in the film as well as the spatial display of the film's set design are not unique in the history of camera movement - although *Cabiria* may be said to combine these two functions in a specific way. Furthermore, as Salt and Thompson suggest and as Hal Mohr confirms, *Cabiria* did have a genuine influence on the history of camera mobility, misguided or not.

Nevertheless, Dagrada, Gunning and Gaudreault's call for a heterogeneous perspective is appropriate. One should bear in mind that although there exists a confluent set of autonomous and axial camera movements from multiple national cinemas in the mid-teens and although the autonomous diagonal movements in *Cabiria* may have influenced many filmmakers – perhaps strengthened by the fact that it was one of the last films to be distributed in America before the outbreak of World War I<sup>116</sup> - other influences within national contexts of film production may have played a key role.

<sup>116</sup> See Hal Mohr's comment in Maltin (1978: 77).

### 2.2.2 Pre-Revolutionary Camera Movement

The heterogeneous nature of the international camera movement trend during the mid-teens can be exemplified by casting a look at a tradition of camera movement that was virtually unknown before the screening of pre-Eisensteinian Russian films at Le Giornate del Cinema Muto in 1990. Camera movements from Yevgeni Bauer's *Twilight of a Woman's Soul* and *Child of the Big City* have already been mentioned but there are many other examples in the films of Bauer. For instance in *Grezy/Daydreams* (1915) a set of axial tracking shots – one forward-moving, one receding – are placed on each side of the key moment in when Alexander thinks he sees his dead wife Elena. Yuriy Tsivian suggests that there might even have been a competition between Bauer and his chief rival Yakov Protazanov as to how extended they could stage their tracking shots (Tsivian 1994: 208). According to Phillip Kemp, Bauer had a camera mounted on a wooden plank supported by two bicycles to shoot the more than three minute long mobile take in *After Death* (1915).<sup>117</sup> Although this is probably the shot that Protazanov wanted to outdo one should hesitate to understand these as the progeny of the camera movements in *Cabiria* for a number of reasons. First of all, they are functionally different – even from each other.

Compare for example the forward moving tracking shot at the beginning of Bauer's *Twilight of a Woman's Soul* to the receding tracking shot at the climactic moment in Protazanov's *Pikovaya dama/The Queen of Spades* (1916).<sup>118</sup> The function of the move from *Twilight* is chiefly accompaniment: although the camera opens up the frame to take in a little more of the luxurious setting in which Vera is overcome with loneliness and although the movement displays more of Bauer's impressively decorative mise-en-scene, these functions are undercut by the fact that Bauer has just shown us this part of the frame. The follow shot retraces a space that Vera and her suitor traversed a few seconds ago (fig. 42-45). One function that the move *does* bring across is a deliberate sense of pace. The movement of the camera is notably ponderous as is Vera's stride. In fact, it is one of those examples where the pacing of the camera move

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<sup>117</sup> Liner notes for *After Death* (BFI's DVD *Mad Love* which features three Bauer films). I am not familiar with Kemp's source for this information.

<sup>118</sup> Both of these tracking shots are the only ones of their kind in the respective films.

also functions expressively (i.e. inflective) because it substantiates Vera's melancholic frame of mind, her *Schwermut*.



Fig. 42-5. *Twilight of a Woman's Soul* (1913).

Protazanov on the other hand makes something else out of his tracking shot. Instead of launching it early on he presents his narrative in largely static shots reserving the tracking shot for the climactic moment in the film<sup>119</sup>: About 45 minutes into the 60 minute film, German (Ivan Mosjoukine) is visited by an old woman whom he murdered because she would not reveal her psychic card detection powers. Revisiting him as a ghost she gives him the name of three cards. German uses this information to win over Chekalinskii, the head of the gambling society, two nights in a row.

German's entrance on the first night is presented elegantly but Protazanov relies on the resources of staging within a stationary frame and not camera movement: We see the table in the foreground with Chekalinskii occupying a dominant position facing the camera and wearing a bright suit that distinguishes him from the other characters crowding the table. Then two young men at the right side of the frame leave their place thereby creating a compositional gap allowing us to see German and Narumov advancing towards and arriving at the table (fig. 46). The second night German's arrival is presented in a more straightforward manner and this time the shot does not recede into depth. The camera takes in the table from a slightly high angle with the background of the setting pushed up behind the table. The frame is even more crowded than before lending an oppressive and claustrophobic quality to the shot. German walks into view - through the crowd - from the right and makes his bet (fig. 47).

When German arrives at Chekalinskii's gambling den for the third time to bet on the last card, the ace of spades, his route to the table is presented in a

<sup>119</sup> *The Queen of Spades* (1916) contains approximately 165 shots out of which about 55 are intertitles. Out of the remaining shots there are only three brief repositioning shots and the one receding tracking shot that is exceptional.



completely different way than the two prior visits. On the third night an intertitle informs us that everyone is waiting for German to show up. As German makes his appearance we do not see the gambling table nor Chekalinskii in the frame. Instead German's advance is strongly highlighted by the performance of the other players as well as by a number of other devices. As German enters every other high society gambler in the room directs his attention towards him. As he strides forwards and takes center stage, everyone around him remains in their position except for two men who walk up to him and place themselves on each side of him. As they shake hands with him, German is not only flanked by the two men but by two pillars in the background. Through the movement of the players there is suddenly a strong sense of symmetry to the composition with German occupying the central pivoting point. German advances diagonally towards the camera (not along the axis) and strikes an imposing and self-confident posture. Mosjoukine turns on his famous 'magnetic eyes' and directs them at an area off-screen behind the left hand side of the camera (fig. 48). Retaining the emotional intensity that Mosjoukine invests in this gaze, German continues his diagonal stride. Against the backdrop of the static frames thus far presented, now comes a moment of profound effect: As German advances, the camera recedes with him, space giving way before his stride. German stops as he reaches the gambling table but the camera continues its motion and brings Chekalinskii into frame (fig. 49-51).



Fig. 46-8. *Queen of Spades* (1916). The three entrances.



Fig. 49-51. *Queen of Spades* (1916). The pull-back.

Instead of showing us Chekalinskii at the table and thereafter German's arrival, Protazanov shifts the focus of the scene by linking the camera exclusively to German and his diagonal approach to the climactic event of the film. But the camera does more than imbue the shot with dramatic intensity. The camera invites the viewer along, prompting us to take part in his obsessive drive towards the card showdown and to share his assurance of imminent victory. The camera movement also takes part in articulating the power relationship between German and Chekalinskii. While the camera gives way to German's determined stride, it brings Chekalinskii into view by tracking off German as he takes position against the table and curving behind Chekalinskii, letting him slide into the lower left part of the frame where he is dwarfed by German's presence. The way the camera moves in relation to the two central performers prompts us to believe that German has the upper hand. However, Protazanov's staging of the scene cleverly sets the viewer up for a surprise for in fact German will lose the fatal game, beaten by the card he was told to pick by the old woman: the ace of spades. Bewildered and shocked, German instead is left with the queen of spades and as he casts his eyes on the card, he sees the face of the old murdered woman in the queen's stead. Consequently, hindsight forces us to reassess our understanding of the movement. The camera was not as much giving way before German as it was leading him to his doom. The camera took us along with him into that field of obsession with the secret of the cards.

In addition to functional differences pertaining to their intra-filmic application there are also reasons to believe that these autonomous and axial camera movements in mid-teens Russian cinema may have been informed by culturally specific norms and conventions regarding pacing. Yuriy Tsivian brings up this issue when quoting Kevin Brownlow's response to the screening of pre-Eisensteinian cinema at the *Giornate del cinema muto* in Pordenone, 1989: "These films are amazing. They seem to only have two speeds, 'slow' and 'stop'" (2004: 342). Tsivian finds causal factors in the traditions of Russian arts rather than relating the pace of the films – and their 'tragic endings' – to a 'Russian national character' or 'a Zeitgeist.' (2004: 339-48) Tsivian does not specifically address camera movement in this piece but the more than three minute long receding tracking shot from Bauer's *After Death* could hardly be a better example of the way in which camera movement can contribute to

Brownlow's two modes of pacing: In this shot the camera slowly recedes, then pauses, then recedes, occasionally panning as it captures Andrei (Vitold Polonsky) and his friend arriving at and entering the soirée at Princess Tarskaia's. Contrary to the example in *Queen of Spades*, the character at no point seems to push the camera on. Throughout the shot the camera *anticipates* Andrei's movements as though luring him into a strange house and a social gathering that he would prefer not to be involved in.

The mid-teens camera movement trend that Salt credits *Cabiria* for initiating is much more complex and heterogeneous than such an account would have us believe. The functional diversity of the examples from *Twilight of a Woman's Soul*, *Queen of Spades* and *After Death* do not misrepresent an existing functional continuity. Many other tracking shots - particularly from Russian and American films - could be enlisted to illustrate an even greater diversity of mid-teens camera movement: For instance a pull-back from Gizella's bed in *The Dying Swan* serves an abstract function in foreboding that her soul will leave her body, in *Intolerance* the camera does not merely accompany dancers but itself *participates* in the dance and also in *Intolerance* a forty-second 'crane shot' descends from a great height while moving forwards towards the dancers at the feast of Belshazzar flaunting *virtuosity of transport* while simultaneously displaying a large-scale vista.

But how can we explain this trend? And perhaps just as significantly, why did camera movement all of a sudden seem to disappear again? After such wide-reaching explorations of the resources of camera movement, why did filmmakers suddenly turn against it?

Wider historical developments as well as personal history certainly offer some pointers. In Russia the October-revolution spiraled Protazanov's career in a different direction and Bauer, who had been the chief proponent of camera mobility, died in 1917. When the industry got up and going again a montage-based cinema took its place. And this proclivity for editing-based cinema is the perhaps the most likely explanation.

In America, for instance, the process of tailoring storytelling to what has later been referred to as the classical paradigm encouraged a gravitation towards the resources of continuity editing *before* taking on the resources of camera movement: "[B]y 1920, Hollywood had bound cinematic storytelling closely to cutting," argues Bordwell (Bordwell, Staiger, Thompson 1985: 304).



Interestingly, Raoul Walsh's *Sadie Thompson* (1928) which was made as another camera movement-trend was supposed to be at its highest, is a much more statically composed film than *Regeneration* (1915). As to a landmark film like *Intolerance* many commentators have highlighted its narrative idiosyncrasy - its four distinct but thematically linked narratives set in different historical epochs - but there is also a tension in the film between narrative demands and stylistic practices that has not been adequately addressed. Historians have generally highlighted the spectacular crane-like shots during the feast but overlooked that Griffith's propensity for a bombastic spatial aesthetics presented him with problems that Allan Dwan's massive elevator-crane-construction could not quite solve: Griffith crams his spaces and strains the limits of the frame and - as a consequence of his attempt to capture the grandeur of the space - one *also* finds mobile shots in *Intolerance* that actually *struggle* to 'take-it-all-in' (fig. 52-3). The classical paradigm would not privilege spatial aesthetics over narrative demands and consequently such staging strategies were bound to be at most a minority strand.



Fig. 52-3. *Intolerance* (1916). From the top of the 'crane,' pans and tilts struggle to take in the immense set.

### 2.3 Camera Movement and the 1920s Avant-Garde

When the autonomous and axial movement in the mid-teens gave way to more static shot staging around 1917, it would be some while before the functional palette of camera movement was expanded again: "By 1917 the tracking shot craze in America was declining, and by 1918 and 1919 tracking shots on quasi-

static scenes had again become rare [...].” (Salt 1992: 127).<sup>120</sup> The tempering of the use of camera movement in the late teens applies to European cinema as well.

Camera movement as a stylistic choice was not erased off the menu entirely but was generally limited to isolated instances. The years 1917-1922 offer few examples of novel functions when compared to the camera movement trend in the mid-teens:

At the very beginning of the nineteen-twenties the first phase of camera mobility in 1915 and 1916 seemed to be almost forgotten. From time to time one can see a small framing movement used in some films, particularly in America, but in general shot after shot stays quite fixed. In American and German films the only kind of tracking shot to be found, and that only extremely rarely, is the parallel tracking shot, in which the camera accompanies actors walking along at a fixed distance from it. (Salt 1992: 157)

Around 1922-23 in Germany and France in particular, a few filmmakers who would soon bring much innovation to the vocabulary of camera movement began to be more inventive with the device: eerie forward-gliding tracking shots in Abel Gance’s *Au secours* (1923) lead the viewer’s eyes through a castle entrance gate and further into the estate, passing leaves and branches through which one can see the ‘haunted’ castle looming up and of course Gance’s *La roue* (1922) where a platform dolly was used to lay out the space of the train personnel’s café and where mobile shots taken from train mounts added to the frenetic pacing of the action sequences;<sup>121</sup> in *El Dorado* (1921) Marcel L’Herbier used a combination of optical effects and camera movements to invoke the type of semi-subjective imagery launched in *Dreams of a Rarebit Fiend* (1906) and later developed in F.W. Murnau’s *Der letzte Mann*, i.e. shots in which the psychological or emotional state of a character is suggested while said character is visible in the frame. According to David Bordwell French theorists of the period actively advocated subjective camera movement “to enhance the

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<sup>120</sup> Pull-backs and push-ins did not entirely disappear but it is nevertheless interesting that a pull-back from the 1917-film *Wild and Woolly* (John Emerson) starring Douglas Fairbanks is compositionally motivated, functionally clear and very much in line with later conventions and norms: We are presented with a shot of Fairbanks’ character seated in front of a tepee with a fire burning until the pull-back reveals the Western setting to be placed in his Manhattan apartment.

<sup>121</sup> The tripod rests on a triangular platform with three large wheels. Shots of the platform dolly in action appear in *Autour de la roue* (Blaise Cendrars, 1923) and are included in the documentary *Cinema Europe* (1996). There is an extended pull-back which starts on a close shot of protagonist Sisif sleeping on a couch and gradually reveals the wider context of the train engineers’ café. But most of the camera movements in the 3-hour print of *La roue* are pans and tilts or shots filmed from a moving train. *Cinema Europe* contains a mobile follow shot taken on the same location that is not included in the 3-hour print so there must be more in the longer versions of the film.

audience's identification with characters' feelings" (1985: 229) and there are actually a fair number of p.o.v. shots amongst the pans and tilts in *La roue* for example. Other notable examples include the arcing shot in *L'Auberge Rouge* (Jean Epstein, 1923) that lends a stronger sense of intimacy and unity to a dinner table party by enclosing them in a circling move and in the final sequence of Rene Clair's *Paris Qui Dort* (1924) camera movement (along with rapid editing and speeded up action) is used to induce a dizzying pace by means of continuously changing graphic rhythms.<sup>122</sup>

### 2.3.1 Die Entfesselte Kamera

In Germany, the team of director-producer Lupu Pick and scriptwriter Carl Mayer had made *Scherben* (1921) with Friedrich Weinmann as cinematographer and *Sylvester* (1923) with Guido Seeber (street scenes) and Karl Hasselmann (interior scenes) as cinematographers.<sup>123</sup> These two films display the first signs of what would be referred to as 'die entfesselte Kamera' (the unchained camera). Both *Scherben* and *Sylvester* were produced by Pick's production company Rex-Film GmbH and Carl Mayer had originally written *Der letzte Mann* for Pick intending it to be the third film in the trilogy. Disagreements terminated Pick and Mayer's cooperation (Eisner 1973: 154) and the project came into the hands of producer Erich Pommer and F.W. Murnau at UFA.

Although both *Scherben* and *Sylvester* share traits with German Expressionist film on a number of counts such as bursts of expressionist performance style (Eisner 1969: 182, 192-5), the emphasis on morbid psychology and the disintegration of the lower middle-class family (Cook 1996: 117), the narratives are resolutely in the Kammerspiel tradition. Both films situate the main part of the story within the confines of the everyday surroundings of a

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<sup>122</sup> See Bordwell (1980: 274-75) for a description of the camera moves in *El Dorado* and *Paris Que Dort*. A few other notable camera movements of the time are discussed in this book (pp. 158-62, 274-6) as well as in Salt (1992: 127). Beware, however, that Salt misrepresents the example from *Blind Husbands* (Eric von Stroheim, 1919). Stroheim does not use 'a p.o.v. tilt of a villain sizing up his female prey' but a *pair* of embodied p.o.v. movements to contrast two antithetical characters in the story: First we see von Steuben's p.o.v. (Stroheim), looking up his future nemesis though ultimate savior, the stout, pipe-smoking and shabbily clad mountaineer Silent Sepp (Gibson Gowland). Then we get Sepp's p.o.v. looking *down* the petite, yet refined, figure of the peacockish Steuben – impeccably dressed in uniform.

<sup>123</sup> CineBase CBW005274 & CBW016340. Hosted by CineGraph - Hamburgisches Centrum für Filmforschung.

lower middle-class family and generally avoid intertitles to convey drama by means of predominantly naturalist acting instead.<sup>124</sup> Both films can be described as quotidian tragedies. In *Scherben* a visiting railroad inspector (Paul Otto) initiates an affair with the stationmaster's daughter (Edith Posca) which so shames her mother (Hermine Straßmann-Witt) that she practically commits suicide. When the stationmaster (Werner Krauss) comes to realize the reason for his wife's death, he kills the inspector. Towards the end of the film, he stops the train and confesses his crime. His confession is conveyed by means of the only dialogue intertitle in the film: "Ich bin ein Mörder!"

The action in *Scherben* takes place in the course of five days and is limited to very few locations. *Sylvester* is similar in this regard in that the action takes place in the course of only one day: New Years Eve. Like *Scherben* it focuses on the misfortunes of a small family, in this case the strife of Die Mutter (Frida Richard) and Die Frau (Edith Posca) over Der Mann (Eugen Klöpfer), and it is similarly restricted in the number of adjacent settings: a dining room, a kitchen and a patisserie are the sites where the main action takes place, other spaces and locales are what Carl Mayer refers to as *Umwelt* (Chiarini 1967: XXIV).

*Scherben* and *Sylvester* are not merely important because they contain more moving shots than the average production at the time but because they apply individual camera movements *and* patterns of camera movement with a strong sense of deliberation and pre-meditation. For instance Siegfried Kracauer describes a camera movement from *Scherben* that relates motives which come to stand in a symbolic relationship to one another: The camera moves from a shot of a scare crow fluttering in the wind to a shot of a window where we see the silhouette of the inspector and the daughter about to initiate the fatal romance (Kracauer 1947: 104-5). Kracauer's description is not altogether precise as it suggests that the camera moves from A (scare crow) to B (the couple in the window). In fact, the camera only tilts up ever so slightly keeping the scare crow in the lower right foreground of the frame while the window pops into view in the upper left corner of the frame (fig. 54-5). One should be careful not to overemphasize the contribution made by camera movement in this case. For instance it would be misleading to claim that camera movement *itself* functions

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<sup>124</sup>The spectrum of acting is actually quite wide. At one end are the sudden bursts of emotion through expressive gestures. At the other end is the ponderous and resigned pantomime. In between these two modes is naturalist performance: the family gathered around the table eating dinner, the colloquial interaction of Wife and Mother-in-law setting the table and the perfectly natural way the Husband and Wife go about performing their separate chores.

symbolically in this shot. Rather in juxtaposing the two motives the camera movement is *realizing* symbolic potential that was latent in the represented motives.



Fig. 54-5. *Scherben* (1921). The camera tilts up from a shot of the scare crow to include the window in the frame.

Nevertheless, the function achieved by juxtaposing the scare crow and the 'romance' by means of camera movement is revealing of the dissimilarity to symbolic juxtaposition achieved by intellectual montage: i.e. *cutting* to a motive that does not belong to the fictional world portrayed but provides a symbolic comment on the action which the viewer must make sense of intellectually.<sup>125</sup> The effect achieved by means of camera movement in *Scherben* is one of symbolic juxtaposition but does *not* involve disrupting spatial contiguity and temporal continuity. In *Scherben* the vicinity of the two motives is realistically motivated and their spatial contiguity is never disrupted: thus, the camera movement achieves its effect without fragmenting the homogeneity of the diegetic space and time. This way of using camera movement to juxtapose action and motifs for symbolic effect would reappear throughout film history, for instance in *La ronde* (Max Ophuls, 1950).

Apart from this short but poignant camera movement the most noteworthy aspect of the film's mobile cinematography are not really "pan shots" which some commentators have argued (e.g., Kracauer 1947: 104; Luft 1953: 381) but seven forward-moving tracking shots down the railroad line interspersed as a leitmotif throughout the first 23 minutes of the film. The first two examples constitute the opening shots of the film. These two are the only

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<sup>125</sup> Sergei Eisenstein's definition of intellectual montage: (1949 [1929]: 82-3). Charlie Chaplin utilized this editing principle at the beginning of *Modern Times* (1936) to criticize the dehumanization of labor in Fordian mass production: a shot of a herd of sheep is followed by a shot of workers swarming out the subway.



consecutive ones and also vary from the others in that they show only the tracks whereas the subsequent examples feature the stationmaster.

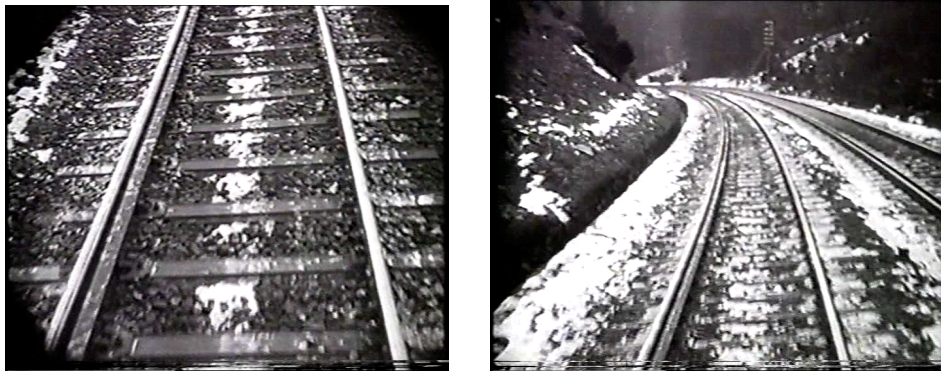


Fig. 56-7. *Scherben* (1921). The intertitle "Ein Tag" / "One Day" opens film, then a diamond shaped dissolve introduces the viewer to the mobile shot of the railroad tracks. As the camera glides across the tracks and the snow all around them it slowly begins to tilt up to show more of the railroad line ahead.

Functionally the opening shots of *Scherben* precurse those opening shots in Gance's horror spoof-film *Au secours* (1923) mentioned above but they much more effectively accumulate feelingful qualities. In the absence of human beings in the frame, the stark winter landscape gains in prominence. The effect of these shots is not only subtly disturbing because of the landscape but also because the tempo of the movements is too slow to represent the movement of a train yet too robust, mechanical and smooth to invoke the p.o.v. of an unidentified character. The slow, steady tempo of the movement, the stark and barren landscape, the uncertainty about what is driving the camera forwards and the refusal to point out clearly a likely destination<sup>126</sup> inflect the shots with a hypnotic inevitability and evoke expectations of horrific disasters lying ahead. In fact, if one had no preceding knowledge of the film (time of production, genre etc), one could easily assume that these were the opening shots of a horror film or a documentary on concentration camps.<sup>127</sup>

The subsequent examples are similar in tempo but the feelingful qualities evoked are modified. They are not as much general properties of the shot as they are specific psychological states ascribed to the stationmaster. In following closely behind the stationmaster as he takes his methodically slow steps down the (same old familiar) railroad line, the contribution of camera movement in the first two follow shots is to magnify the sense of dispirited, dreary routine that are relayed by Krauss' bodily posture.

<sup>126</sup> In the second shot one can detect a house next to the railway line but it is placed so far into the background of the shot that viewers may easily fail to notice it.

<sup>127</sup> Naturally, musical accompaniment could tweak and modify the feelingful qualities.

There are differences in terms of duration and the amount of profile coverage but basically the five axial follow shots are structurally similar. Nevertheless, the action that occurs *in between* them affects the way in which we understand the contribution of camera movement to the full meaning of the shots. Between follow shots two and three we come to know that the stationmaster's daughter has become involved with the inspector. This preceding action suddenly invests the action of the stationmaster and the movement of the camera with suspense: We assume that he is on his way home to his enraged wife and suspect aggressive confrontation upon hearing about his daughter's fall from virtue. Will he come home in time to set things straight? But when we *return* to the third follow shot about two minutes later, he does not seem to have made significant progress. The accumulation of suspense is punctured and the stationmaster's role in the entire affair presumed to be ineffectual. For a brief moment the act of walking the railroad line appeared as one fragment of a last minute rescue-editing pattern, but the reappearance of the third follow shot suggest that it is more like a permanent existential condition, i.e. that the stationmaster is sidelined, isolated and powerless within the family structure. The function of the camera movement - though structurally similar to the previous one - is tweaked because of its placement in the overall pattern of shots. Pacing is still fundamental to the shot but the accumulation of tension that camera movement added to the second follow shot is now almost reversed. The pacing of the third follow shot almost seems to *deflate* the tension that the previous one helped to cumulate.

Comments regarding camera movements in *Sylvester* can only be made with reservations since the existing prints are incomplete. Already in the sixties Lotte Eisner remarked that many camera movements were gone from then "modern prints" (Eisner 1969: 191) and argued that one would have to turn to Carl Mayer's published scenario to get a sense of the function of the original functions of its camera movements.

Thanks to a silent film collector, I have had a chance to see an 8mm copy of what appears to be the American release print.<sup>128</sup> Although this print is not complete there is still extensive camera movement in the film. The application of camera movement reflects a general tendency in Mayer's scripted directions (also noted by Eisner): Many of the movements – though not all – are devoted to representing the so-called *Umwelt* (1969: 186-193). In the opening titles these are listed as Street, a Churchyard and The Sea.<sup>129</sup> Except for one brief tilt and pan at the end of the film The Sea is represented in static shots. Similarly, the Churchyard is only represented in two brief lateral tracking shots towards the end of the film after the death of Der Mann.

By far the most extensive camera movement in the film takes place in the Street: The camera ventures out into the street for the first time just over two minutes into the film. From a shot of the entrance to the patisserie the camera slowly recedes on a slightly diagonal route as a crowd of pedestrians pass on the sidewalk; the camera tracks left into the street, cars passing on both sides of the camera; it pauses for a few seconds, taking in the street scene, before resuming its lateral motion - now predominantly panning rather than tracking. Remarkably the camera retraces its route at the end of the shot. All these movements, even the brief pause, are scripted by Mayer.

Director Lupu Pick argues that the vision driving the new camera movement technique was to make the *Umwelt* suffuse the constricted spaces of the main action like the ocean surrounding an island (Chiarini 1967: XX). This is a persuasive argument and an appropriate analogy. The *Umwelt*-shots stand out because of their placement in the narrative (they often interrupt the action) and because of the structure of movement: the camera ventures out on its own like a probe moving independently of the figures. Combined with the sparing use of

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<sup>128</sup> The version is probably identical to the print screened at Internationale Stummfilmtage in Bonn, 2005. It is in the collection of National Film Center, Tokyo. There are a few flash frames, i.e. shots where only a few frames remain but the running time of 66 minutes is close to original listings. Unfortunately, a number of scripted *Umwelt*-scenes are still missing: e.g. a Churchyard scene (sc. 14) and a scene in a forest (sc. 18). According to Mayer's script both were to contain extensive camera movement (Chiarini 1967: 44, 52).

<sup>129</sup> Eisner refers to Mayer's script where directions for camera movement are generally used in scenes representing the *Umwelt* whereas more conventional shots are used to represent the main action of the film (1969: 191). This holds up well for the final film. There are a few camera movements such as a short pan representing the optical p.o.v. of the Mother as she moves her gaze from a photograph of the wife and her son to a shot of her and the son. This is a significant shot because the realization that comes from this action triggers the bursts of jealous violence that ultimately push the son/husband to suicide but on the whole camera movement is sparsely used for the main action of the film.



camera movement in other scenes, the pattern of movement suggests to the spectator the very significance of the *Umwelt* as a particular world.

The intricate ways in which shots of the *Umwelt* are intercut with the presentation of the main action owes more to the resources of editing yet Ernst Engel, editor of the scenario, has some insightful comments on how the camera movements correlate with the pacing of the film. Engel argues that the *Umwelt* is not presented as “accessory action or reaction” but instead as “accessory rhythm, in or out of tempo, as a symbol reinforcing and amplifying the given facts of the drama” (ibid.). Clearly, Engel is correct in assuming that the film stimulates a reading of the movements as serving an abstract function.

This is acknowledged by Mayer who himself thinks of these camera movements as serving an abstract function: “[B]y a continual shift in depth and height around the events taking place, [the camera movement] should convey the vertigo human beings experience when trying to come to terms with their environment” (translated in Eisner 1969: 191). This ties in well with scripted portrayal of the Street as a modernist inferno: “A square looms up. Like a shadow! In the flow of many lights. And traffic! Motor-cars! Trams! Carriages! Men! Electric signs! Motor-cars! A single entangled mass. Whose elements are barely distinguishable” (translated in Eisner 1969: 189). It would appear to tie in less well with camera movements in the Churchyard and the forest but since most of these are not available in existing prints, Mayer will have the last word in this discussion.

Despite precursors in both French and German cinema, it was undoubtedly the use of camera movement in *Der letzte Mann* which had the most substantial effect on the stylistic palette of filmmaking and which - together with *Variété* (E.A. Dupont, 1925) from the following year - propagated the idea of ‘die entfesselte Kamera’ as it was known at the time (Lejeune 1931: 119; Macgowan 1965: 236; Bacher 1978: 16-22; Salt 1992: 157; Cook 2001: 119).<sup>130</sup> As Lutz Bacher

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<sup>130</sup> Although *Variété* was an international hit and by most accounts is said to have invigorated the idea of “die entfesselte Kamera,” it should be pointed out that although the domestic releases of *Der letzte Mann* and *Variété* were less than eleven months apart, the American premieres of these two films (both in New York City) were actually eighteen months apart. *Der letzte Mann* / *The Last Laugh* was first shown on January 5<sup>th</sup> 1925 whereas *Variété* / *Variety* received its US premiere June 27<sup>th</sup> 1926. By the time *Variety* premiered in New York, a number of American films such as *The Eagle* (released November 8 1925) and *The Big Parade* (released November 1925) had already demonstrated an increasing proclivity for mobile cinematography. Release dates: imdb.com

has pointed out the actual camera mobility in *Der letzte Mann* has been somewhat exaggerated in earlier accounts.<sup>131</sup> According to Bacher there are only 45 camera movements in the entire film, many of which appear in shots that also contain segments with stationary camera (1978: 16).

There are a number of structurally complex camera movements in the film such as the receding tracking shot at the end of the film which weaves its way through the restaurant past diners who amuse themselves at the news of the former porter's sudden inheritance but ultimately it is the more clearly defined *functions* of those camera movements that have secured its canonic status.

For instance, *Der letzte Mann* helped to launch a tradition of opening a film with a virtuosity take: The film opens with the camera placed in a descending elevator, then as the elevator comes to a halt and its doors open, the camera makes a short forward movement before an almost imperceptible cut to a similarly paced forward-moving shot brings us closer to the revolving door at the entrance of the Hotel Atlantic. As Frieda Grafe has suggested the introductory camera movement was staged so as to call American producers' and viewers' attention to the director: "In English it is called 'display': flexing your muscles. *Der Letzte Mann* was one of the films that should have drawn the Americans' attention to Murnau" (Grafe 1990: 167).<sup>132</sup>

The opening shot of *Der letzte Mann* has been mentioned *many* times by historians as well as critics (e.g., Jungstedt 1974: 166; Cook 1996: 119; Thompson & Bordwell 1994: 118) but the recently restored version by Luciano Berriatúa suggests that maybe we have not fully understood the implications of the shot. First of all, it should be noted that the opening shot is essentially different from the tradition it helped to establish because the movement of the camera mimes the viewpoint of a human character (the almost imperceptible cut excluded) whereas later virtuoso opening shots such as in *Touch of Evil* (Orson Welles, 1958) or more recently in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (Tim Burton, 2005) would be more concerned with transporting the viewer, presenting him or her with viewpoints not normally accessible in everyday life. In *Der letzte Mann* the elevator boy even bows to the camera after opening the door. The fact that there

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<sup>131</sup> Bacher cites Theodor Huff: "In *The Last Laugh* the camera travels almost continually" (1948: 8); and Lewis Jacobs. "The camera traveled continually from the opening scene of a revolving hotel door, in and out of streets, up and down houses, through doors and windows, like a living organism and with amazing facility." (1939: 310). See Bacher (1978: 15-16).

<sup>132</sup> My translation.

is no lead-in or pay-off shot encouraging us to associate the movement of the camera with a specific character has led some commentators to suggest that the camera focalizes the viewpoint of an unidentified guest at the hotel.

While there is nothing different about the actual shot containing the camera movement in Luciano Berriatúa's recently restored version, the shot is here preceded by an intertitle that invites the viewer to read the focalization of the camera in a particular way.

Heute bist Du der Erste, geachtet von Allen, ein Minister, ein General, vielleicht sogar ein Fürst. Weisst Du, was Du morgens bist?!  
Today, you are number one, respected by everyone, a minister, a general, perhaps even a prince. Do you know what you will be tomorrow?!

The nature and diegetic status of the focalization is complicated by the intertitle. The viewpoint that the intertitle allots to the camera is not simply that of an unidentified hotel guest within the world of the story. Clearly, the large majority of camera movements are not focalized by characters within the diegesis but this example still resides within the realm of subjective camera movements. It appears to invoke a *presence* not identified within the diegesis. We have come to recognize such shots from horror films where the mobile camera inhabits the presence of an unidentified ominous Other but this is hardly the case in *Der letzte Mann*.

The *presence* of those opening camera movements in *Der letzte Mann* is of a different kind. In the final analysis nearly all camera movements are of course designed with a viewing audience in mind but it is quite rare for a film to purport that the movement of the camera represents *the spectator himself* inscribed into the fabric of the film. This is in fact how the opening title suggests we understand the camera movements that succeed it. The intertitle addresses the spectator in second person and by implication the viewpoint provided by the camera is not the "I" or "they" but the "you" of the camera. Consequently, *Der letzte Mann* occupies the peculiar position of a silent film that serves as a precursor to those rare examples where a second person voice-over is combined with a mobile vantage point (e.g., Lars von Trier's *Europa*). Although the "you" of the camera may be seen as a Brechtian device in *Europa* as well, it is nevertheless important to stress that *Der letzte Mann* utilizes the second person address for very specific reasons.

Through the combined efforts of the intertitle and the camera movements 'a spectator' is both inscribed into the fabric of the film yet remains alien to the diegetic world presented. The camera movement invites the spectator in but as an observer rather than a participant. It transports this "you" down the escalator and across the lobby over to the revolving door which comes to represent an existential roulette wheel echoing visually the wording of the intertitle: "who knows what you will be tomorrow?"

Immediately after the shot of the revolving door, there is a cut to Jannings outside the hotel and the camera assumes a characterological function. Throughout the film the camera will also lend its perspective to Jannings (not only optically, but also indicating his psychological state and showing us images that he sees in the mind's eye)<sup>133</sup> and it will serve abstract functions such as visualizing the movement of sound. Nonetheless, the perspective presented in the opening shots has important implications for the way in which we understand the much-debated ending of the film. When the second and final title of the film informs us of the sudden inheritance bestowed upon Jannings' character, the film appears to surrender and sacrifice our engagement with him without clear motivation, but in fact it merely brings us back to the distanced observer perspective offered in the beginning allowing us to judge the actions from this external vantage point. Thus the end of the film is not merely a tagged on happy ending. The intertitle and the final minutes of the film serve a Brechtian function but one that has been prepared for by the opening intertitle and the subsequent audience-addressed camera movement. The return to the external vantage point allows the spectator to view the narrative in a didactic light and prompts viewers to conclude that it is after all not the social status of a uniform that is the source of power but money. One would have been hard pressed to reach this aesthetic conclusion without the opening title of the film and consequently Berriatúa's restored version not only affects the understanding of the *opening* shot. From the perspective of formal composition the return to a direct mode of address bestows upon the film a circular structure and a sense of closure, yet the subversive critique of German society becomes couched within a didactic program.

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<sup>133</sup> The term 'the mind's eye' is from Cook (1996: 119).

### 2.3.2 In The Slipstream of *Der letzte Mann*

The camera movement trend in the mid- and late-twenties that *Der letzte Mann* and *Variété* helped to instigate is widespread but also multifaceted. According to Kenneth McGowan *Der letzte Mann* had “a greater effect on Hollywood technique than any other single foreign film” (1965: 229) and Lewis Jacobs argues that *Variety* “put the American movie-goers into a white heat of enthusiasm over film art” (quoted in Cook 1996: 121). David Cook argues that the success of these two films “insured the permanence of German influence upon Hollywood studios until the end of the silent era” (1996: 121).

One of the Hollywood filmmakers who were influenced by ‘die entfesselte Kamera’ was William A. Wellman. Kevin Brownlow remarks that Wellman’s *You Never Know Women* (1926) and *Wings* (1927) both made “flamboyant use of the moving camera, a style which Wellman adopted in the mid-twenties as it was becoming fashionable in Europe” (Brownlow 1968: 168). David Bordwell even argues that *Beggars of Life* (William A. Wellman, 1928) displays “free-ranging camera movements,” which combined with its rapid editing and dialogue played out in tight singles “looks much like today’s movies” (Bordwell 2002: 21). Yet as William Wellman’s recollections remind us there was also resistance to the initial trend:

Camera movement I loved – and then I got awfully sick of it. I did the first big boom shot in *Wings*, when the camera moved across the tables in the big French café set. Then everybody got on a boom, and both me and Jack Ford got right off. We both agreed that we’d never use the thing again. There’s too much movement. It makes people dizzy – it really does, and they become more conscious of the camera movement than they are of what the hell you’re photographing. (Brownlow 1968: 168)

Filmmakers may have also adopted mobile cinematography for different reasons. Wellman recalls that his reason for moving the camera was to visually substantiate the type of situation he was shooting: “I don’t know what made me begin to move the camera around. I’d seen fights, and wanted to get closer to them, so I’d run forward. Then I thought I’d do that with a camera” (Brownlow 1968: 168). The logic of such situationally expressive camera movements can work two ways. One way of understanding such movement is that spectators have learned to attribute a particular meaning to such a shot per convention. On the other hand, the filmmaker can also be said to mimic the perception of the

characters *while* it is capturing them to let us share their sensory and psychological experience while we are watching them (this is what *Kri-kri e il tango* did). It is peculiar that filmmakers chose to communicate subjective states from objective vantage points but it nevertheless has become a predominant function of handheld camera movement in mainstream cinema. Of course, this second possibility also works by convention, though of different sort, the learned logic being that there is a relation between the sensory and psychological activity of the characters and the actions of the camera.

The influence of 'die entfesselte Kamera' in *Der letzte Mann* involves so many remarkable films both in America and in Europe that it is impossible to do every film justice so what follows is more of a survey of some of the contributions to the stylistic palette that became a menu of options for later filmmakers. In particular I will discuss at length two small-scale camera movement strategies in *Die Liebe der Jeanne Ney* (G.W. Pabst, 1927).

E.A. Dupont's *Variété* (1925) is probably the film showing the most immediate influence from *Der letzte Mann*. It centers on the story of three trapeze artists and as in *Der letzte Mann* Emil Jannings is in front of the camera and Karl Freund behind it. Some of the camera movements almost seem to be a continuation of camera movements applied in *Der letzte Mann*. The latter film contains a fast pull-back from a trumpet visualizing the movement of sound that *extends from the instrument*. *Der letzte Mann* contains a stationary shot of the porter listening but *Variété* applies a fast push-in on an ear to visualize sound *entering an ear*. The most novel camera movements in the film are the renowned embodied p.o.v. shots from a swinging trapeze.

*Variété* was a more successful film than *Der letzte Mann* and its trapeze shots may very well have been the butt of the first parodic camera movements. Granted this intertextual function is engaged by a 15-minute experimental film rather than a narrative film, namely Paul Leni's first puzzle word film *Rebus Film no. 1* (1925) but it deserves mention nonetheless: interspersed between the credits and the three intertitles "I am," "the first," "crossword puzzle," the film contains a flurry of short mobile shots. We see a number of handheld shots following one dog then another, a camera turned upside down while filming into troubled waters at the back of a boat, wild diagonal movements from bottom left to top right and then a reverse movement in the next shot, speeded

up motion of shots taken from the back of moving train, the front of a car seen in a three-quarter view but filmed with a camera that is moving around in circles and so forth. The main reason why it is likely that these were intended to parody the camera movement craze at the time is not only the structure of movement but also the fact that in one of these mobile shots the camera pans (while at a Dutch angle) rapidly across the front of a movie theater advertising *Variété*.

Murnau's name became even more strongly associated with 'die entfesselte Kamera' after *Tartuffe* (1925) and *Faust* (1926) - in particular young Faust's flight to Parma on Mephistopheles' cloak in *Faust* (1926). This latter example was photographed by Carl Hoffman on a miniature set and it is a precursor to many of those *virtuosity of transport* shots that can be witnessed in contemporary blockbusters where the camera assumes a privileged viewpoint not ordinarily accessible in everyday life.

### 2.3.3 Expressive Schemes

Georg Wilhelm Pabst's *Die Liebe Der Jeanne Ney* (1927) also joined the camera movement trend but what is remarkable about this film is not as much the novelty of individual camera movements as the adherence to particular camera movement strategies. When a film systematically tailors stylistic devices to particular story action across the course of a film it can be referred to as an "expressive scheme" (Salt 1992: 289) and if applied to focal length strategies a "lens plot" (Bordwell 2006: 146). For instance in *Making Movies*, Sidney Lumet writes of a strategy of following a lens plot in *12 Angry Men* by systematically raising the focal length of the lenses as the story unfolds in order to gradually increase the sense of cramped space and the pressure bearing down on the jury (Lumet 1995: 81-2).<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> For a more recent example see cinematographer Anastas Michos' comments on the lens plot of *Freedomland* (2006): "We tended to use the long end and the wide end; it was a picture on a 21mm or 27mm, or a 75mm or 150mm. I don't think we pulled out the 50mm, 40mm, or 35mm very often. It's a story of extremes and seemed to call for it." Quoted in John Calhoun (2006: 105). John Seale also argues that he used a lens plot in the filming of *Poseidon* (2006). See Williams (2006): 62-3

*Scherben* used patterned camera movement as a leitmotif between more ordinary character-interaction scenes that was tweaked to different ends, *Sylvester* tied its patterned use of movement to highlight and portray a symbolic *Umwelt* that existed parallel to the on-going story. *Die Liebe der Jeanne Ney* is one of the first films to clearly display how patterned movement can be made to enhance standard narrative scenes.

The opening title of the film sets the tone: “After the Russian Revolution, civil war raged in the Crimea, bringing in its wake chaos and misery and unscrupulous men.” The opening shot of the film substantiates the impression left by the intertitle: In close-up the camera moves diagonally down a pair of worn-out boots resting on a doorframe, past a pair of loose socks and the lining of stumped old pants and further down unto a desk covered with crumpled newspapers, an obscene drawing, cigarette butts, matches and indeterminate objects that lie sprayed out on the table in a way that signals several weeks of neglect. As the camera comes to rest on a close shot of the table, an un-groomed male hand moves into the frame fumbling around in the clutter of objects (fig. 58-60). The hand grasps hold of a cigarette butt and the camera follows diagonally to the right as the hand withdraws and we get to see the face of its owner: A man that we later come to know as the corrupt and unscrupulous Khalibiev, played by Fritz Rasp – a character actor whose sharp weasel-like features are aptly suited for this villainous role (Rasp plays the equally unsympathetic Uncle Meinert in Pabst’s *Das Tagebuch einer Verlorenen*, 1929).



Fig. 58-60. *Die Liebe der Jeanne Ney* (1927). During the camera movement we only get to see a series of fragments of Khalibiev’s figure and even the smaller objects such as the lamp and the bottles on the table are never seen in their entirety.

The proximity of the camera to the objects is an uncomfortable one. Instead of clearly laying out the spatial parameters of Khalibiev’s abode, the camera moves across fragments: detail, clutter and filth. Here Pabst taps into the realist style of the *Kammerspiel* film and the work of scriptwriter Carl Mayer, which highlighted everyday details and objects, not necessarily for



allegorical purposes such as was the case with the uniform in *Der letzte Mann*, but to integrate the quotidian into the storytelling structure of the films he penned (Luft 1953: 382). Nonetheless, Pabst goes a step further by letting the moving camera linger on a more filthy, cluttered even revolting mise-en-scene – at one point he shows us in close-up a blood stain fresh from the execution of a capitalist (one presumes).

Another characteristic is small and medium-scale jolts and an uneven camera route. If one studies the route of the camera in the opening shot one finds that the camera moves in what can best be described as a contorted S-shape as if the camera was filling out the spaces in a dot to dot illustration rather than following a smoothly rounded path.

This tendency for camera movement to be immersed in a world of corruption and depravation is also noticeable in establishing shots such as the second shot of the film. Here we are introduced to a somewhat wider space inhabited by sleazy, frivolous and corrupt characters yet certain qualities remain the same: erratic - almost cinema vérité-like - jolts, jarring frame lines, and again the camera is too close to the action to take it all in (fig. 61-3). We are not given supremacy over the represented space. Although the movement is broken up into temporary stops these contain no strong compositional pull. Later shots strongly suggest that this is in fact also our hero's point of view on the action. By denying our hero, Andreas, a spatially privileged viewpoint, the film teaches its spectator that although corruption and crime rule in the Crimea, it is a chaotic universe where *no character* has the supreme knowledge of a Dr. Mabuse (e.g., Fritz Lang, *Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler*, 1922) or a Haghi (Fritz Lang, *Spione*, 1928).



Fig. 61-3. *Die Liebe der Jeanne Ney* (1927). The frame lines cut off the dancer at the ankles and at the upper thigh, the head of one bar guest is cut off at the neck. The heads of two other guests are sliced straight through. Though other characters in the bar are given a more orthodox placement in the frame not even these characters come to 'rest' within the composition due to the jolts and uneasy movements of the camera. During the last movement across the table the camera seems to tilt up in a fit.

The camera movement strategy endorsed in the brief scenes portraying the courtship and later reunion of Jeanne and Andreas stands in sharp contrast to the way camera movement represents depravation and turmoil. From the vantage point of the dramatic action portrayed early in the film – scenes of corruption, political intrigue and so forth – the courtship of an amorous couple is in itself a departure but the visual presentation of the courtship substantiates the emotional release experienced by Jeanne and Andreas – and by the spectator. Whereas the ‘depravation scheme’ was characterized by rough and erratic movements, spatially disprivileged vantage points on the action, uncomfortable proximity, detail, fragmentation and claustrophobic interiors, the ‘amorous program’ is different in every way.

The courtship of Jeanne and Andreas is presented in only two brief shots but Pabst counterweighs their brevity by reserving the most expansive and fluid camera movements for these shots. The first of these starts on a flight of stairs after a political rally and instead of pushing the camera towards the filth and grime, Jeanne’s and Andreas’ fleeting smiles are accompanied by an expansive and swift pull-back that creates space around them. The pull-back structurally resembles a crane pull-back and no shot like it has occurred in the film so far (fig. 64-6).



Fig. 64-6. *Die Liebe der Jeanne Ney* (1927). A fire truck may have been used as camera support for this quick and expansive pull-back.

The pull-back amplifies the emotional release and overflow of spontaneous and powerful feelings experienced by the characters. The structurally idiosyncratic pull-back also ventilates the spatial confinement and claustrophobia of the interior scene preceding the flashback and invites volitional participation, i.e. “wanting - from one’s own position – the character[s] to obtain the object of [their] desire” (Raskin 1983).

Remarkably, the pull-back is followed by yet another expansive and fluid camera movement that enhances the characters’ sense of release, freedom and

spontaneity. This time a long and smooth parallel tracking shot accompanies Andreas and Jeanne as he chases her past trees and shrubbery. In effect, the pull-back *lifts* Jeanne and Andreas out of the urban context and the societal segregation and strictures that stand in the way of their romance and bridges the logic-defying geographical transition to a countryside setting. This second 'courtship shot' further punctures the political tension as well as the spatial claustrophobia conveyed by many of the interior scenes. Furthermore, the lateral movement past trees and shrubbery also imparts the shot with a lyrical quality that stands in sharp contrast to the prior scenes of the film (fig. 67-9).



Fig. 67-9. *Die Liebe der Jeanne Ney* (1927). The pull-back is followed by an expansive tracking shot in a countryside setting.

Significantly, these two 'courtship camera movements' almost drown amidst the scenes of treachery, seedy bars and political turmoil. In total the two shots take up a mere 20 seconds of screen time which are further gnawed at by a dissolve that bleeds into the first shot and a dissolve that leads the spectator out of the second shot. The very brevity of the two shots emphasizes the relative tenderness of the moment and makes the viewer want to cling on to these few frames of happiness. Equally significant both the *preceding* shot and the *subsequent* shot are symptomatic of the threat to Jeanne and Andreas' relationship: Andreas' gesture of Bolshevik aggression<sup>135</sup> on the one hand and the corrupt ploy of Khalibiev on the other hand. It is a shot of Andreas' clenched fist that dissolves into the first courtship shot and Jeanne's sweet recollections evaporate as an aggressively vibrating doorbell gradually replaces the shot of their coy glances. We soon come to know that it is Khalibiev who rings the bell at Alfred Ney's house where Jeanne is harboring these memories and that the doorbell not only serves as a symbolic disruption but a physical one as well (fig. 70-2).

<sup>135</sup> The on-march of the Bolsheviks, which forces Jeanne to return to France.



Fig. 70-2. *Die Liebe der Jeanne Ney* (1927). Andreas' clenched fist leads into the romantic interlude. Khalibiev ringing the doorbell leads us out of it.

When Jeanne and Andreas are reunited half an hour later in the film expansive camera movements are again employed by Pabst. As soon as the automobile carrying Jeanne appears, the camera starts to move. As Andreas pursues the car from the other side of a street fence a series of extensive and fluid parallel tracking shots follows him and Jeanne's wagon respectively. One may think of them as embodied p.o.v. shots but their potential focalizing function is not strongly marked by close lead-in shots. The central function of these numerous free-moving parallel tracking shots is again to convey the joyous release of bottled up emotions.

Camera movement came of its own in the mid- to late twenties. In Abel Gance's *Napoleon* (1927) the camera was perhaps 'liberated' even more than in any previous film. Judging from a letter Gance sent to his cinematographer Joseph-Louis Mundviller before production began in August 1924 camera movement was of central importance to Gance: "I ask you to devote all your care to the question of the movement of the cameras – rapid and easily manageable movement. It is the most important problem we have to solve."<sup>136</sup> Beyond acquiring the most portable handheld camera on the market, the Debrrie Photociné Sept, Gance's technical crew led by Simon Feldman constructed various camera supports such as a mount (or *cuirasse* as it was called) for the Sept so that it could be worn around the neck, an automatic panning head, a horse mount, a guillotine mount, a swinging trapeze mount, a sledge mount, a platform that could move up and down wooden rails on a staircase as well as a

<sup>136</sup> Abel Gance to Joseph-Louis Mundviller (August 28, 1924), AG/CNC. Quoted in Brownlow (2004: 44). Mundviller was originally attached to the project but was replaced by Jules Kruger about six months into production (Brownlow 2004: 42).

precursor to early sound era dollies<sup>137</sup> where the camera was not only mounted on a sledge but could be hoisted up and down using a similar mechanism to the guillotine mount (Brownlow 2004: 41-46, 56-74).

By means of these camera supports *Napoleon* (1927) brought together yet also transcended various uses of the mobile camera that had been applied in other films up until that time. A chase sequence where the camera is not only mounted on car but on a galloping horse<sup>138</sup> conveyed an even more exhilarating chase than the ride of the Klan in D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915) (Brownlow 2004: 72). In *Le Miracle des loups* (Raymond Bernard, 1924) handheld camera movement had been applied during battle scenes to visually suggest to the viewer what it would be like to physically take part in the action and at least one of the handheld movements also served as a p.o.v. shot of an unidentified character. The snowball fight in *Napoleon* intercuts handheld shots serving both of these functions with shots taken from a sledge<sup>139</sup> as well as handheld shots that are so frenzied that they cannot be said to represent the viewpoint of a character or an unassigned human agent partaking in the action but instead suggest the visual *idea* of hectic activity.<sup>140</sup>

The famous example where a camera swings across the national assembly during the singing of the Marseillaise owe a debt to the trapeze shots in *Variété* but whereas the movements in *Variété* were motivated p.o.v. or approximate p.o.v. shots, Gance's 'trapeze' shots are more ambitious and inclined towards the abstract function. An intertitle suggests to the viewer that being a member of the assembly was like being – as Napoleon was at this time in the film – on a boat in rough seas. However, Gance's 'trapeze' shots do not represent the p.o.v. of the members of the crowd. In swerving over the crowd the camera instead makes a roaring ocean out of the masses. At least three interpretations are viable. The camera movements can be understood as serving

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<sup>137</sup> E.g. the Bell and Howell dolly nicknamed the "Rollambulator" had a centre post that allowed for vertical camera movement. See "New Perambulator and Camera," (1932).

<sup>138</sup> The camera had to be driven by a motor for a steam engine modified to run on compressed air by the ingenious technician Simon Feldman. *Napoleon's* cinematographer Jules Kruger sat on a horse that ran next to the one carrying the camera wherefrom he could control the valves on the cylinder, which was necessary for the camera motor to work. See Brownlow (2004: 73-74) as well as Brownlow's documentary *Cinema Europe* (1995) for additional information on how the camera was operated.

<sup>139</sup> See a photograph of this 'dolly' in Brownlow (2004: 64).

<sup>140</sup> It should also be noted that intercutting static shots of *Napoleon* and sometimes superimposing them on the handheld footage makes a symbolic statement out of the sequence: the way in which the grandiose gestures of young Napoleon are cut into this footage makes a symbolic gesture out the sequence in the way that it points forward to Napoleon's later battles.



an abstract function in providing a visual simile of the *idea* that the revolutionary fervor was like the waves of an ocean. One could also argue that it is suggestive of the *experience* of being present at the event. Thus the camera movements offer the spectator an experience parallel to that of the members at the assembly. A third option is that the swinging camera movements represent Napoleon's p.o.v. in a figurative sense suggesting that despite his absence, he precedes over the events (i.e. that he rides the mass movement like a captain rides the waves of the ocean).

*Napoleon* stands as the most ambitious of the 1920s-films in its use of camera movement but like another highly *mobile* French Impressionist film of the time such as *L'Argent* (Marcel L'Herbier) its camera movements appear more functionally indistinct or ambiguous compared to the German tradition discussed earlier and for that reason also arguably less influential on a broad scale.

Unlike the often less clearly motivated camera movements in Gance's *Napoleon*, Frank Borzage's *Seventh Heaven* (1927) includes a striking vertical craning movement that is well-integrated into the narrative. Already in the opening title spectators come to know that the theme of verticality is written into the very dramatic structure of the film: "For those who will climb it, there is a ladder leading from the depths to the heights – from the sewer to the stars -- the ladder of Courage." The first scene takes place below street level, in a sewer, where the male protagonist Chico (Charles Farrell) reveals his dreams of upward social mobility and a job as street washer. Later in the film - after Chico announces his pretense wedding with Diane (Janet Gaynor) - the two of them drive to his abode in the huffing and puffing automobile Eloise. After sending off the cabby, the camera follows them through the narrow entrance to the building until they reach the stairs. The camera changes its axial course to a vertical one and follows Chico and Diane all the way to the seventh floor where they will live close to the heavenly firmament.<sup>141</sup>

*Seventh Heaven* (1927) also contains fast-paced receding tracking shots across the uneven ground of the Hole-in-the-sock neighborhood. It is likely that these shots were carried out by means of dolly suspended from rails in the

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<sup>141</sup> There is a masked cut on their way up but it is staged so as to seem like a continuous movement.

ceiling since such were constructed at the Fox Studios for a film that went into production before *Seventh Heaven: Sunrise* (1927) directed by W.F. Murnau.<sup>142</sup> Like *Der letzte Mann* and *Faust*, *Sunrise* represents another hallmark of ‘die entfesselte Kamera.’ As with *Der letzte Mann* Carl Mayer wrote the script for the film in which he penned down many of the camera movements that ended up in the final film. The film was shot by Charles Rosher and Karl Struss and contains some of the most arresting camera movements of silent cinema. One of the most renowned is the evocative tracking shot that both follows and detaches itself from Anses (George O’Brien) as he moves through the marsh towards his rendezvous with the Woman from the City (Margaret Livingston). The shot was achieved by means of a dolly suspended from overhead tracks – a method Charles Rosher had borrowed and adjusted from Carl Hoffman’s work in Berlin on Murnau’s *Faust* on which Rosher served as a consultant (Brownlow 1968: 230, 232).<sup>143</sup>

Many of the heralded directors incorporated camera movement into their aesthetic programs in the mid- to late twenties. Joseph von Sternberg first embraced mobile cinematography in *Underworld* (1927) (Bacher 1978: 21). His subsequent film *The Last Command* (1928) shows a superior command of the way in which camera movement can be orchestrated to strengthen particular story action as exemplified by those scenes where unidirectional tracking shots (without added panning) past rows of lined up soldiers add to the sense of militaristic precision, rigor and order. Just as Ophuls would later place objects of decor at set intervals to achieve a ‘musical’ sense of graphic rhythm so Sternberg does the same but achieves a graphic rhythm that can be likened to a military march rather than a Viennese waltz.

The mobile trend of the mid- to late 1920s can be evidenced in a number of films from other well-known directors such as Clarence Brown and Maurice Tourneur’s *The Eagle* (1925), Victor Seastrom’s *The Scarlet Letter* (1926), King Vidor’s *The Crowd* (1928), Marcel L’Herbier’s *L’Argent* (1928), Fritz Lang’s *Spione* (1928), Joe May’s *Asphalt* (1929), E.A. Dupont’s *Piccadilly* (1929), Carl Th. Dreyer’s *La Passion de Jeanne d’Arc* (1928) and Julien Duviver’s *Au bonheur des dames*

<sup>142</sup> Although *Sunrise* went into production before *Seventh Heaven* it was released subsequent to it.

<sup>143</sup> This one of the most extensively discussed camera movements in the history of cinema. See Bacher (1978), Bordwell (1985: 121-5), Wood (1998: 33-4). A number of the sections mentioned in 1.4 also refer to it. Cinematographer John Bailey discusses many of the camera movements in *Sunrise* on his commentary track for Eureka’s release of the film.

(1930) just to mention a few.<sup>144</sup> But even a film directed by a lesser-known director such as Edwin Carewe's *Evangeline* (1929) can weave a whole range of pull-backs, parallel and autonomous tracking shots into its visual syntax.

Apart from the canonic examples like *Faust*, *Sunrise* and *Napoleon* it is worth noting that in the mid- to late twenties one also finds surprisingly novel camera movements in films where one might not expect them. For instance in Yakov Protazanov's *Aelita* (1924) which is best known for its set design, a crane shot of a pier and a war ship serve as a p.o.v. shot as seen from Aelita's remote position on Mars (qua the machine invented by Gor, fig. 73-5). Even a film such as *Dans le nuit* (1929) directed by an actor, Charles Vanel, contains many camera movements. The operator even takes the camera on a briskly gyrating merry-go-round along with the newlywed couple, allowing spectators to take part in their exhilarating experience.



Fig. 73-5. *Aelita* (1924). A gigantic construction crane acts as camera support on this shot which leads to Aelita's discovery of the engineer Los whom she falls in love with.

How does one sum up and assess the development of camera movement across the silent era? One could test the possible validity of at least four teleological arcs:

- 1) Increase in complexity of movement.
- 2) Increase in quantity (development in the degree to which camera movement permeates the visual style of films).
- 3) Perfection of fluidity and smoothness.
- 4) Increase in functional capabilities.

Judging from the literature on the topic as well as the films viewed for this dissertation, camera movement cannot be said to follow any clear line of progression on any of these points. As to the first point, a number of silent films introduced complex movement which for various reasons was not integrated into the visual syntax of other films: for instance the push-in (*Hooligan in Jail*,

<sup>144</sup> Camera movement in some of these films has already been analyzed and interpreted at length, e.g. *L'Argent* (Noël Burch 1973: 129-62), *La Passion de Jeanne D'Arc* (Kau 1989: 149-198; Bordwell 1981: 74-8).



1903), extensive tracking (*Second-in-Command*, 1915), crane-like movement (*Intolerance*, 1916).

As to the second point, the most significant deviation relates to the international camera movement trend that emerged in the mid-teens but which was not sustained in the ensuing years. The decrease in quantity may have been related to larger political developments (The Russian Revolution and WW1), the death of a major contributor (Yevgeni Bauer) and alternate stylistic resources (the increasing reliance on editing as a storytelling device in American cinema). Naturally, these possible *causes* need to be investigated further than space and time have allowed me to do here.

Regarding the third point there does seem to be such a progression. Particularly, camera movements in prestige films of the late 1920s such as *Piccadilly* (1929), *Evangeline* (1929) and *Au bonheur de dames* (1930) seem to have reached a zenith of fluidity and smoothness. However, judging from available sources<sup>145</sup> the tracking shots in *The Second-in-Command* (1915) satisfy the criteria of fluidity and smooth synchronicity better than do many films of the mid-1920s. To fully answer the question, more films need to be seen and more information on available camera supports needs to be unearthed. Since I have not located any primary documents regarding camera supports of this time I can only recount the scant information supplied in various sources. From that evidence there does not seem to have been industry standards concerning for instance platform dollies and tracking equipment. Dollies, 'cranes' and tracking equipment appear to have been impromptu workshop inventions rather than professionally designed products for distribution. For instance Hal Mohr recounts how he devised tracks to be used on a film that was not released called *Pan's Mountain* (1914) – possibly the first tracking equipment to be used in an American studio (Maltin 1978: 78; Koszarski 1974: 48-53) - but also that this equipment was never put into production or used again.

Has there been a progression towards an increasingly wider functional palette? Here one should distinguish between the overall paradigms that camera movements function within. Providing a scenic view and laying out a diegetic space are related functions but appeal to two different forms of

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<sup>145</sup> I rely on various commentators' description of the tracking shots in *The Second-in Command* because I have not been able to see it myself (McGowan 1965: 436; Brownlow 1968: 23, 26; Staiger 1979 [1984]; Salt 1992: 127). The production circumstances are described by the film's producer Fred J. Balshofer (Balshofer & Miller 1967: 117-118).

engagement. An astonishing wealth of functions was actually established early on: virtuosity of transport in phantom ride films, Hitchcockian suspense in a story film from 1905 (*Stolen by Gypsies*), wild panning to convey an inebriated state (*Dream of a Rarebit Fiend*, 1906) and so forth. Nevertheless, although the two latter films *do* tell stories, camera movement came to serve much more sophisticated functions in the mid-teens when they operated within narratives where character-psychology and individuated causality played a more significant role. Camera movement could substantiate and amplify a more nuanced palette of feelingful qualities and psychological states.

The camera movement trend initiated in the 1920s in Germany partly revisited the same terrain that push-ins leading into flashbacks and other moderate ventures into psychological suggestiveness had treaded in the mid-teens but also demonstrated new ways in which camera movement could represent character psychology (optical point-of-view, affected p.o.v. *and* the mind's eye in *Der letzte Mann*). The functional palette was indeed extended in other ways: abstract functions (*fliegende Ton* in *Der letzte Mann*), parodic camera movement (*Rebus film no. 1*), patterned camera movement tweaked to different ends (*Scherben*), patterned use of camera movement for abstract-symbolic purposes (*Sylvester*) and expressive schemes for more conventional types of scenes (*Die Liebe der Jeanne Ney*). In any case, one can safely conclude that Jean Mitry was wrong in arguing that camera movements before *Der letzte Mann* were merely "descriptive" (2000 [1963]: 184). They had developed a whole range of functions, including abstract and psychological functions.

One may even stop to ask whether there are *any* functions that these films did not explore? Many silent films of the twenties are as complex in their construction and visual patterning as *any* contemporary film. The use of camera movement in the latter part of twenties is too polyphonic to allow for generalized conclusions. Indeed one of the reasons why the functional scope of camera movements in the twenties is difficult to summarize is that these films are rich in pre-codified practices. When watching a film such as *Sylvester* or *L'Argent* one often stops to consider: what *are* these movements to convey? One has to stretch one's facilities and *work at it*. In a way it is more difficult to account for the camera movements in *Sylvester* than it is to account for camera movement strategies of 1950s and 1960s art house cinema (e.g., Godard's famous tracking shot in *Week End*) because the latter could more easily be

understood as *oppositional* strategies to the Hollywood tradition of the 1930s and 1940s. The filmmakers of the 1920s such as Mayer, Pick, Murnau, Gance and others appeared to be *stretching* the functional reach of camera movement more than *reacting* to existing stylistic paradigms.

One possibility is of course to mobilize the term 'unmotivated' to dismiss camera movements that do not serve immediately apparent narrative functions such as laying out scenographic space, keeping the viewer's attention on the key players, singling out an important detail or suggesting psychological activity of significance to the story line. Trying to unearth the plethora of aesthetic resources of 1920s-camera movement finally reveals that there is a limit to how far functional analysis of camera movement can take you. At that point – but only at that point - one must patiently single out individual examples and mobilize the resources of stylistically sensitive interpretive criticism. Although chapter 4 does not take on a camera movement from the 1920s, the analyses will, in principle, show this dynamic interaction at work.

## 2.4 Camera Movement and The Transition to Sound

In the August 1932 edition of *American Cinematographer* one can read about a meeting of cinematographers and directors on the topic of camera movement. The first two paragraphs read:

For many weeks there has been much discussion among Hollywood cameramen and others over the problem of "trucking" shots. Ever since Rouben Mamoulian's picture "Applause" appeared with a multitude of shots in which the camera performed acrobatics, directors in Hollywood have been practically going wild in an attempt to inject moving camera shots in their pictures, with the result that many pictures seem to have been made with the camera constantly on the move and many pictures have come out with photography considerably lowered because of these efforts. This has caused no little concern among the cameramen who conscientiously attempt to give the finest of photography in all productions.

In an attempt to correct some of the perambulating, or trucking, abuses, the American Society of Cinematographers called a meeting on the evening of July 19 at the projection theatre of the Paramount Studios. To this meeting were invited a large group of outstanding motion picture directors, and the meeting developed into one of the most interesting and perhaps beneficial of any held by this organization in many years.

To readers unfamiliar with this mobile trend, these arguments might come as a

surprise and they certainly contradict some of the popular views on early sound films such as the one film historian David A. Cook sums up in *A History of Narrative Cinema*: “More important, as it has become almost axiomatic to say, the movies ceased to move when they began to talk, because between 1928 and 1931 they virtually regressed to their infancy in terms of editing and camera movement” (Cook 1996: 261). However, as the meeting above illustrates, the situation was far more complicated than that. The transition to sound was a watershed for camera movement but not the watershed described by Cook. It is in some ways the most interesting time span in the history of camera movement because the functions of the device had to be reinvented for sound cinema.

One might remonstrate that although Mamoulian’s early talking picture *Applause* (his directorial debut from 1929) is chiefly blamed for initiating the ‘rotambulating’ or ‘perambulating’ trend, it was not as pervasive as argued above and did not really catch on until 1931/1932 with films such as *The Front Page* (Lewis Milestone, 1931), *The Public Enemy* (William Wellman, 1931), *Svengali* (Archie Mayo, 1931), *Street Scene* (King Vidor, 1931), *Prestige* (Tay Garnett, 1932), *Scarface* (Howard Hawks, 1932), *Rain* (Lewis Milestone, 1932), *Back Street* (John Dahl, 1932) and the more limited but memorable examples in *Love Me Tonight* (Rouben Mamoulian, 1932) and *Trouble in Paradise* (Ernst Lubitsch, 1932). One might further argue that the ‘rotambulating’ trend needed appropriate technology to carry it and that for instance a seven minute long walk-and-talk shot in *Rain* could hardly have been carried out without the aid of the prototype of the Bell & Howell ‘Rotambulator.’<sup>146</sup> However, at least a few films such as *Her Man* (Tay Garnett, 1930) and particularly *All Quiet on the Western Front* (Lewis Milestone, 1930) dispute that argument.

First of all, filmmakers still had the option of capturing moving shots by means of silent cameras. Even the first ‘talkie’ *The Jazz Singer* (Alan Crosland, 1927) contains half a dozen admittedly brief yet dynamic receding and parallel tracking shots during the silent sections of the film. Furthermore, the option of post-synchronization allowed for free panning and tilting during tracking shots, which a number of films utilized as early as 1928 and 1929 (Salt 1992: 185).<sup>147</sup> Another option of recording mobile shots silent was of course trick photography on miniature sets, which was carried over from silent cinema. It is

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<sup>146</sup> The walk-and-talk shot will be discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>147</sup> Barry Salt mentions *The Singin’ Fool* (1928), *Hearts in Dixie* (1929) and *Chinatown Nights* (1929).

used extensively on a *The Bat Whispers* (Roland West, 1930) where it serves a multitude of functions. Approximately fifteen minutes into the film an 'aerial' shot not only establishes the spatial layout of the house and yard but thrusts our viewpoint towards the house in a disquietingly dynamic fashion. This shot has the semblance to the free-ranging mobility of contemporary cinema (fig. 76-8) as do the occasional uses in *Svengali* and *Trouble in Paradise* for instance.<sup>148</sup>



Fig. 76-8. An 'aerial' establishing shot in *The Bat Whispers* (1930). In the course of the movement the screen blacks out in order to visualize an on-going thunderstorm. Such a black-out is used to mount a transition to the interior where a rotambulating shot continues the forward motion until it reaches a door.

In *Svengali* there are two remarkable camera movements shot on a miniature set which serve an abstract function. They are connected with two shots that precede them and a fifth shot that ties them in with a real set. The sequence takes place just after Svengali (John Barrymore) has hypnotized the young model Trilby (Marian Marsh). The first of the five shots shows Svengali standing at the open window. Without motivation from physical movement in the scene the camera approaches Svengali taking the longer path around the piano until framing him in a profile shot (fig. 79-81). The coordination of camera movement and set design is particularly noteworthy because the piano is placed so that it presents an obstacle to the advancing camera. Yet the piano is not a realistically motivated obstacle, as we shall see later regarding set design and camera mobility in *Kameradschaft* (Pabst, 1931). Here the physical surroundings do not dictate that the camera's access to Svengali must be hindered. If anything the relatively sparse decor in the apartment should have the opposite consequence. The curving route of the camera enhances the volume of the space and provides more 'dimensional' information regarding the objects in the room and Svengali himself. Yet the better view of Svengali's disposition does not reveal anything significantly different from what one could discern from his posture as seen from behind.

<sup>148</sup> In his commentary track on Criterion's edition of *Trouble in Paradise*, Scott Eyman points out that a mobile sequence where a camera movement on a miniature set is tied in with a camera movement on an actual set is very similar to a scene in *Tempest* (Sam Taylor, 1928) which was shot silent (its release was post-poned so that a synchronized sound-on-disc Vitaphone track could be added to it).



Fig. 79-81. *Svengali* (1931). As the camera 'rotambulates' around the piano we receive more information on the volumes of the objects.

Most importantly the idiosyncrasy of the camera movement attributes particular significance to the events about to take place and brings the viewpoint of the spectator within the sphere of Svengali's telepathic influence. The second shot of the scene is a static shot that shows Svengali's p.o.v. of the open windows but then come the two remarkable camera movements that involve miniature sets. The first shot starts on a big close up of Svengali's eyes and nose, then the camera tracks back, seemingly passing through a cubicle to the window door that was open in the previous shot.<sup>149</sup> Earlier we saw that Benjamin Christensen and his cinematographer Johan Ankerstjerne created the effect of traversing through a window cubicle in *Hævnens nat* (1916). In *Svengali* this effect occurs within an astoundingly convincing 'crane movement' on a miniature set. Note in particular how the focus shifts and the light flickers around Svengali's right eye during the pull-back thus enforcing a live-action feel. After the camera has pulled back to a view of the entire building and other aspects of the cityscape there is a cut to a shot containing a rightward movement, first a pan then a tracking movement, past a series of houses. Then the camera swings around and the lateral movement becomes an axial forward movement across two blocks of houses to Trilby's balcony window (fig. 82-7). A masked cut replaces the miniature set balcony with a balcony on a real stage and the camera moves inside Trilby's apartment and curves to the left locating her asleep on her bed. The two special effects 'crane moves' serve an abstract function for though they are projective they are not projective p.o.v. shots. The implication is not that the camera extends Svengali's optical point of view but that the movement of the camera visualizes the extension of his telepathic command.

<sup>149</sup> It is dubious to attribute significance to this mismatch because it is most likely a result of imperfect coordination between the special effects department and the regular production team. Fred Jackman and Hans Koenekamp provided the technical effects; Barney McGill was cinematographer on the film.



Fig. 82-7. *Svengali* (1931). Six frames from the 'crane shot' that visualizes the extension of Svengali's telepathic command.

The special effects shots in *Svengali*, *The Bat Whispers* and *Trouble in Paradise* were filmed silently. The main problem concerning camera mobility arose with so-called "100 per cent" recording (visual *and* sound recording) because the noise of the cameras would be picked up by the microphones. "Even the best of pre-talkie cameras were too noisy for sound work, and though they were completely remodeled, and every possible source of noise muffled, they were still loud enough to seriously interfere with the microphone," wrote William Stull in the fall of 1929 (Stull 1929: 7). Even by May/June 1930, "no camera silent enough to be used un-insulated under all circumstances, has yet been made" (Mohr 1930: 10).

The first and most unpopular solution to the problem was the so-called *ice-boxes* or camera booths, which were soundproof chests that locked up the camera(s) as well as the cameraman. Besides being poorly ventilated, they isolated the cameraman from his colleagues and the action he was photographing. Furthermore, the footage had to be shot through a glass plate and the heaviness of the booths made them difficult to move about between takes and close to impossible during takes (Stull 1929: 7, 36; Mohr 1930: 10, 22, 44).<sup>150</sup> Shooting mobile shots with a camera contained in a soundproof booth

<sup>150</sup> The combination of the heaviness of the booths and the problems of sound editing had the effect of introducing television style shooting with a stationary set-up from inside the booths where there was sometimes remarkably little variation of angle and distance (created by



allowed for synchronous sound recording but put limitations on the amount of panning and tilting during tracking shots (Salt 1992: 185).

A number of alternatives to the sound booths were developed such as the 'Bungalow' which was "a small, sound-proof enclosure built around a Mitchell High-speed camera, and mounted on a steel tubular tripod which rolls on rubber-tired wheels" developed by John Arnold at MGM (Stull 1929: 7). A problem caused by the Bungalow as well as by other ways of 'blimping' the camera, i.e. sound-isolating it by means of coverings of various materials, was an impractical increase in the size and weight of the cameras.

Before the introduction of sound, tripods were generally designed to cope with a load that rarely exceeded eighty pounds but the blimped cameras could easily weigh up to four hundred pounds in total (Stull 1933: 7). The bulky blimps often increased the size of the camera quite substantially because it had to be spacious enough to allow easy access to various components of the camera within (Stull 1930: 11). Perhaps the earliest efficient combination of sound-proofed cameras and camera support was developed at RKO where in 1929 Don Jahraus had developed a covering that weighed a mere 30 pounds. Jahraus' 'Blimp Camera' was modified by Gregg Toland at The Samuel Goldwyn Company for the Vitaphone sound-on-disc system. An even more important addition – for mobile shots – was Toland's addition of device by which focus could be adjusted from the outside (Stull 1929: 36). The modified blimped camera was light enough to be carried by regular tripods but perhaps because of its size, it was generally supported by a special 'perambulator' (ibid.). According to William Stull it was easy to adjust the height of the mount and the combined Blimp Camera and perambulator made "moving shots even more conveniently easy than they were before sound pictures came" (Stull 1929: 36). The modified perambulator and blimp was very likely used for mobile shots on *Condemned* (Wessley Ruggles, 1929), shot by Toland and George Barnes and released the same month that Stull's article appeared.<sup>151</sup>

Writing in 1933 William Stull claims that the serious restriction on camera movement only lasted a few months (Stull 1933: 6) and how quickly

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different focal length lenses). Evidence of this style can be seen in *Dixiana* (1930), a film which also contains two-strip technicolor sequences.

<sup>151</sup> Unfortunately, I have not been able to see this film but judging from a comment posted on [imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0019785/#comment) it contains a substantial number of dolly moves: [www.imdb.com/title/tt0019785/#comment](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0019785/#comment). Whether or not these were recorded with synch sound remains to be seen.



Hollywood got their cameras moving again is perhaps best described by Hal Mohr who as early as June 1930 criticized the soundproof camera booths arguing that “they were so big and clumsy that moving them only a few inches necessitated real labor on the part of large crew of ‘grips’: obviously they could not be used for the moving-camera shots *which are so vital a part of modern screen technique*” (Mohr 1930: 10. Emphasis added).

Lutz Bacher argues that “those directors who cared enough found the means to keep their cameras mobile even in the darkest hours of the sound box which lasted till early 1929” (Bacher 1978: 31). David Bordwell addresses the problem in a slightly different light and persuasively argues that restoring the mobility of the camera was not as much the goal of a few pioneering film directors but was generally perceived to be a problem within the industry (1984 [1977]: 150). That filmmakers - in facing technical obstacles - may have over-compensated is another matter.

What can be deduced from the fate of camera movement during the transition to sound? Barry Salt who has researched the application of camera mobility across the transition to sound from a statistical perspective argues that there is little discontinuity in terms of quantity:

[I]f one makes a rough addition of all the cases, one finds that in fact there was remarkably little discontinuity in the use of camera movement across the transition to sound in Hollywood; what discontinuity there was existed in other dimensions of the medium. The use of the mobile camera in their early sound films by such second and third rank talents as Eddie Sutherland (*The Saturday Night Kid*) and Paul Sloane (*Hearts in Dixie*) attests to the vigour with which a burgeoning fashion could be pursued in the face of technical obstacles. (Salt 1992: 185)

Bordwell even argues that there is *more* camera movement in the transitional years than in the silent years (Bordwell, Staiger, Thompson 1985: 304, 307). Regardless, the most interesting aspect of this re-adoption or resuscitation of camera mobility is not quantity but a question that was posed by Bordwell in 1977: “Why, given the high additional costs and the technological obstacles, was camera movement ever a dominant studio film technique *at all*? Why, to put it more simply, did anybody bother?” (1984 [1977]: 149).

Bordwell answers this question in two ways. From the vantage point of production economy the ‘mobile camera carriages’ had certain benefits and could even be said to grow out of concrete production demands. Since the blimped cameras were heavier and bulky regardless of whether a film was shot

in static set-ups or mobile ones, wheeled camera supports – whether they be ordinary tripods fitted with wheels, so-called ‘rolling tripods’,<sup>152</sup> dollies or cranes - made it much easier to transport the cameras *between* takes (p. 151-2). The other answer to the question had to do with what camera movement contributed to filmic representation. Camera movement was important for two interrelated reasons. They provided “a powerful surrogate for the active locomotion which we surrender upon settling into our cinema seat” and they were in aid of a representational system that established an “‘illusory realism’ related to narrative time and space” (p. 152). In other words, when we take our seat in front of the movie screen and fasten our eyes on the action, we sacrifice active locomotion and we witness images on a flat surface. Camera movement can mend both of these ‘sacrifices’: Camera movement offers a surrogate for active locomotion and it provides strong cues for reading the two-dimensional plane as a three-dimensional fictional world because spectators – when viewing the effect of camera movement – are being fed information about shape, size, distance and the relative positions of objects in the frame.

These two orthogonal supra-functions of camera movement are not in themselves surprising. At least the first function echoes Lightman’s ‘theory’ of camera movement as the “eye” of the audience. What is significant here is the *importance* that Hollywood filmmakers assigned to these functions and the trouble the industry went through in order to secure these effects.

#### 2.4.1 Norms and Motivation for Camera Movement in Early Hollywood Sound Films

If one casts a closer look at what the cinematographers and directors are quoted for saying at the above-mentioned meeting, their attitudes are not as uniform as they may at first seem. Having photographed Rouben Mamoulian’s *Love Me Tonight* (1932) in April and May just a few months before the meeting Victor Milner was one of the cinematographers most entrenched in the mobile style.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>152</sup>A ‘rolling tripod’ can best be described as cross between a low-slung dolly and a tripod. An example is the ‘Mole Richardson Rolling Tripod’ illustrated in Stull (1933: 7).

<sup>153</sup> Compared to films such as *Rain*, the ‘rotambulating’ trend is not as noticeable in *Love Me Tonight* as Miles Kreuger’s commentary on Kino’s DVD-edition of the film would indicate. The three long lateral tracking shots in the beginning of the film which follow Maurice (Maurice Chevalier) from his house to his business are the most remarkable indications of the trend but

Perhaps for this very reason Milner had very strong opinions on when camera movement was justified:

Victor Milner, A.S.C., then spoke quite spiritedly on the subject. He declared that it would seem as though many directors were having the cameras run around the sets solely to show that they, too, can have moving shots in their pictures and with no other reason apparent. (Hall 1932: 10)

The piece more than suggests an opposition of cinematographers and directors concerning the trade-off that camera movement can impose on lighting. Again Milner formulates this problem:

He then pointed out the difficulties placed before the cameramen in the matter of lighting for these shots; and explained that many times a cameraman appears on the set at the start of the day and arranges the lights for the scene called for, only to have the director walk in later and call for a trucking shot that makes it necessary to relight the entire set – thus causing delay and increased cost of production. He pointed out that photography must suffer when one has to light the set so that it can be photographed from practically all angles and in every nook and corner without a change of light placement.

Rouben Mamoulian was also present at the meeting and responds in the following way:

I do not feel, "said Mr. Mamoulian," that I have been in the picture industry long enough to be qualified to discuss subject before you man [sic] who have spent so many years in it. When I came into the picture field I spent considerable time in looking over the situation and a careful study revealed to me the fact that while this is the youngest of the arts, it, nevertheless, seems to have the most traditions. I have never seen an art in which there are so many things that you cannot do in any other way than has been done throughout its past. It seemed to me that there was little thinking in the industry and when a man advanced a new idea he was frowned upon [...] (ibid.)

Mamoulian is then quoted for saying that when he came into the industry, he felt that the camera had been "neglected" and that it was being confined to the stationary tripod to "dispassionately record just what was before it." But Mamoulian had other plans for the camera: "I thought that the camera should be given opportunity to really be a live and breathing factor in the making of pictures. That it should be allowed to get off the tripod and do the things that it was capable of doing" (ibid.). So on one hand we have the visual inventiveness of Mamoulian and other directors who are calling for longer and more complex

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are not representative of the rest of the film. Milner also photographed *Trouble in Paradise* which came out in October 1932. According to William O. Huie Jr. the meeting may have had an influence on the staging of camera movement in *Trouble in Paradise*, which was shot between late July and mid-September (Huie 1987: 37-51).

camera movements or are attempting to make camera movement an integral part of film style. On the other hand are the conservative, commonsensical attitudes of the experienced craftsmen in the ASC who were unhappy about certain applications of mobile cinematography as well as the repercussions for other aspects of their craft (and that of other members of the camera crew): not only lighting but composition, focus and the general photographic quality of the image.

Very aptly William O. Huie has termed the activity of the ASC 'A Technicians' Lobby' with specific reference to Victor Milner's role in the production of Ernst Lubitsch's *Trouble in Paradise* but as to the relationship of the ASC to Mamoulian the situation is a little more complex. In calling upon Mamoulian, two possibilities seem likely. If one compares the tracking shots in *Applause* (1929) to those in *Love Me Tonight* (1932) it is clear that some of the more experimental and overt movements have been filtered out: for instance in *Applause* there are examples where the camera tracks in on static characters and then tracks back again without any clear justification - the latter movement often being violently chopped off by a sudden cut. Maybe the ASC saw in Mamoulian not only the initiator of the 'trucking trend' but also an example of a director whose initial 'trucking abuses' had been moderated and tailored to a better fit with the compositional and realistic motivations of the classical paradigm - perhaps under the influence of the 'technicians' lobby.' Another possibility is that the ASC was still trying to moderate and tame Mamoulian's taste for camera mobility or at least trying to get him to talk sense into less qualified camera mobility heirs.

At this meeting, as well as in an interview ('As told to William Stull,' ASC) from February of the same year, Mamoulian seems to give the cinematographers the answer that they want. In the interview Mamoulian stresses the unfortunate effects of directing a film "without a knowledge of the dramatic uses of the camera" which could lead to one of two extremes, the first being a theatrical and stagy production, the second involving "...an unrestrained orgy of unjustified angle-shots and camera-movements. Either is bad, but I regard the latter as worse for [...] such is the power of the camera that this technical fault will overshadow the good points of the story and staging" (Mamoulian 1932: 8-9). At the meeting Mamoulian is quoted for saying the following: "Without doubt, trucking shots have been abused and overdone [...]"

I think that the camera should move - but only when necessary; only when by movement it will enhance the value of the picture" (Hall 1932: 10). Yet these two utterances attributed to Mamoulian are not necessarily homogenous because the type of motivation that Mamoulian mentions at the meeting is far more flexible than realistic or narrative motivation. Camera movements can "enhance the value" of a film in many ways, for instance by being staged as to invoke the attraction of spectacle and showmanship.

#### 2.4.2 Introducing the Crane

One further aspect of the question of motivation may shed light on the opinions of Hollywood cinematographers on camera movement. The tentative definitions of when and how to move the camera were not only based on the possibilities of the tracking shot. The 'rotambulating' or 'perambulating' trend is complicated by the fact that 1928-1929 were also the years when the camera support par excellence was developed: the camera crane. While crane shots or crane-like shots also appeared in a number of earlier silent films, the 'cranes' used were either construction cranes or one-off inventions.<sup>154</sup> However, around 1928/29 two actual camera cranes were constructed almost simultaneously. F.W. Murnau had a crane constructed for his now lost 1928-film *4 Devils*. Murnau's staff dubbed the crane the "Go-Devil":

The picture I'm working on now is a circus story, and naturally, the camera must not stand stock still in one spot in such a gay place as a circus! It must gallop after the equestrienne, it must pick out the painted tears of the clown and jump from him to a high box to show the face of the rich lady thinking about the clown.

So I have had them build me a sort of travelling crane with a platform swung at one end for the camera. My staff has nicknamed it the "Go-Devil." The studios will all have Go-Devils, some day, to make the camera mobile. (Murnau 1928b: 90)<sup>155</sup>

Little information exists on the crane and its subsequent use in other films – and no comment was made of it in *American Cinematographer* at the time. Murnau

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<sup>154</sup> Besides examples mentioned earlier, an impromptu crane-construction was also used on *Quality Street* (Sidney Franklin, 1927) (Brownlow 1969: 225). An ordinary construction boom is reported (Bogdanovich 1997: 88) to have been used for a crane shot in *Robin Hood* (Allan Dwan, 1922) but the print of the film that I have seen does contain evidence of such a shot.

<sup>155</sup> Also quoted in Bacher (1978: 27); and in Samuelson (2003: 90).

was right in his assumptions about the future of this camera support but it was the almost concurrently constructed *Broadway*-crane that would become a prototype for later studio cranes. According to an installment in *American Cinematographer* the idea of a huge camera crane was conceived by Hungarian-born Paul Fejos, the director of *Broadway* (1929). Subsequently, he conferred with the film's cinematographer Hal Mohr, executives and the chief electrician at Universal before passing the idea on to engineers at Consolidated Steel Corporation who developed the idea and manufactured the actual crane.<sup>156</sup>

The use of the crane in *Broadway* is very noticeable and a remarkable use of it is made in a scene that takes place the day after an evening's entertainment at the Paradise Club, the main setting of the film: This mobile long take starts on a close shot of a cleaning woman's hands scrubbing the floor, then the camera pulls back and ascends with a breathtaking rapidity to an overhead long shot that reveals the context in which the action is taking place; without a break in the film the camera then circles around the entire Paradise Club simultaneously re-establishing the spatial scope of the scene and informing the viewer of the less glamorous cleaning job of daytime workers in the process of restoring the place to its night time radiance (fig. 88-90).



Fig. 88-90. A crane pull-back in *Broadway* (1929).

Contrary to the hetz on "trucking abuse" that permeated both the above mentioned interview and meeting as well as many subsequent reviews and articles,<sup>157</sup> this 1929-AC-installment welcomed the invention of the crane with great enthusiasm: "Most amazing photographic device in history of picture

<sup>156</sup> According to Hal Mohr it was built by Llewellyn Iron Works, Maltin (1978: 86).

<sup>157</sup> I agree with William O. Huie, Jr. that Victor Milner's "Let's Stop Abusing Camera Movement" AC 16, 2 (February 1935) is the last response related to the particular mobile trend of the early thirties but many subsequent comments by cinematographers restate the central premises of 'common sense,' 'narrative motivation' and 'camera movement should not call attention to itself and follow moving action.' See e.g. Charles Clarke's comments in "The Moving Camera" (1974).

making used in ‘shooting’ Universal’s super-production ‘Broadway’” (“Crane [...]” 1929: 14). Hal Mohr operated the camera and is quoted for saying that the crane can capture

[...] effects equivalent to those which might be obtained on a particularly thrilling roller coaster and an airplane doing a barrel-roll simultaneously. Or, swung vertically in a complete arc of 180 degrees, he may at the same time revolve the platform 100 times a minute – all the while grinding his crank industriously. Extended upright, the girder is 50 feet from the ground, and it may be swooped down in two seconds. (ibid.)

The installment heralds both the technical ingenuity of the equipment itself as well as its on-screen effects. Certainly, the virtuosity of the crane movements stands out in relation to the visual repertoire of 1929-films – they even stand out to a contemporary viewer. Hal Mohr himself admits to the reflexivity of the device: “The result was, we made shots in *Broadway* where it was an exposé of the abilities of this crane; it was pretty exciting” (Maltin 1978: 86).<sup>158</sup>

Again, one may remonstrate that the Broadway-crane did not initiate a camera movement trend. According to David Samuelson the crane was a “one-off” (2003: 90) suggesting that it was only used on *Broadway* and others have argued that the small sets in early talkies did not favor such large cranes (Bordwell & Thompson 1993: 127). Nonetheless, according to Hal Mohr the crane was used on many subsequent films at Universal where they had built a special stage to accommodate it: “But that boom was some piece of equipment; we used that subsequently on everything we made. We used it on *King of Jazz*, every picture I made there” (Maltin 1978: 86). Film historian Richard Koszarski even heralds a particular application of it in *The Captain of the Guard* (1930), the last picture Paul Fejos worked on at Universal: “[T]he spectacular scenes of the revolutionary insurrection, shot from the enormous camera crane Fejos and Mohr had designed for *Broadway*, are clearly the work of a master - something which cannot be said for the rest of the film” (Koszarski 2005: 239). Although there is better documentation for the introduction of various dollies and tripods it is still apparent from various sources that after Universal launched the crane in 1929, the other major studios soon followed and acquired both large and

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<sup>158</sup> The rest of Mohr’s Universal-films are *The Last Performance* (1929), *Shanghai Lady* (1929), *King of Jazz* (1930), *Czar of Broadway* (1930), *The Cat Creeps* (1930), *The Cohens and the Kellys in Africa* (1930) and *Free Love* (1931). The crane may not have been available to Mohr and Fejos for *The Last Performance* – a film that was released *after* but produced *before Broadway* – although Mohr insinuates that it was, see Koszarski (1974).

small cranes in the course of the next few years.<sup>159</sup> Bacher suggests that it is “likely that cranes were used to execute many complex eye-level camera movements as well as intrinsic crane shots until crab dollies and smooth studio floors became common in the late forties” (Bacher 1978: 28).

Regardless of the scope of the ‘crane trend,’ a contradictory picture emerges when one investigates Hollywood cinematographers’ views on overt camera movement. On one hand ‘common sense,’ ‘story motivation’ and ‘justification’ are key terms to both cinematographers and directors working within the classical paradigm, i.e. the narrative dominant is still very much being propagated. On the other hand, the enthusiasm about the crane shots expressed in the 1929 installment suggests that there is a space for overt camera movement within the classical paradigm. Although the installment proposes a justification for the invention of the crane - to “visualize the personality of the Night Club set” (1929: 14) - this cannot be defined as strong narrative motivation. In fact, Hal Mohr himself explains how the use of the crane in the film and the subsequent adjustments necessary in relation to stage and set design do not enhance but *disrupt* the logic of the story line:

The stages were only thirty or forty feet long, and the arm of this thing was forty or fifty feet long – I’m not sure exactly how long [app. 31 feet, ed.]. So they built the BROADWAY stage, Stage 12, to accommodate this crane. We went all out and had the BROADWAY set fill the whole goddamned stage, so that this little honky-tonk that Tryon was trying to work his way out of turned out to be something like you’ve never known in your entire life. It wasn’t a bad picture as I recall it, but the premise was really idiotic. Here he wanted to play the Palace – well that nightclub could have taken the Palace, the Winter Garden, and the Hippodrome all in one! But that boom was some piece of equipment [...] (Maltin 1978: 86)

If we are to understand the opinions of Hollywood cinematographers on camera movement at this point in film history, the analysis should incorporate Mohr’s statements as well as those in *AC* on the Broadway-crane. These radiate with enthusiasm over *the technical ingenuity involved in the construction of the crane* (1), *the flexibility of the crane as a piece of production equipment* (2), and *the spectacular on-screen effects that it produces* (3). Point 1-2 are primarily of a technical nature and are of secondary importance here, but point 3 is significant because it is an example of another type of motivation for the crane movements

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<sup>159</sup> “New Perambulator [...]” (1932: 16), Stull (1933: 7), Stull (1934: 441) and “Cinematic Progress During 1933,” (1934: 490-1).



of *Broadway*: artistic motivation. Artistic motivation is one of the motivational categories described by David Bordwell in *The Classical Hollywood Cinema*:

By this term, the Russian Formalist critics meant to point out that a component may be justified by its power to call attention to the system within which it operates. This in turn presupposes that calling attention to a work's own artfulness is one aim of many artistic traditions – a presupposition that challenges the notion that Hollywood creates an 'invisible' or 'transparent' representational regime. (Bordwell, Staiger, Thompson 1985: 21)

According to Bordwell, artistic motivation is not at odds with the classical paradigm: "Hollywood has eagerly employed spectacle and technical virtuosity as means of artistic motivation." In "a pursuit of virtuosity for its own sake" Hollywood has given place to "byzantine camera movements" (ibid.), even outside of the musical genre. Nevertheless, camera movements that are *only* artistically motivated will be tolerated only intermittently (ibid.).

Many of the overt – and one might add wobbly - tracking shots in Mamoulian's *Applause* lack the attraction of spectacle that most of the crane shots in *Broadway* display. Whereas the former practice was frowned upon, the latter was championed in AC. One can induce that within the category of overt or - as I will refer to them - *reflexive* camera movements, the crane shots in *Broadway* more clearly appeal to a non-diegetic level of engagement: There is little doubt in the mind of the viewer or craftsman that their motivation is artistic rather than diegetic and that one is meant to enjoy the artifice of the movement. This distinction is not as clear with regards to the tracking shots in *Applause* (see also comparison with *Casablanca* regarding pull-back+push-in-staging in 2.4.1).

Although few critics of today will be sorry to see the practice of camera mobility demonstrated by *Applause* exorcised or ironed out in the classical paradigm, there are also reflexive camera movements which contrary to the crane movements in *Broadway* were received by the ASC with mixed feelings but whose functions were commendable, to some extent even influential: The decorative camera movement which displays a graceful visual rhythm that elicits a sense of 'visual pleasure.'<sup>160</sup> This trend generally came to America from abroad. An AC review of Eric Charell's *Congress Dances* (the English version of *Der Kongress tanzt*) very aptly illustrates the double-sided reception of these

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<sup>160</sup> The most recent and slightly revised definition of Ophuls' rhythmic long takes is found Bacher (2002).

rhythmic or decorative camera movements: “The direction made rather too much use of the moving camera technique, but every move was logical, and done in a rhythmic fashion unknown to American directors, with the possible exception of Mamoulian” (Stull September 1932: 20). This last nod to Mamoulian is undoubtedly to *Love Me Tonight* which Stull approvingly reviews on the same page heralding Mamoulian’s “conceptions of the relationship between cinematic and musical rhythm” (ibid.) rather than to *Applause*.

Both *Der Kongress Tanzt* and *Congress dances* contain quite graceful and rhythmic movements that interact closely with the musical aspects of the film.<sup>161</sup> A sequence of decorative tracking shots follows Christel (Lilian Harvey) as she is being transported to a villa in the countryside to entertain Czar Alexander during The Vienna Congress. During six mobile long shots the camera follows her carriage out of town as she sings “*Das gibt Es nur ein Mal*” and through the countryside to her new residence. On several occasions on this trip Charell lets people, animals and a variety of objects pass between the camera and Christel’s carriage in a manner similar in structure to the rhythmic long takes so characteristic of Max Ophuls’ late French films.<sup>162</sup> Lutz Bacher has later demonstrated how Ophuls’ rhythmic mobility was countered during various stages of the production process and that his films could have had a visual design much closer to his later French films (Bacher 1984, 1996). Ophuls did not encounter opposition from his cinematographers but the AC review of *Congress Dances* anticipates the *type* of opposition that Ophuls would encounter in the Hollywood film industry some fifteen years later when he resumed his directing career at Universal-International.

In Germany, on the other hand, greater appreciation appears to have been bestowed upon these camera movements in *Der Kongress tanzt*. Only four years after the premiere Oskar Kalbus described two particularly graceful sequences in this way:

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<sup>161</sup> Although the print I saw of *Congress Dances* at The Ritrovato Festival in Bologna (2004) did not contain this famous sequence, it does - according to Horst Claus, who has researched the different versions of *Der Kongress Tanzt* - belong there and should also have been in the prints distributed in America. Claus’ personal guess was that someone had simply nicked the famous sequence from this particular copy and kept it to himself or herself. Consequently, my reference to this sequence of movements is the most extensive version of *Der Kongress Tanzt* (the so-called “ARD version” / Source: Murnau Stiftung) that was aired on Arte, January 3, 2006.

<sup>162</sup> The sounds of *Das gibt Es nur ein Mal* continue for approximately seven minutes but change in function and orchestration. As Christel arrives at the villa, the rhythmic coordination of music and camera movement continues but is altered to accomodate and highlight the dance-like investigation by Lilian Harvey of her new residence.

Zwei Szenen schafft Charell mit hinreißender, schnittloser, kontinuierlicher Bildfolge, die einzigartige unerreichte und unvergeßliche Höhepunkte alles filmischen sind: die Heimkehr vom Heurigen und noch meisterhafter; Christel auf der Fahrt durch die Stadt, über den Markt, über das Land nach ihrem Schloß das der Zar ihr geschenkt. (Kalbus 1935b: 35-6)

With the central role of German silent cinema to the history of camera movement in mind it is not surprising that mobile cinematography continued to play a substantial role in German sound films. A simple explanation is continuity of personnel. Although the imprint of Murnau and Karl Freund on the history of camera movement continued within the American studios,<sup>163</sup> other directors and cinematographers continued to evolve mobile styles within German film production. In fact the sequences that Kalbus describes from *Der Kongress Tanzt* were photographed by Carl Hoffman who also photographed *Variété* (together with Karl Freund) and *Faust*. Nevertheless, it is not merely a question of 'getting the cameras moving again' so that particular filmmakers could keep on doing what they had been doing in silent film production. The mobile styles of German cinema in the early thirties also entail a retailoring of the functions of camera movement both to sound cinema as such and to different generic platforms. The Kammerspielfilm that was such a significant generic platform from which 'die entfesselte Kamera' was launched had almost vanished (Kalbus considers Hans Behrendts *Die Hose* (1927) to be last example (1935a: 75)) and a more popular genre found new functions for camera mobility.

#### 2.4.3 The Musical and Camera Movement

The introduction of sound had an important influence on camera movement. It gave the movement of the camera another dimension of interaction. Filmmakers could move to accentuate verbal delivery, track-in to close-up expecting a powerful musical cue to supplement it in post - magnifying a blooming emotion - or it could drift past a scenery whose communicativeness issued not only from the visual but the auditory space as well. Recall the opening shot of *His Girl*

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<sup>163</sup> Murnau went to America to shoot *Sunrise* for Fox in 1926. After shooting a film for Lupu Pick in London, Freund established the Movie Colour company in England in 1928 but an invitation from Herbert Kalmus in 1929 let him to America where he worked on *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930) and shot numerous films such as *Dracula* (Tod Browning, 1931) and directed *The Mummy* (1932) and *Mad Love* (1935) among others. Source: Filmportal.de

*Friday* (1940): a lateral tracking shot pasts a floor of working journalist. Yes, the movement lays out a visual space but the sounds that issue from this space are just as significant.<sup>164</sup> Fingers tapping keys, phones ringing and utterances such as “Copy boy!” and “Where’s the rest of this story?” introduce us to the bustling activity of the milieu. After a dissolve to a short but similarly paced mobile shot a spoken line even specifies exactly what this space is: “Morning Post. City Desk.” Another dimension of interaction was of course music and camera movement. Although scores had been written for a few silent films it was minority practice. With a musical score decorative tracking shots and musical accompaniment could mesh in a harmonious unity (*Der Kongress tanzt*) or a gently drifting camera can accompany a sailor’s ballad (*Bomben auf Monte Carlo*).<sup>165</sup>

Few films exploited the possibilities to the extent that *Der Kongress tanzt* did but the German musical tradition of the early thirties nevertheless occupies a central place in the history of camera movement.<sup>166</sup> When a program of German musicals from the late 20s and early 30s were included in the program at the Ritrovato Festival in Bologna 2004 the director of the festival Peter von Bagh argued that the genre had its golden age “between the period when the lively, dynamic and poetic films of Lubitsch reigned supreme amongst otherwise pedestrian and mechanical recordings of musical shows, and Busby Berkeley’s finest years which began in 1933” (Bagh 2004: 104). Bagh also writes that the camera is “perpetually in motion creating a charming and natural unity between exterior and interior scenes, both of which are characterized by the same quality of light and delicate touch” (ibid.). Perpetually in motion is an overstatement yet these films do subscribe to a particularly mobile style.

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<sup>164</sup> According to Bordwell, Staiger & Thompson (1985: 298-308) the microphone largely came to be understood as the accompanying ‘ear’ to the lens’ eye. Typical to craft literature, the motivation would then be based on an anthropomorphic analogy: the camera moved as a real person with with eyes *and* ears. See e.g. Lightman’s description of the camera movements that lead us into Rick’s Café in *Casablanca*. (Lightman 1958: 384)

<sup>165</sup> It deserves to be mentioned that there *were* a number of earlier ‘silent film’ adaptations of operas and operettas that integrated live or recorded music with projected film (though hardly with anything resembling the mobile style of the thirties-films). The opera adaption *Der freischütz* (1917) tried to match the live singing with the lip movements of the players on the screen, whereas operatta adaptations such as *Der fliegende Holländer* (1918) and *Undine* (1919) were satisfied with integrating the live classical music with their narratives (Kalbus 1935a: 80-83). For more information on opera and operetta films see Katja Uhlenbrok, ed. *MusikSpektakelFilm* (Edition Text + Kritik: München, 1998).

<sup>166</sup> 1930 was the significant year for Germany in terms of the transition to sound. In September 1929 only three percent of German films were sound films whereas by September 1930 this number had increased to 84 per cent (Carroll 1978: 16).

Significantly they are chiefly responsible for introducing decorative camera movements that engender visually pleasing rhythms such as the series of tracking shots in *Der Kongress tanzt*.<sup>167</sup> Since *Der Kongress tanzt* (including the French and British versions of the film) was a domestic and international hit and - despite the slight reservations expressed by Stull - also a critically acclaimed film (Claus & Jäckel 1996: 147-8) and it was probably the most influential of the German musicals as regards camera mobility. For instance Barry Salt argues that the film was highly influential and in particular a “major source for the style of Ophuls’ films” (1992: 297) :

The massive success of *Der Kongress tanzt*, even on the international scale, proved a shining example, and Ophuls’ early films are attempts to convert the material he had in hand to something as much like it as possible. The camera movement in *Der Kongress tanzt* was used to follow people about at a ball, on staircases, and travelling in a carriage in a way that has come to be regarded as unique Ophuls, though Ophuls’ way was not fully established until after World War 2” (1992: 297).

Salt’s parameters for comparison are admittedly broad and Lutz Bacher has provided a more fine-grained list of devices that help achieve the characteristic Ophulsian fluidity (1996: 6-7).<sup>168</sup> Bacher lists seven criteria including the patterned placement of objects between the camera and the players to engender visual rhythms, complementary character movement as well as countermovement of characters, a preference for lateral, circular and diagonal blocking as opposed to axial blocking and smooth transitional movement, for instance player movement continuing in the pace of the follow shot as if the

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<sup>167</sup> A number of directors and cinematographers were involved in this musical and operetta-based long take-trend. At least Eric Charell, Ludwig Berger, Max Ophuls, Anatole Litvak, Willi Forst and Hanns Schwartz contributed to the trend in the early thirties. Of the cinematographers Carl Hoffman has already been mentioned but there were others such as Günther Rittau, Curt Courant, Konstatin Irmen-Tschet, Otto Kantarek, Robert Baberske and judging from imdb-reviews of *Das Lied einer Nacht* (Anatole Litvak, 1932) even Fritz Arno Wagner. Franz Planer was also involved in a number of these films. He worked on Anatole Litvak’s *Nie wieder Liebe* (1931) where he met Max Ophuls whom he later worked with on *Liebelei* (1933), *The Exile* (1947) and *Letter from an Unknown Woman* (1948). According to Lutz Bacher, *Leise flehen meine Lieder* (1933) and *Masquerade* (1934), which Planer shot for Willi Forst, had “a mobile camera style akin to Ophuls’ (1996: 93). Not all Planer’s work displays this quality: *Die Drei von der Tankstelle* (1930) contains a remarkably reflexive ending with the characters addressing the camera before announcing the generically expected finale but there is very little camera movement in the film.

<sup>168</sup> To be fair Salt’s comparative analysis of Vincente Minnelli’s *Madame Bovary* (1949) and Ophul’s *Letter from an Unknown Woman* (1948) does in fact unearth a difference of predominantly straight tracking shots in the former and “the numerous small adjustments in dolly position, usually accompanied by small panning movement to reframe at various points within the duration of a longish take that also contains large scale camera movements with a number of camera holds” in the latter (1992: 307).

wheel of an automobile loosened itself and continued its motion after the car had decelerated.

If one studies the entire musical sequence where *Das gibt es nur einmal* is either sung or heard in instrumental form then all seven criteria are satisfied at one point or another though never in one single shot. In particular there is only little of the back panning or reverse tilting that Bacher finds in Ophuls' American films of the late 40s, i.e. where the camera pivots with the characters (the camera base travels in one direction while the camera itself moves contrariwise keeping the actress or actor in view) (fig. 91-4).



Fig. 91-4. *Der Kongress tanzt* (1931). *Das gibt es nur einmal*-musical sequence.

The commitment of *Der Kongress tanzt* to the seven devices listed by Bacher is certainly as strong as that of the contemporaneous films directed by Ophuls save perhaps for *La signora de tutti* (1934) but the significant development – according to Barry Salt – is that Ophuls helped lift a number of features including decorative camera movements out of the musical context which had given birth to them and applied them in other genres. This appears to be a fair assessment if one traces Ophuls' application of camera movements throughout the thirties and forties. For instance decorative camera movements migrated to his anti-militaristic melodrama *Liebelei* (1933) and his *telefoni bianci*-melodrama *La signora de tutti* (1934) and virtually exploded in the unlikely generic context of a Hollywood swashbuckler: *The Exile* (1947).<sup>169</sup> Today many of the Ophulsian practices of fluidity such as the elegant pivoting described above are applied in virtually all generic frame works in both long take film making and mainstream cinema.<sup>170</sup>

<sup>169</sup> Both Barry Salt and Lutz Bacher have argued that Ophuls' pre-WW2 films only contain momentary examples of rhythmic or decorative camera movements (Salt 1992: 297, Bacher 2002:). Interestingly – as Bacher demonstrates – Ophuls' experience in the American studios was not merely one of stylistic obstruction but also helped him arrive at his signature style of visually pleasing rhythmic camera movement.

<sup>170</sup> Very few contemporary mainstream films have double digit ASLs (Bordwell 2002).

Far from all camera movements in German musicals of the early thirties are of the decorative kind. First of all, there are a number of stunningly inventive camera movements. The orchestration of camera movement in *Der Kongress tanzt* has been discussed by a number of scholars<sup>171</sup> but other German musicals of the time also found novel uses for the mobile camera. For instance *Zwei Herzen im Dreiviertel Takt* (Willi Forst, 1930) contains one of the earliest examples of including within a single camera movement time leaps of several years without any apparent cues in lighting. Later of course Otto Preminger compressed the passing of a night into a single camera movement lasting about 25 seconds of screen time in *Fallen Angel* (1945) but in Preminger's case a change in lighting eased us into the new morning setting.<sup>172</sup> It is not really until the mid-70s that one finds subtle time-leaps that are not marked but must be induced. Films such as Theo Angelopoulos' *The Travelling Players* (1975), Carlos Saura's *Cria Cuervos* (1976) and Michelangelo Antonioni's *The Passenger* (1976) offer examples. In more recent years we have seen the device used quite elegantly but also more explicitly marked in John Sayles' *Lone Star* (1996) as well as in *Notting Hill* (1999).

There are some indications that the German musical continued the tradition of opening a film with a long complex camera movement as can be witnessed in the opening shots of *Bomben auf Monte Carlo* (Hanns Schwartz, 1931) analyzed in chapter 4 but this tradition appears to have been stronger in French cinema (Crisp 1994: 394-5). For instance the virtuoso crane shots at the beginning of René Clair's French musicals *Sous les Toits de Paris* (1930) and *Le*

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<sup>171</sup> See for instance Barry Salt's discussion of camera movement in *Der Kongress tanzt* seen in relation to the films of Max Ophüls (1992: 296-315) and David Bordwell's analysis of the camera movement which follows Christel into her new villa (2001: 74-79). Lutz Bacher has collected background information on German mobile long take filming in the thirties and forties (1978: 34-38) though the camera movements cited are from mid-thirties films or later.

<sup>172</sup> This two minute long take starts on June and Eric on the bed in their hotel room in San Francisco. June (Alice Faye) cites the passage from the bible to Eric (Dana Andrews) on how mutual love can redeem a fallen angel. After he falls asleep the camera follows her as she removes the burning cigarette from his hand, puts out the cigarette, turns out the light, rises from the bed and goes to open the window. June exits the frame and goes back to bed while the camera slowly moves towards the window. As the camera approaches the window the light of dawn gradually illuminates the frame and the city of San Francisco gradually appears as a reflection in the window. In the course of approximately 25 seconds it has become dawn and without a break in the film the camera pans back towards the bed where it finds June and Eric asleep. One explanation is that we are supposed to read it as real time and that Eric has been keeping June up all night telling her the story of his life. Indeed there is an elliptical cut from Eric and June kissing to a shot where Eric tells her the last part of the story connecting him with her. Nevertheless, Eric's opening line after the elliptical cut - "I could go on for the rest of the night" - suggest that they still have the night in front of them. I submit that the diegetic time greatly exceeds screen time during this camera movement.

*million* (1931) are famous examples of this tradition. Beyond their sheer display of virtuosity Clair manages to bend these opening shots to different functional ends. Colin Crisp argues that these camera movements explore “the whole set, orienting the audience within it and establishing right away the overall atmosphere as defined by set, costumes, and lighting (Crisp 1994: 394). What Crisp forgets to mention about the remarkable crane shot from *Sous les Toits de Paris* is that it also gradually brings the viewer into the diegetic soundscape of the film, in this case a gathering of customers for sheet music singing the title song of the film. The opening crane shot in *le Million* on the other hand serves an abstract function by cleverly invoking a visual symbol as it slides past countless rooftops until finally coming to rest on “the one rooftop in a million” beneath which a party of people are celebrating the lottery winning.

It is also important to remember that for a brief period of time in film history the musical showed promise of becoming not just a peculiar genre within classical narrative cinema but a different art form. The dominance of music and non-diegetic sound over dialogue in Rene Clair’s *Le Million* was one indication but the rhythmic coordination of music, mise-en-scene and camera movement was another. Filmmakers at the time realized this potential as exemplified here by the comments of cinematographer Charles B. Lang:

The musical film, it must be remembered, is potentially a new artistic medium, differing alike from the conventional talking picture, the musical dramas and comedies of the stage, and from silent or synchronized films. Some new foreign productions – such as Eisenstein and Tisse’s “Romance Sentimentale,” and a few of the German musical films – have hinted somewhat at the potentialities of this new field. (Lang 1933: 94)<sup>173</sup>

What if the rhythmic impulse was not only intermittently embraced but became the Dominant system throughout the course of the film, i.e. that for the duration of the film timing the movement of the camera to a rhythmic structure would be valued over its contribution to narrative progression? Except for a few exceptions such as *Fantasia* (1940) we now know this never came to be in feature films.

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<sup>173</sup> Although credited as co-director, Eisenstein attributes the film to Grigori Alexandrov (Bordwell 1993: 16). Eduard Tisse is credited as cinematographer.



#### 2.4.4 The Aesthetics of Obstruction: Realist Styles of the 1930s

The coming of sound created a menu of options for coordinating camera movement and sound. Whereas the musical orchestrates music and camera movement to rhythmic ends, an altogether different breed of films in the 1930s exploits another dynamic interrelationship. At the heart of these obstructive strategies lies the interrelationship of mise-en-scene and cinematography but diegetic sound plays an important role as well. A scene in *Westfront 1918* (G.W. Pabst, 1930) illustrates the strategy at work.

*Westfront 1918* was shot by Fritz Arno Wagner who was one of the first German cinematographers to blimp his camera so that it could be used for mobile synch-sound recording.<sup>174</sup> The large majority of shots in *Westfront 1918* are static but it contains a series of extensive tracking shots along the trenches housing the German soldiers. Consequently, the camera is shown to be *potentially* mobile. However, it is in fact an *immobile* camera which first exemplifies the aesthetics of obstruction at work.

Late in the film Karl (Gustav Diessl) returns from leave. He takes position in the trenches along with a fellow infantryman (Fritz Bayer) and inquires about the whereabouts of Der Student (M.J. Moebis). During their conversation we hear moans from off-screen and are told that Der Student (M.J. Moebis) - a close friend - lies wounded between the two lines. Significantly, we only *hear* the moans. The camera does *not* venture out to show us where he is placed but deliberately restricts our visual access to this highly charged scene. The film not only adheres to this aesthetics of obstruction for the sake of narrative suspense (do the moans come from a French soldier?) but also to heighten realism.<sup>175</sup> By restricting the camera's viewpoint to that of the German soldiers, the camera *flaunts* a limited, documentary-like access to events. We do not *see* shots of Der Student because it would be just as fatal for the cameraman as for Karl to walk out between the fronts. Der Student remains outside the reach of the camera's field of view until the moment it accompanies the soldiers during their on-march.

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<sup>174</sup> Christian Metáin is co-credited with Wagner. Erno Metzner was responsible for the production design.

<sup>175</sup> *Showing* the spectator a shot of Der Student in the ditch at this point does *not* betray narrative suspense. As Hitchcock has so often demonstrated such a strategy could equally well *accumulate* suspense.

The first three lateral tracking shots along the trenches in *Westfront 1918*<sup>176</sup> do not fully adhere to the obstructed viewing positions sketched above. The movements appear pre-staged, too perfectly timed to capture the *sound* as much as the *images* of explosions. However, a fourth parallel tracking shot indicates the direction Pabst and Wagner were to take on their subsequent film *Kameradschaft* (1931). Here the camera mimes the restricted viewpoint of the advancing German soldiers, as it appears to slouch along with them into enemy territory, moving around ditches, past steel wire fencing. Significantly, during the climactic battle of the film the camera *refrains* from injecting visual energy into the shots as if to respect the horror of warfare by trying to evade it. Remember that the battle scenes of a film such as *Miracle of the Wolves* (1924) used handheld camera movement to inflect the shots of the battle with the excitement and fervor of participation. Silent handheld camera movement was an option not chosen.

On Wagner and Pabst's collaboration on *Kameradschaft* (1931) the aesthetics of realistic obstruction was extended to involve the paths of camera movement to a much greater degree than in *Westfront 1918*. *Kameradschaft* is about a mining accident in France and a German rescue team who show *Kameradschaft* by crossing the border - at the danger of being shot at - in order to assist the rescue operation. Consequently, a great deal of the film takes place inside mines. It is a studio set but the restricted visual access that a documentary camera crew would have in a real mine is *built into* the way the sets are constructed for camera movement. This has the effect, described by Noël Carroll, that the camera is identified with the position of an external observer, not a participant (1978: 18). Although there are many camera movements in the film, the paths of movement and the camera's access to the characters during those movements is hindered by objects and set construction. The movement of the camera is designed to imitate the restricted movement of a camera in an actual mine. Just like the camera cannot move out between the two fronts in *Westfront 1918*, so in *Kameradschaft* it cannot gain full access to the emotive features of the characters and must – on occasion - maintain its distance so not to interfere with the rescue operation (*ibid.*). Some actions can hardly be seen but the fact that they can be *heard* extends the potential of these staging

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<sup>176</sup> The first two occur within the first fifteen minutes of the film. The third and fourth tracking shots along the trenches occur app. 55 and 70 minutes into the film.

strategies. Diegetic sound thus offers new possibilities of highlighting the discrepancy between *potential* access and *actual* access to the action.

In a way this is opposite to the strategy pursued in the opening bar scene in *Jeanne Ney* where the camera was *too close* to the action to take it all in, yet in both cases mobile cinematography is shown to be subsumed under and dictated by the surroundings in which the action occurs. By packing the entire frame with environmental detail and thus increasing its weight as the focus of attention relative to the human interaction of the story, Pabst reveals a stronger commitment to a realist aesthetic than most filmmakers.

The aesthetics of obstruction and the highlighting of environmental detail can of course be pursued in the interest of other aims than increased realism. The three-minute tracking shot in Yevgeni Bauer's *After Death* (1915) also highlights cluttered decor but in the interest of decorative virtuosity (see fig. 36-8); lateral tracking shots in some of Kenji Mizoguchi's films of the thirties - *Sisters of Gion* (1936) and *Osaka Elegy* (1936) for instance - refrain from penetrating obstructive decor but the non-intrusiveness is rather a form of reticence.

## 2.5 Staging Strategies in Hollywood Sound Cinema

Although numerous scholars place the on-set of classical cinema in 1917 (Bordwell, Thompson and Staiger 1985; Burch 1990: 244) the development of camera movement has a trajectory of its own within the Hollywood filmmaking. As has already been noted there was an experimental trend in the mid-teens during the transition to the classical cinema, *die entfesselte Kamera* trend brought to America by *Der letzte Mann* and *Variété* in the mid- twenties and then at the latter stages of the transition to sound and in the early thirties there was the 'perambulating' trend as well as the limited appearance of virtuoso crane shots.

The immense size of the Broadway crane made it impractical for the small sound stages at that time and shooting on Universal's immense stage 12 (which was built to accommodate the crane) added a financial burden to a production because a substantially bigger lighting package was needed (Mohr 1935: 469). For that reason the Broadway crane was generally reserved for

spectacular set pieces. However, in the course of the 1930s medium-sized cranes and smaller cranes were gradually introduced and refined paving the way for so-called ‘dolly and crane-productions’ as standard practice.

In theory the proliferation of cranes and dollies in the early thirties facilitated greater mobility but in practice it seemed to have taken the prestige and challenge out of orchestrating complex camera movements. Very likely aided by the conservative voices within the ‘technician’s lobby’ of the ASC who pressed for moderation, filmmakers instead tailored and re-functionalized camera movement to classical sound cinema in a way that was to have a lasting effect.

What norms were developed for camera movement in the course of the thirties and forties? The section on the use of crane shots in Paul Fejos’ *Broadway* recounted how there was room for the occasional display of virtuosity in the Hollywood cinema. It is time to turn our attention to bedrock functions of camera movement within the classical paradigm.

The supra-functions of using camera movement as a surrogate for active locomotion and as a way of providing strong cues for reading the two-dimensional plane as a three-dimensional fictional world are fundamental to the Hollywood cinema. However, it would be misleading to think of these as individual premeditated functions. Unlike the tracking shots in *Cabiria*, tracking shots in Hollywood cinema do not *display* volumetric effect. Instead depth and volume is not an end in itself but a by-product of camera movements that accompany moving action or establish diegetically significant spaces.

### 2.5.1 The Tyranny of Story

To many scholars the *only* significant function of style in Hollywood cinema is to transmit narrative information. Robert B. Ray writes of a “subjection of style to narrative” (1985: 34). The primacy of narrative is equally evident from comments by Hollywood craftsmen:

When you make a movie, you gotta have a screenplay, a story. Well, that story really dictates what we are going to do, how to shoot it, how to photograph it, how to direct it, how to act it. Everyone is subservient to

that [...] and the cameraman has to keep the mechanics out of it. (James Wong Howe to the camera in *Visions of Light* 1992)

Other labels such as 'seamless,' 'continuity,' or 'invisible' style invoke the same hierarchy. Inherent in all these terms is the assumption that classical style conceals or effaces its own artifice so better to immerse the viewer in the fictional story world and to encourage audience engagement with the characters on the screen. An antithetical function would be overt style, which invites the viewer to engage with the design and structuring principles of the film itself.

This is a standard account of classical stylistics but instead of subsuming millions of camera movements under the heading "narrative function" the following pages will attempt to provide some more fine-grained perspectives of the various types of narrative functions engaged by camera movement in Hollywood sound cinema. A number of concrete examples will be discussed to illuminate these functions and a few comparative studies will be made to illustrate how certain staging strategies found in sound films of the late 1920s and early 1930s were subsequently tailored to a closer fit with the classical paradigm.

### **2.5.2 Restraint and Common Sense**

First of all, there was among some Hollywood filmmakers a resistance to camera movement as such. As Raymond Durnat wrote of Hollywood filmmaking: "[C]amera movements tended to be regarded as slow and cissy, whereas cuts were tough, taut and virile" (1968: 15). The most well-known detractors include John Ford and as we saw in chapter 2 also Charlie Chaplin. The fact that re-introducing camera mobility in sound films was a widely held objective within the industry suggests that Chaplin's position is hardly representative but his criticism nevertheless stresses an important point about camera movement in the classical cinema. For various reasons, primarily lighting and choice in editing, the static shot was the baseline choice. If one wanted to move the camera it had to be motivated. Even momentary displays of virtuosity should not *merely* be displays but serve ulterior motives. This would explain why more extensive examples of camera movement often became applied in establishing shots. The soaring motion of the crane in *Broadway* could

take the spectator on a magnificent trip but simultaneously establish the layout of the Paradise Night Club. The tailoring of camera movement to classical norms in the course of the 1930s was not necessarily aimed at decreasing the amount of camera movement but of motivating it on more conventional footing.

One of the ways in which this restraint can be demonstrated is by looking at various uses of the push-in. In the classical cinema of the 30s, 40s and 50s (also the 60s) one rarely sees two push-ins in the same scene for instance. This contrasts with a director like Mikio Naruse whose silent 1930s melodramas such as *The Unrelated* (1932), *Nightly Dreams* (1933) and *Street Without End* (1935) often contain several push-ins within the same scene, even intercut in shot/reverse shot. It also contrasts with contemporary cinema where one often finds multiple push-ins within individual scenes – for instance intercut push-ins to substantiate tension or rising emotions. In a way Naruse's films look decidedly contemporary but his repeated push-ins raise the melodramatic pitch to a level of hysteria that even contemporary cinema rarely musters.

The classical cinema, on the other hand, reserves the push-in for one specific moment whether this be to accentuate a particular action or motif within a scene, to increase the spectator's sense of intimacy with the characters, to suggest psychological activity on the part of the character that the camera is advancing towards, to lead in to a flashback or to *project* a character's point-of-view onto the object of his or her gaze (fig. 96-105). Naruse's intra-scene push-ins is sometimes a *mix* of these functions, even adding a twist to the projective variant by letting it visualize a verbal *outburst* rather than project a point of view.



Five examples from *The Mark of Zorro* illustrate different functions of the push-in. Fig. 95-6: The camera pushes in to accentuate that Diego and Esteban are drawing closer to one another. Fig. 97-8: The camera pushes in to draw attention to Diego's magic trick. Fig. 99-100: The camera pushes in to increase the spectators' sense of intimacy with Inez and Esteban's covert dialogue. Fig. 101-2: The camera pushes in to magnify emotions.

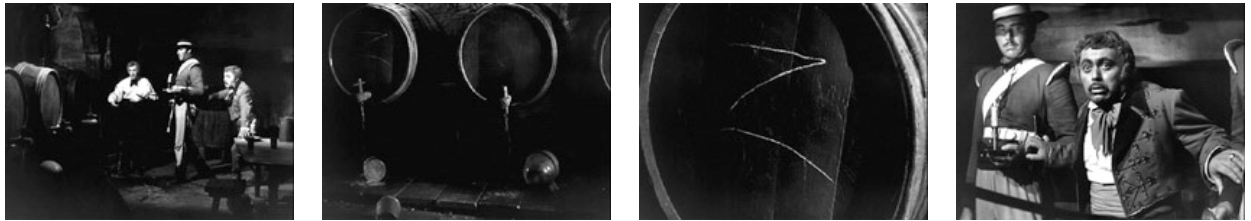


Fig. 102-5: The camera pushes in to project Don Luis's point of view onto the object of his gaze: "Z"). When intercutting push-ins, individual shots in falling-in-love encounters in contemporary cinema (e.g., *Den eneste ene*, 1998) often serve both of the latter two functions.

The norm of carefully selecting a narratively motivated moment for the push-in is on Victor Milner's agenda as he endorses the choice of camera mobility in the films of Ernst Lubitsch and Cecil B. DeMille against what he sees as perambulating excesses of certain filmmakers:

Both of them use camera-movement only to emphasize a definite climax in dialogue or pantomime [...] When he [Lubitsch] moves the camera, he invariably does it at a time when it is necessary to bring the audience closer to some important bit of business – some word, act or expression which highlights a whole scene or sequence. And he makes sure that the technique of the shot is so flawless that the movement is virtually imperceptible to the audience – natural, inevitable, and wholly subservient to the story-action. (Milner 1935: 46)

This is one of the last articles in *American Cinematographer* to accentuate this norm. One can assume that by the mid-30s it was so well-established that it did not need to be restated.

### 2.5.3 A Strong Sense of Direction

Using camera movement to lead the eye of the viewer towards salient information is not a criterion of value to all filmmakers, for instance it goes against the Bazinian ideal of "a democracy of vision." Nevertheless it is central to Hollywood cinema. In that sense directional camera movement like other compositional strategies can pull the attention of the viewer towards one particular point of observation. To editor and film director, Edward Dmytryk, this is what filmmakers ought to do in all types of shots. Dmytryk points out that he occasionally has discussions with cinematographers on this issue

because some compose a 'full' frame much as a landscape painter would. Dmytryk is against such a strategy:

You can boil a set and the people in it right down to the bare essence, as it were [...] Otherwise, I think you might give the audience too much to look at [...] They cannot focus really, honestly, on the screen as a whole [...] Now my whole intent when I cut from one scene to another, is to have the audience's eyes looking at an exact portion of the screen [...] I want them to see right away what I want them to see and not be wandering around looking for a few seconds or even a fraction of a second [...] I lose their attention for even a second or two, and if this happens every time I make a cut, by the time the picture is over, their eyes and their attention will have wandered a great deal. (Lightman 1968: 341)

Camera movements are also relevant in this regard because they can supply a very forceful compositional pull. The push-in for dramatic accentuation is central here but so is even an apparently simple follow shot. By synchronizing its movement to one character, the accompaniment shot basically tells spectators where to look.

The preference for compositional pull also brings up one of the significant differences between those movements that direct attention and movements that articulate scope. Dmytryk's staging and editing strategies leave little room for some of the heralded camera movements in films of Orson Welles, Jean Renoir, William Wyler or Jacques Tati's *Play Time* (1967). Consider the pull-back in *Citizen Kane* that opens on a shot of Charles playing in the snow, then tracks back through the house with his mother and the banker, passing Charles' father on the way. Whatever one may wish to claim against the alleged democracy of vision supplied by this shot - i.e. that it leaves the viewer with a free choice of focusing attention on either the background, middle ground or foreground planes - it is not *camera movement* which is responsible for directing the viewer's attention to one and then the other plane of action (it may be other stylistic parameters of the scene such as sound cues, aperture framings, or factors external to the scene such as preceding narrative information).

Except for the Bazinian examples of camera movement from Renoir, Welles and Wyler most camera movements in classical films provide a strong compositional pull. Furthermore, except for particularly coded instances such as scenes of violence or action, a classical camera movement 'knows where it is going.' In those cases where it detaches itself from the primary agents of the story it had better be narratively or generically motivated, i.e. to build suspense or tension. If a camera movement in a classical film makes the viewer wonder



what it is in the process of showing us, it had better reward this suspense once it finds its destination. One of the characteristics of camera movement in the classical paradigm is directional decisiveness.

The directionally contrary movements on display in films that were part of the 'rotambulating trend' within single shots basically vanished during the mid- to late thirties and ways of integrating the movement with the action became more standardized. "Never pan in two directions in a single shot unless you are following a specific action," a commentator informs the aspiring filmmaker (Cadarette 1940: 11). This is not a "steadfast rule," Cadarette continues, but "any variation of it must be carefully executed" (ibid.).

Directional indecisiveness or - depending on temperament - inventiveness informs the staging of a number of camera movements in *Applause*. The film is particularly profligate with reverse camera direction in single shots such as pan right and pan left or pull-backs and push-ins. As Kitty's daughter April and a nun are revealed to be sitting in a Wisconsin monastery the camera pulls back much longer than is necessary to establish the milieu before an insignificantly brief push-in *at the end* of the shot is abruptly terminated by a cut (fig. 106-8).



Fig. 106-8. *Applause* (1929). The brief push-in is terminated abruptly by a cut.

Compare this scene to one of the few pull-back + push-in combinations one finds in a manifestly classical film: *Casablanca*. As in *Applause* the scene features only two characters yet in *Casablanca* only one of these is represented at the beginning of the scene, namely Rick. The camera's proximity to Rick at the beginning of the shot conveys that this is fundamentally *his* scene. When the camera pulls back it only pulls back *just* enough to establish the spatial layout of the scene. While Rick's thoughts and actions will be at the heart of the scene these will be brought to light through interaction with Sam. This brings us to another function of the pull-back: creating a compositional gap for Sam to fill.

Once Sam has entered the frame, the interaction between the two will eventually motivate the push-in. As the dramatic interaction between them becomes more intense, they move into closer physical proximity. By pushing in on a tighter two-shot, the camera accentuates the interrelated development of increased physical proximity and increased intensity of interaction (lines spoken with more force, gestures more aggressive).



Fig. 109-12: The pull-back opens up a nook of space in the left hand side of the frame where Sam will enter. The push-in is cued to Sam's movement towards the table.

### To follow moving action unobtrusively

At a 1974-workshop at the Fed-X Film Festival in Los Angeles cinematographer and former head of the American Society of Cinematographers, Charles Clarke, had the following to say about camera movement:

[I]n my day, the idea was to tell a story on the screen with the least mechanical reminder by a moving camera. If we moved the camera at all, we moved with the movement of the actors, so that the audience was never aware that we were using a moving camera. It was considered bad technique to call attention to the movement of the camera.<sup>177</sup>

To properly assess Clarke's statement, one should keep in mind that he speaks as one of Hollywood's veteran cinematographers who had worked as a director of photography on more than 130 feature films from the early 1920s until 1962, a time span that roughly corresponds to the classical era as it is tenuously periodized in *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* (1985).<sup>178</sup>

Clarke's statement does not stand on its own in this regard, neither historically nor geographically. An article by James Wong Howe from 1945

<sup>177</sup> "The Moving Camera. Excerpts From One of Several Workshops that Highlighted the Recent International Cinematographers Conference at FILMEX," AC 55, 6 (June 1974): 689.

<sup>178</sup> The periodization suggested is 1917 to 1960 but the authors do not take 1960 to be a definitive cut-off point.

speaks out against “camera gymnastics” and Howe further adds that he believes in a “minimum of camera movement and angles that do not violate sense but contribute intrinsically to the dramatic effect desired” (Howe 1945). Even in more recent publications cinematographers such as John Seale below prescribe or emphasize a similar use of camera movement. Implied though not explicitly stated by Clarke is the fact that the function of the classical follow shot is not simply to follow moving action but to do so unobtrusively. Though speaking in the 1990s John Seale’s comments below demonstrate that it is still popular to endorse the unobtrusive follow shot:

The operator’s job is to second-guess what the audience might want to see, and then try to capture it unobtrusively. I spent years learning how to hide zooms, cranes or tracking shots in the movement of whoever or whatever was in front of the camera. (Ettegui 1998: 139)<sup>179</sup>

Following moving action unobtrusively is not the predominant function of camera movement in film traditions such as avant-garde cinema and it only applies in more limited measure to art cinema yet it is still so widely practiced that it is necessary to refine this initial assertion.

One of the central means of focusing the viewer’s attention on the subject at hand is to have a perfect synchronization of camera movement and the principal action of the performers.<sup>180</sup> The synchronous follow shot encompasses both small reframing movements as well as follow shots that maintain audience focus on the characters as they move about. The camera is subservient to moving action yet it is not so subservient that it lags behind or shows evidence of hindered access to the players. Compare for instance the above comments by Clark, Howe and Seale to the camera-subject principles of Jean Renoir:

Renoir:

I don’t want the movements of the actors to be determined by the camera, but the movements of the camera to be determined by the actors. This means working rather like a newsreel cameraman. When a newsreel cameraman films a race, for instance, he doesn’t ask the runners to start from the exact spot that suits him. He has to manage things so that he can film the race wherever it happens. (Bazin 1958/1959: 26)

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<sup>179</sup> John Seale made a similar statement in Colbert (1997): 8.

<sup>180</sup> See also William E. Hines’ description of the concerns of the respective members of the camera crew when preparing for, rehearsing for and capturing a shot by means of a mobile camera, *Operating Cinematography for Film and Video* (L.A.: Ed-Venture Films/Books, 1997): 100-118.

At a casual glance these theoretical statements do not seem radically different from the synchronous follow shot but it is the imperfections – small or big – which are cherished and nourished by Renoir.

#### 2.5.4 A Cinema of Fluidity

Camera movement in the Hollywood cinema is generally an aesthetic of smoothness and fluidity. This is what Herbert Lightman says about the parallel tracking shot:

In this type of shot the camera's motivation for movement is usually pretty well established, since it depends upon and is keyed to the movement of one of the players. The effect to be desired, as in all types of camera movement, is *smoothness* – since a jerky pattern of movement would detract more from the scene than it would add. If the camera glides smoothly along, the audience will not be consciously aware of the movement in itself. (1946b: 102)

Perfecting smooth and fluid camera movements was greatly facilitated by dolly and crane developments and improvements in the course of the 1930s and 1940s. One has only to compare the camera movements in *Applause* (1929) which one critic maliciously refers to as “among the wobbliest ever seen on a screen, as though most of the filming had been done hand-held by an inebriated operator” (Coursodon 1983: 235) to an average major studio production from the late 1930s. “Although in films of the late twenties and early thirties one still finds jerkily awkward camera movements, perfectly smooth fluidity soon became the norm,” argues Bacher (1978: 113).

However well executed, the mobile shot had to be seen through: for the sake of smooth continuity the norm was to avoid cutting while the camera was in motion:

The first method – in which the camera dollies while filming a stationary or moving subject – requires the utmost smoothness of camera movement. The dolly must gradually accelerate, glide with a floating action, then decelerate to a stop. (Mascelli 1957: 789)

How does one account for fluidity and smoothness in terms of functions? Lightman's comments quoted above as well as other sources in craft literature<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> See also Lightman (1946c): 312.

suggest that within the industry smoothness and fluidity were simply a given way of *realizing* all types of camera movements. In an article written later in 1946, Lightman comments that “smooth camera movement, correctly motivated, is a device that adds fluent quality and carries the story forward” (1946c: 312). Even the trouble of going through the extended long takes of *Rope* was by Hitchcock’s account merely meant to make the film “flow smoother and faster” (Yates 1948: 246).

A number of critics and scholars have attributed different effects to the ideal of smoothness and fluidity. Mark Le Fanu links it to the “dreaming, semi-conscious, semi-sexual pleasures of the art form” (1997: 14) whereas Jean-Pierre Geuens argues that the invention of the Steadicam in the mid 1970s was simply one in a series of Hollywood camera supports that effaced the presence of a human operator (1993: 12).

Given the norms for unobtrusive synchronous follow shots there is substantial variety depending on the numerous types of bodily posture and movement that the camera facilitates: The tactical maneuvering and countless measured changes in bodily posture during Howard’s (James Stephenson) interrogation of Leslie (Bette Davis) in *The Letter* (1940) is matched by a constantly reframing camera. In fact, each movement not merely reframes the action but underlines the successive development in their interaction. At the other end of the scale the unrestrained bodily movement of the Marx Brothers results in camera movements that are structurally different - more expansive and loose - yet whose main function is very much the same, i.e. to reframe the action unobtrusively and in synch with performance. In the case of the Marx Brothers, however, reframing solves a problem: The filmmakers do not have to surrender proximity in order to capture the Brothers’ erratic performance but can maintain a field size such as medium shot or *plain américain*.

### **2.5.5 The Follow Shot and Duration**

The classical paradigm sets stronger demands on follow shots than synchronicity and fluidity. The duration of follow shots is also significant. The classical film cannot waste valuable screen time on simply transporting a character from one point in space to another. And yet how does one explain the

existence of mobile long take trends in Hollywood in the early 1930s as well as in the mid-1940s to mid-1950s? Note for instance that Vittorio de Sica's supposedly 'long take' neorealist classics *Ladri di biciclette* (1948) and *Umberto D* (1952) with an average shot length of 7.2 seconds each are in fact edited somewhat faster than the standard Hollywood film at the time.<sup>182</sup>

The Hollywood long take trend has some early proponents in *Holiday* (1938) photographed by Franz Planer who had experience with mobile long take shooting from working in Germany with Willi Forst and Max Ophuls (Salt 1992: 216, Bacher 1996: 92-3). Some of the long take films in the trend rely on fairly conventional staging but a number of films sustained the longer shots by means of camera movement (Salt 1992: 216).

Barry Salt includes *The Letter* (William Wyler, 1940) in the former category but it really belongs in the latter. Other early proponents include Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* (1941) and even more so *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1942) with its gracefully receding walk-and-talk shots during the ball sequence and an average shot length of 17.7 seconds. But the trend really caught on in the mid to late 1940s by which time a whole range of directors had joined the trend: Vincente Minnelli, Max Ophuls, Otto Preminger, Preston Sturges, George Cukor and others. The question that remains is "what kind of long follow shots are acceptable within classical cinema?" The short answer is "those that convey narrative information efficiently." But how can they do so?

Hollywood cinematographers and operators have generally applied three strategies of achieving narrative efficiency in long follow shots. The first strategy is to edit the film in the camera by organizing the movement of camera and players so that the shot is structured into a string of narratively significant stops or moments of transitional rest. This is what Lutz Bacher refers to as 'narrative-expressive' long take staging though Bacher's definition also encompasses autonomous camera movement (see chapter 1.9). Narrative-expressive camera movement has the advantage of clearly delineating the key points of performance or vocal delivery but significantly, it also facilitates more choices in editing (providing there is footage to cut to). For instance if the long

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<sup>182</sup> De Sica's *Miracolo a Milano* (1951) was actually edited brisker with an ASL of 6 second and with an ASL of 9.5 seconds even Roberto Rossellini's *Roma, città aperta* (1946) is slightly below the Hollywood norm. The numbers for the Italian films are based on my own research and were first presented in my M.A. thesis (2002). According to Barry Salt's most recent survey, the mean average shot lengths (ASL) of American films from the five-year period 1946-1951 is 10.47 seconds and 10.13 seconds for 1952-1957 (Salt 2004: 67).

take movement concludes with an over-the-shoulder shot featuring two characters engaged in conversation, this can facilitate more conventional shot/reverse shot breakdown of the ensuing conversation.

Particularly in more confined spaces expressive long take staging often relies on many stationary set-ups with brief camera movement from one compositional stop to another. This is the case with the four minute long take in *The Letter* (1940) as well as with many of the long takes in Hitchcock's *Rope* (1948). However, more or less continuous follow shots can also be broken down into expressive stops. An example of such stop-and-go follow shots is to be found approximately five minutes into *Love Me Tonight* (Rouben Mamoulian, 1932) when Maurice (Maurice Chevalier) walks to work, stopping to interact with various Parisians on his way. This is conveyed in three follow shots and every time Maurice stops to interact with another character on street level the camera frames the action in a compositional stop or else finds a moment of transitional rest before picking him up again.

### 2.5.5.1 Walk-and-talk

With expressive camera movement narrative significance is chiefly invested in compositional stops but what about the problem of maintaining the viewer's interest *during* the actual movement of the camera? One way of maintaining interest during a follow shot is the walk-and-talk strategy where the dialogue of (typically) two characters is the focus of attention while the changing scenery behind them inflects their conversation in various ways (e.g., adding visual dynamics, integrating them into their environment).<sup>183</sup> Not relying on compositional stops puts strong demands on performance because the dramatic structure depends on vocal delivery, gesture and mimicry performed while in continuous motion.

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<sup>183</sup> A long receding follow shot in *Manhattan* (Woody Allen, 1979) exemplifies the latter function. In contemporary film and TV productions the walk-and-talk shot is typically carried out by means of a Steadicam receding as two busy characters in medium close up framing come roaring down a hallway. The technique has been used to various ends but it is so well established that there is even an entry on it at wikipedia.com: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walk\\_and\\_Talk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walk_and_Talk). The dynamic variant of the technique has already been parodied and mocked in dialogue by Shirley (Rachel Cronin) and Phil (Michael Ian Black) in an episode of *Ed*. According to the wikipedia entry there are also self-parodic examples in *The West Wing* and *Studio 60 on Sunset Strip*: two shows that themselves rely heavily on the device.

Walk-and-talk follow shots were plentiful during the rotambulating trend of the early thirties, best exemplified by Lewis Milestone's *Rain* (1932). *Rain* makes use of both continuous walk-and-talk shots as well as stop-and-go walk-and-talk shots which in effect apply the principle of the scene from *Love Me Tonight* to follow shots of two people engaged in conversation. But *Rain* also exercised staging solutions for walk-and-talk shots that were later filtered out during the thirties. Most remarkable is a seven minute long take where the camera follows Sadie Thompson (Joan Crawford) and her suitor 'Handsome' Sgt. Tim (William Gargan) as they walk in a circle around the porch of 'hotel' Villa Horn, stop for a few seconds, then continue all the while engaging in conversation while the rain is pouring down outside. Recall that the follow shot of Maurice in *Love Me Tonight* is staged so that he constantly interacts with new characters in his path and as both he and the camera traverse space he becomes integrated with the physical surroundings of the neighborhood – the buildings, the people and the spaces. The motivation is less clear in *Rain* because the focus is almost exclusively on the on-going conversation and only minimal use is made of the background and foreground that passes by (it does not take seven minutes to infer that the pouring rain is a significant comment on the action). The chief function of the camera movement is to sustain pacing and enliven an otherwise static conversation scene. There is nothing in the *substance* of the scene which renders it unfit for conventional shot breakdown including shot reverse/shot-editing. Here is how one anonymous commentator in *American Cinematographer* (likely to be William Stull) responded to *Rain* and director Lewis Milestone ('Milly'):

"Milly" is sufficiently the cinema craftsman to know that an excess of perambulation is not great direction; the "Front Page" proved that; but in "Rain," confronted by almost the same problem that arose in "The Front Page," that is, a relatively small set in which practically all of the action must occur, Milestone has run amuck with his perambulator. ("Through the Lens [...]" 1932a: 44)

Walk-and-talk follow shots did not disappear completely but were generally staged in less overt fashion and ironed out so as to coalesce unobtrusively with the story line. The static shot was the norm and moving the camera needed convincing motivation. Some walk-and-talk follow shots in *Rain* are in tune with later examples but certain idiosyncrasies of its 'perambulating' or 'rotambulating' walk-and-talk follow shots were later ironed out.



First of all, the excessive duration of mobile shots decreased in tune with an overall development throughout the mid- to late thirties of increasingly faster editing rates.<sup>184</sup> Second, conspicuous autonomous camera movements are mixed in to the walk-and-talk shots in *Rain*.

On some occasions the camera weaves its own path around the characters and at other times the camera actually *detaches* itself from them and leaves them out of frame for short stretches of time. Towards the end of the seven-minute long take a messenger brings a letter from the Governor ordering Sadie to return to San Francisco. After receiving the ill news Sadie and Tim walk out of shot to the left of the camera whilst the camera itself pans right, picking them up when they are inside the house. The problem as regards classical stylistics is that nothing validates the detachment. There is nothing of interest for the viewer to see *during* the pan,<sup>185</sup> the movement does not cumulate tension or suspense and it is not retrospectively motivated by disclosing a significant or dramatic moment: Sadie and Tim simply go into her room in order to pick up her coat (fig. 113-16).



Fig. 113-6. *Rain* (1932).

In an earlier walk-and-talk follow shot an autonomous camera movement panning off Mr. Horn and Dr. MacPhail to a group of natives is clearly enough motivated by their discussion, which brings up the issue of the natives, but the staging of the shot raises confusion as to the off-screen position of the two speakers. The camera pans off them while they are in motion to focus instead on the subjects of their conversation but taking the brevity of the pan into consideration and the fact that they were in motion when the camera

<sup>184</sup> Connected to the diffusion of the walk-and-talk follow shot was an increase in editing tempo during the thirties. Whereas the mean average shot length for late silent films of the period 1924-1929 was 4.8 seconds this number had first risen to 10.8 seconds for sound films period in the period 1928-1933 but the mid-thirties saw a renewed speeding up of editing pace facilitated by new editing equipment that made it easier to cut sound film. As a consequence the mean average shot length decreased to about 9 seconds for the period from 1934-1939 with 1937 constituting the year of the fastest cut films (Salt 1992: 188-9, 214).

<sup>185</sup> It is telling that a similar though longer and slower 'reverse' pan in Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* according to cinematographer Michael Chapman 'freaked out' the crew even though *this* pan actually lays out the space of the taxi garage injecting into the film an authenticity of place. Chapman to the camera in Bouzereau (1999).

detached itself from them, one would expect their off-screen presence to be momentary. Yet their off-screen presence is longer than expected and one wonders what has happened to them. The pitch, timbre and volume of their voices remain the same and give no indication of their exact whereabouts. In fact, their conversation begins to take on the appearance of a voice-over commentary rather than diegetic dialogue. Horn and MacPhail eventually turn up in the frame again. Their puzzling absence suggests that they either stopped to watch the natives or took a roundabout way to get to them. But because these turns of events occurred off-screen, the viewer was kept in the dark. Such coordination of camera movement, figure movement and off-screen space would befit a Miklós Jancsó-film like *The Red and the White* (1967) which invites the viewer to partake in a play of form but it did not find a place in the classical paradigm.

Preston Sturges makes occasional use of extended walk-and-talk movement but avoids overt staging solutions and finds a way to integrate them with the classical style. In *The Miracle of Morgan's Creek* for instance, Sturges makes three extended receding tracking shots with the players advancing in a frontal or three-quarter view. The first of these follows Trudy (Betty Hutton) and Norval (Eddie Bracken) out the garden gate and into town. Unlike *Rain* the camera does not move independent of them nor does it leave them outside of frame. Instead it attends closely to their every move. Like *Rain* the designs of one character are gradually revealed (in *Rain* Tim wants to settle down with Sadie, in *Morgan's Creek* Trudy tries to talk Norval into accepting the role of a decoy date so that she can slip off to the dance for the soldiers) and like *Rain* this shot facilitates dialogue.

Quality of dialogue and delivery aside, the swift and continuous pace of the characters and the camera in *Morgan's Creek* lend more dynamic energy to the shot than the stop-and-go movement in *Rain*. In the course of the seven-minute long take in *Rain* the camera is in motion for less than two minutes whereas in *Morgan's Creek* the camera - save for one 4-second pause - is in continuous movement for a little *over* two minutes (the entire take runs app. three minutes and fifty seconds).

In *Rain* Sadie and Tim leave her room so that Sadie cannot be said to entertain male company and their entire walk outside on the porch of Villa Horn could be said to be a geographical correlative for the ostracizing and

marginalization of her character by the reformers. While this reading motivates their *placement* outside it does not sufficiently motivate a seven-minute walk-and-talk shot. At the very end of the shot Sadie gives in to the idea of going to Sidney with Tim (though she does not exactly embrace it) and this is the chief function of the shot: to set up life in Sidney as a goal to be pursued so that the Governor's demands of her return to San Francisco will be as much at odds with her plans as possible.

There is stronger narrative motivation for following Trudy and Norval to the cinema. Obviously, the walk-and-talk shot takes Trudy's conversation with Norval outside the auditory reach of 'Papa' Kockenlocker but most significantly the tracking shot facilitates narrative progression in two ways, one visual and one verbal. First of all, Sturges cleverly takes care of the physical transition from the Kockenlocker house to the movie theater. It is important that we get to *see* the front of the movie house because it is easier to re-establish the setting for two later scenes: the brief scene where Norval exits the movie house only to find that Trudy is not there and the somewhat longer scene in the morning when Trudy returns from her 'party to end all parties.' Sturges could have simply cut from the Kockenlocker house to the movie theater but he uses the tracking shot to bridge the intermediary space enabling Trudy to make her designs known to Norval on the fly as opposed to staging the entire dialogue in a more static scene outside the movie theater.

The conversation itself is there to generate amusement but it also plays a significant role to the set-up of the film. Trudy's arrangement with Norval - communicated to him and the viewer during the latter part of the tracking shot - will get her to the dance which will occasion a predicament - a marriage and a pregnancy no less - that she will try to sort out for the rest of the film. And who will help her out? Trudy will make full use of the promise that Norval gives her during the walk-and-talk shot: "I can't think of anything that makes me more happy than helping you out. I almost wish you'd be in a lot of trouble sometime so that I could prove it to you."

This has more to do with the action happening *within* the tracking shot than with the actual movement itself one might argue but staging the shot as a receding tracking shot of two advancing characters gives a side-by-side placement which *Morgan's Creek* uses to better compositional advantage than *Rain*. Not having to face Norval directly Trudy can cast testing glances as she

probes the terrain for her oncoming plea to Norval. This enables the viewer to see and take fun in her 'sly' designs while *simultaneously* seeing that the gullible Norval fails to detect the hidden agenda until it is spelled out to him (fig. 117-9).

Last but not least this is not the only time that Norval receives surprising news while on the move (he later learns of Trudy's marriage and pregnancy in a similar walk-and-talk follow shot) and this strategy is appropriate because it substantiates one's sense of Norval being led around a circus ring, slowly being led into more and more trouble until he is in way over his head – in so much trouble in fact that it exceeds his comprehension.



Fig. 117-9. *The Miracle of Morgan's Creek* (1944).

### 2.5.5.2 Ambience

Another strategy for maintaining interest while the camera is in motion, is to forfeit the role of conversation and instead follow unspeaking characters while the actions, sounds, or aspects of the set design around them carry significance and thereby enrich the communicativeness of the shot. This strategy is most common in establishing shots. One of the most elegantly executed examples occurs in *The Reckless Moment* (Max Ophuls, 1949) in an early scene where a tracking shot follows Lucia Harper (Joan Bennett) through the lobby of the Midtown Hotel to the bar where she will meet Ted Darby (Shepperd Strudwick) who is dating her daughter. As the camera follows her through the lobby it passes two groups of bit players in the foreground and one in the background of the shot. The lines spoken by them help establish the nature of the hotel that Ted is staying at. In the foreground one man tells another "Any time we get a new singer..." in the background another man tells his partner "I don't think this television is a big thing" and finally the camera passes two other characters in the foreground one of which says the following on the phone: "He took me

for a fifty last night. I don't think the game was on the level." This way of staging a follow shot not only establishes spatial layout but gives a better sense of Darby's milieu which then reflects back on characterization, i.e. the 'kind of man he is.'<sup>186</sup> Thus Ophuls and his associates managed to charge the follow shot with narratively important information.

### 2.5.6 Mobile Point of View

Robert B. Ray suggests that next to following moving action, the second most important function of camera movement in Hollywood cinema is focalization, i.e. to move the camera in order to represent a character's point of view (1985: 47). Ray argues that these camera movements efface their own conventionality and do not come across as staging strategies *chosen* by an agent outside the diegesis because they are motivated by actions occurring within the story world.

Ray's inclusion of focalized camera movement is slightly misleading for if focalized camera movement managed to conceal "the necessity of choice" (1985: 39) then why is their appearance so scarce? Three reasons stand out. First, as films such as *Dark Passage* (1947) and *Lady in the Lake* (1947) have demonstrated focalized camera movement is difficult to execute technically and difficult to cut. Except for mirror shots, focalized camera movement also hinders the viewer's access to the facial features and bodily gestures of the character who is witnessing the portrayed events. Third, focalized camera movement is not as 'invisible' as Ray suggests. Consider for instance the effect of watching *Lady in the Lake*, which Noël Burch refers to as "bizarre" (1990: 254).

Ray's account of classical cinema as a formal paradigm neglects the fact that the palette of classical camera movement does not merely consist of follow shots (reframing, accompaniment) and focalized camera movements. The range of choice is not even complete if we include the virtuoso crane shots already mentioned.

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<sup>186</sup> For information on the shooting of this scene see Bacher (1996: 278-280).

### 2.5.7 Autonomous Camera Movement in the Classical Cinema

Charles Clarke's statement that camera movement in the classical cinema was only used to follow moving action is illustrative of the skeptical attitude towards the device but it is not an exhaustive description of the menu of options in Hollywood filmmaking. Whereas repositioning shots and accompaniment shots are everywhere evident the stakes are higher for autonomous camera movement. Their functions must be clearly established and they will be reserved for specifically codified moments.

Nevertheless, Hollywood cinema has found ways of motivating a whole range of autonomous camera movements. Again most of these can be subsumed under what David Bordwell refers to as compositional motivation or if one prefers Burch's terminology they are 'diegetically integrated' in terms of both "external, physical, and 'inward' or psychological movement." (Burch 1979: 226)

But what narrative functions legitimize autonomous camera movement? For one, Burch's much wider definition provides the motivation for such autonomous camera movements as the psychologically suggestive push-in. As illustrated by the discussion of follow shots and push-ins, issues of frequency and duration must be taken into account but before such assessments are made let us first suggest a range of functions which autonomous camera movements can serve within classical narratives:<sup>187</sup>

- 1) Establishing the spatial layout of a scene.
- 2) Cumulating tension and suspense as to what the camera is in the process of disclosing. This will often lead to 3)
- 3) Validating the autonomous movement by disclosing significant characters or objects. The cliché example is the lateral movement that reveals a band of Indians on the hill.
- 4) Following or discovering a character's glance.<sup>188</sup> A character looks at something and the camera moves to disclose it. These examples can also be said to project a character's point of view.
- 5) Increasing our sense of intimacy with characters, for instance the second

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<sup>187</sup> Some of these functions overlap with a list of camera practices (mobile and static) that Edward Branigan has recently suggested to be diegetically *motivated* (2006: 26).

<sup>188</sup> I borrow Branigan's fitting description in this case (2006: 26).

type of push-in from *The Mark of Zorro*.

- 6) Accentuating an action or development of dialogue. The push-in from *Casablanca* described earlier exemplifies this function.
- 7) Revealing emotional or psychological states of characters (either from an internal or external vantage point). This legitimizes a range of camera movements that do not follow moving action such as push-ins suggesting bursts of emotion and crane movements that visually extend an emotional outburst. Jeremy Vineyard calls the latter type “crane-up expression” (2000: 30). There is an excellent example of such a crane shot in *The Shawshank Redemption* (1994) when Andy (Tim Robbins) has escaped prison after crawling 500 yards through human excrement. After Andy sheds his shirt, raises his hands towards the sky and lets his body be soaked by pouring rain the camera cranes up to magnify his sense of release.
- 8) Inflecting scenes with feelingful qualities. As opposed to revealing character subjectivity these shots substantiate the ‘genre’ of the scene or type of situation and will often be coordinated with music. The evocative opening crane shot of *The Letter* serves as an example.
- 9) The anticipatory movement. The camera moves independently of moving action in order to anticipate a future event as when the camera pulls back in *Casablanca* in order to anticipate Sam’s entrance (see earlier description).
- 10) Deflecting attention from potentially offensive action, for instance violence or sexuality as when the camera

Shot execution is of course still important to the Hollywood craftsman and emotionally suggestive camera movements must not be executed at the cost of self-effacing style: “‘Unseen’ photography does not at all mean pedestrian photography; in its own terms it should express emotion, and that emotion, according to the story, may be light, somber, sinister, dramatic, tragic, quiet” (Wong Howe 1950).

The classical film’s concern about an autonomous camera movement is that the camera detaches itself from its characterological function. In doing so it risks flaunting narrational omniscience and self-consciousness. According to Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson such displays are generally reserved for credit

sequences and the opening minutes of the film: “Yet once present in these opening passages, the narration quickly fades to the background. In the course of the opening scenes, the narration becomes less self-conscious, less omniscient, and more communicative” (Bordwell, Staiger, Thompson 1985: 27). The anticipatory camera movement reminds us that the classical film enacts a constant balancing of indicating the direction in which the story is moving and effacing the traces of stylistic construction. Like a line of dialogue introducing a dinner appointment in the near future (what Bordwell et al refer to as a “dangling cause”) so too can camera movement reveal information that will become significant later on but the classical cinema places high demands on such autonomous movements. In many ways they are the most difficult camera movements to execute.<sup>189</sup> Their motivation must be clearly established in accordance with the overall progression of the narrative. For that reason such movements will often be noted in the script.

Other functions are engaged by autonomous camera movement in Hollywood studio films such as the artistically motivated virtuoso crane shots in *Broadway* but these are not really narrative functions per se, or at least they exceed narrative function. In other words they exist in the classical *film* but are not wholly integrated into its *narrative structure*. In this regard I endorse Elizabeth Cowie’s critique (1998: 178-90) of the motivational categories launched in *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* (described in 1.11). If one adopts the motivational categories *realistic*, *compositional*, *intertextual* and *artistic* launched in *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* then close to any camera movement could be enlisted as being in the service of upholding the unity of a classical narrative. Or as Cowie states: “The church is so broad that heresy is impossible” (1998: 178). It is true that there are camera movements in Hollywood studio films that are artistically or generically motivated but that does *not* mean that they operate in the *service* of classical *narrative*. Elizabeth Cowie instead suggests that one distinguishes between the classical film and classical narrative. From the point of view of camera movement this is a rewarding suggestion because generically and artistically motivated camera movements can then be said to offer resistance to the norms of classical narration.

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<sup>189</sup> Dolly grip Jimmy Leavens argues that this is still the case in his work and that such movements will often be noted in the script (Nielsen 2003d).



## 2.6 Resistance to Norms or The Norms of Differentiation

We should be careful not to make the classical Hollywood film out to be more stylistically rigid than it is. Nevertheless, there are certain bounds to its stylistic palette. The following will discuss camera movement strategies operating at the boundary or outside the filmmaking practices of Hollywood studio production. While acknowledging the possibility of carving up non-Hollywood narrative strategies and stylistic traditions according to the definitions of art cinema narration, parametric narration and historical-materialist narration suggested by Bordwell (1985), the following will highlight certain camera movement strategies without committing itself wholly to these preconceived narrative frameworks. By bracketing this question of narrative affiliation we can approach these camera movements as stylistic strategies in their own right and only then begin to ask what particular stylistic practices might mean to the narrative frameworks within which they operate.

### 2.6.1 The Continuing Story of Handheld Camera Movement

Whereas the Hollywood studio film would feature momentary uses of handheld camera movements in particularly motivated instances, it did not feature extensive handheld camera movement. In general, handheld camera movements in Hollywood studio productions were reserved for those instances where the camera was staged to *participate* in the events at hand (see chapter 1.2), either as an unassigned or anonymous persona or mediating the position of a character in the fiction. Scenes of physical action (e.g., *Body and Soul*) or combat were the strongest candidates for inclusion of handheld footage. There is, of course, the unusual shot in *Citizen Kane* that is *meant* to look as if it was handheld to indicate that the footage was shot illicitly. However, the appearance of handheld camera movement tended to be brief: Even in the

opening subjective segments of *Dark Passage* (Delmer Daves, 1947), the handheld Arriflex-camera is only used for a handful of the more 'busy' shots.<sup>190</sup>

The New Waves of the late 50s and early 60s initiated what one commentator described as "an essential transformation in the approach to visual expression" (Solomon 1965-6: 19). From the point of view of camera movement, the key development in filmmaking of the late fifties and sixties was that filmmakers explored a wider palette of stylistic options.

One of the significant aspects of the transformation is the more extensive use of handheld camera movement beyond the use in scenes where its narrative motivation was clear. Available equipment facilitated this development but did not cause it. The Éclair Caméflex Standard 35mm camera (CM3) – a competitor to the Arriflex – was manufactured by Etablissement Éclair in France from 1947 and onwards<sup>191</sup> but had no immediate effect on French film production (Salt 1992: 231). Together with the family of Arriflex 35-cameras it became an important tool for New Wave filmmaking in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>192</sup> According to Allen Daviau, Orson Welles had an Éclair Caméflex brought to Universal Studios for the production of *Touch of Evil* (Orson Welles, 1958), which camera operator Philip Lathrop ultimately used to shoot a substantial number of handheld shots.<sup>193</sup> In *Touch of Evil*, however, the most *noticeable* uses of a handheld camera still take place in scenes of violence, particularly the scene in which Quinlan (Welles) murders Grandi (Akim Tamiroff).

In a Hollywood studio production the handheld camera was generally a tool that could be used to inflect particular types of scenes or – in rare cases – be used for subjective sequences. To independent and maverick filmmakers in the late 1950s and early 1960s it was a liberating force: "As far as handheld camera is concerned, what French film-makers and audiences alike responded to was

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<sup>190</sup> The Arriflex 35 was introduced at the Leipzig Trade Fair in 1937. Delmer Daves had tested the confiscated Arriflex cameras for the Air Force during his service in WW2 (Diaz-Amador 2001-4). The camera was not suitable for synch sound recording without a blimp.

<sup>191</sup> It had the advantage over the Arriflex of a different design that made it easier to rest on the operator's shoulder (Salt 1992: 231) but similar to the Arriflex cameras it was too noisy for synch-sound recording without a blimp. Salt gives 1948 as the date for the Éclair Caméflex camera but according to *The National Museum of Photography, Film and Television* the model dates from 1947. The Caméflex was a switchable camera that could be used for both 16mm and 35mm magazines: [www.nationalmediamuseum.org.uk](http://www.nationalmediamuseum.org.uk)

<sup>192</sup> New Arriflex cameras were introduced in the 1950s and 1960s: 35IIA (1953) and 35IIB (1960), Diaz-Amador (2001-4).

<sup>193</sup> Daviau to the camera in Glassman (1992).

its ability to reawaken a viewing subject made somnolent by the moribund *cinéma de papa*" (Geuens 1993: 11).

Handheld shooting in European and American independent cinema had a much more profound influence because it provided strong incentives for would-be filmmakers:

I was a film student from 1960 to 1965, during the height of the French New Wave, the international success of the Italian art cinema and the discovery of Eastern European cinema. What these movies gave us as film students was a sense of freedom, of being able to do anything [...] Now you no longer had to shoot a film in the traditional manner, which required a master shot, medium shot and close-up, with the camera tracking or panning to follow a character [...] In my first movie, not one shot was a matched cut. At the same time, Cassavetes had used a lightweight 16mm camera for  *Shadows* in 1959, so there were no more excuses. If he could do it, so could we! (Martin Scorsese in Christie & Thompson 2003: 14-5)

The films of the French New Wave are significant in extending the use of handheld camera movements to all types of scenes and they relied both on the 35mm lightweight Arriflex cameras (e.g., *Bande à part*, 1964) as well as the 35mm Éclair Caméflex. However, as Martin Scorsese points out, John Cassavetes'  *Shadows* (1959), shot on 16mm and blown up to 35mm for release prints, is both an early and extreme manifestation of the transformation taking place.<sup>194</sup> Although a number of conversation scenes are shot with a static camera, jerky and edgy handheld camera work makes its presence felt throughout the film in many types of scenes.

Except for a few conventionalized and motivated exceptions, the camera in a Hollywood studio film will move to orient the spectator spatially in so far that it is narratively motivated. The classical camera movement generally installs a trust in the spectator that it will direct attention unobtrusively, that it will follow the flow of the action synchronously. If it detaches itself or sways from this purpose it will do so for a specifically codified purpose. This is not the compositional strategy of  *Shadows*. Combined with choppy editing, off-kilter framings and the emphasis on close-up and medium close-ups, the imperfect

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<sup>194</sup> The French New Wave filmmakers apparently saw 16mm as an amateur's format, although theoretically it could facilitate greater camera maneuverability. A few of their short films such as Truffaut's *Une visite* (1955) and Godard's *Une femme coquette* (1955) were shot on 16mm but all the classic New Wave films were shot on 35mm. 16mm cameras had existed since 1923 but were generally for amateur use. Significant improvements in the quality of lenses and parts were made during WW2 because the military needed to upgrade the equipment for various uses - equipment tests, to verify target hits etc (Allen & Gomery 1985: 221).

and loose reframing movements often off-balance the gravitational field of the image. Although the handheld camera generally follows moving action, its restless feel-around reframing and accompaniment movements make no promises. Due to the imperfections one cannot be sure that every movement be necessary, preconceived or meaningful. It substitutes the firm embrace of the classical style with vitality and edginess. And yet it would be incorrect to claim that this handheld style was wholly unmotivated and somehow detached from the film's narrative design. Just as one should not underestimate the stylistic palette of Hollywood studio films, so one should not underestimate the range of alternative narrative strategies.

The handheld camera work of *Shadows* deviates from classical stylistics but it does so to visually substantiate a subject matter that also deviates from the classical Hollywood studio film: existential boundary situations and urban interracial tension. Every camera move and every cut offers a potential surprise. Just as it is difficult to get one's bearings in the sequencing of sounds *and* images, it is difficult to get ones bearing in terms of the relations between the characters. This is particularly valid in the opening scenes of the film where we are as uncertain about the main character's goals as we are about their interrelationship.<sup>195</sup>



Fig. 120-1. One of the opening shots of *Shadows*.

As to the interaction of stylistic parameters, *Shadows* is a film of *improvisation in different registers*. Performance and the jazz score are the obvious parameters whereas the chunky flow of shots appears to be the result of selecting the best pieces of performance with little regard for smooth continuity.

<sup>195</sup> E.g. skin color confuses the spectator's sense of the characters' interrelationship. We first see scenes featuring Ben (Ben Carruthers), a hip trumpet-playing beatnik who looks Italian-American; then Ben comes to borrow money from Hugh (Hugh Hurd), a black singer. To our surprise a line spoken by Hugh's agent informs us that Hugh and Ben are brothers; then we see a farewell scene between Hugh and what one initially takes to be his white girlfriend but who turns out to be his little sister Lelia (Lelia Goldoni).

As to the handheld camera movement, some is subsumed under the more or less improvisatory movement of the players, though the vitality and vivacity comes exactly from the camera *failing* to neatly reframe. However, there are occasions when the handheld camera itself partakes in the improvisation as when it suddenly moves into and out of a circle of girls singing "A Pretty Girl Is Like a Melody." Taking such playful licenses at the beginning of the film installs in the spectator what Jauss would refer to as 'a horizon of expectations' (Selden 1988: 207-8). Being introduced to the camera's behavioral potential, it installs in us the notion that the camera may go wherever it pleases. Even if it does not immediately satisfy those expectations, the *possibility* of playful and irregular movements never completely disappears.

One way of accounting for stylistic strategies of *Shadows* and other films relying on a great deal of handheld camera movement is to claim that these movements are realistically motivated a la 'the rough and accidental style more adequately reflects the haphazard twists and turns of ordinary existence.' This is the way Stanley Solomon interprets the use of camera movement in *Jules et Jim* (François Truffaut, 1961): "The world of the three main characters, a world of war and neuroses, is constantly unsettled, aimless, shifting - as is the camera" (1965/6: 22). It can also be read symptomatically in relation to the world at large: "The contemporary method for inducing in the spectator a feeling of a disoriented or unstable society is to employ a freely moving camera [again in relation to *Jules et Jim*]" (ibid.). However, this line of reasoning is too simplistic. The implications of the handheld camera work in *Shadows* - and *Jules et Jim* - is of a more paradoxical nature.

*Shadows* teaches us a couple of things about the potential functions of handheld camera movement. Handheld camera movement can provide a greater sense of intimacy with the players. In *Shadows* we get very few roomy compositions that provide the spectator with a supremacy over the spatial layout of a scene, and in those few cases that we do they serve particularly expressive purposes.<sup>196</sup> In *Shadows* the camera is often embarrassingly close to

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<sup>196</sup> When Lelia and her new white boyfriend Tony (Anthony Ray) run away from the older intellectual David (David Pokitillow) in Central Park, handheld camera movements yield more spacious compositions that substantiate the momentary exhilaration and release felt by the characters (and which the spectator is invited to share). Towards the end of the film, two - for this film - very unusual high angle shots accentuate Benny's isolation after his friends leave him. These shots recall the repeated shots of Ben isolated in a corner in the jazz joint at the very beginning of the film.

the action. On one hand it provides an intimacy where even pock marks on the character's faces become visible.<sup>197</sup> On the other hand, it becomes more difficult to accommodate sudden movement in the frame.

Another function highlighted by handheld camera movement is its limited cinematographic inflection of the spaces that it captures. Thus when enmeshed with location shooting handheld camera movement can also foreground an authenticity of place.<sup>198</sup>

These functions are paradoxical, because they are founded on a Brechtian notion of *acknowledging* the very act of recording. The flaws and rough movements in many of the follow shots and reframing shots build into the fabric of the shots the mark of a fallible human operator with fallible equipment. Monaco is right, it is more "realistic and more ethical" to acknowledge that there is a relationship between subject and camera (Monaco 2000: 203). And this is, in the final analysis, what handheld camera movement does in *Shadows*.

The increasing use of handheld movement in the sixties was facilitated by the influx of a number of directors and cinematographers with a background in documentary filmmaking. Raoul Coutard, who worked as a cinematographer for a war correspondent before establishing working relationships with Jean-Luc Godard and François Truffaut, is one of the prominent examples. In America, Haskell Wexler could draw on his experience in documentary filmmaking when shooting handheld scenes for *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (Mike Nichols, 1966). Extending handheld camera movement to all possible scenes continued throughout the 60s and 70s. By 1974, a period film such as *Chinatown* - nominated for 11 Oscars including Best Cinematography - could use handheld camera movement to film a romantic love scene.

Nevertheless, the extension of the stylistic palette did not *only* come from documentary film practices. A director such as Claude Lelouch, who became known for his proclivity for the zoom lens in the early sixties, also had experience in documentary filmmaking but developed his visual repertoire by shooting Scopitones, three-minute color films for a jukebox (the Scopitone) with

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<sup>197</sup> According to Haskell Wexler, Richard Burton objected to Wexler being assigned as cinematographer on *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (Mike Nichols, 1966) precisely because the intimate handheld camera work would reveal the marks on his face (Glassman 1992). Wexler had worked a great deal on documentaries up to that point.

<sup>198</sup> There are certainly exceptions to these functions (Lars von Trier's *Dogville* comes to mind).

moving images: “Holding the camera himself, Lelouch was able to work very quickly and still create elaborate stylistic effects. He developed a visual style of flamboyant zooms, tracks, and cuts to match the energy of the yé-yé songs” (Lev 1983: 23). Lelouch made his feature film debut in 1960 with *Le propre de l’homme* (1960), then worked on Scopitones and commercials between 1961 and 1964 when he also directed *L’Amour avec de si* (1962), *La Femme Spectacle* (1963), *Une Fille et des fusils* (1964) before he landed an international hit with *Un Homme et une femme* (1966). *Un Homme et une femme* (1966) used zoom shots extensively and helped to popularize the device.

### 2.6.2 More Than is Needed: The Wandering Camera

According to Robert B. Ray the basic tactic of the classical paradigm was “the concealment of the necessity of choice” (1985: 39). I.e. a classical camera movement should not make the viewer ponder ‘this could have been done in another way.’ A number of autonomous camera movements have already been accounted for in terms of their function within classical cinema. Here I will focus on a peculiar type of autonomous camera movement that is *based* on puzzling the viewer, prompting the viewer to ask, “why is it done in this way? What is the filmmaker trying to communicate?”

A recurring characteristic of the 1960s and 1970s art house cinema was the wandering camera.<sup>199</sup> The classical norms of the synchronous follow shot entailed that the movement of the camera be subordinated to moving action. Recall John Seale’s remarks about spending years to perfect how to hide crane shots, tracking shots and zooms in the movement of “whoever or whatever was in front of the camera” (Ettedgui 1998: 139).

The wandering camera relinquishes its compositional obligation to the main characters and detaches itself from what Kenneth Johnson refers to as its “characterological function” (Johnson 1993: 51). We can begin to define wandering camera by looking at a specific example. In Martin Scorsese’s *Taxi Driver* (1976) there is a scene in which Travis (Robert de Niro) talks to Betsy (Cybill Shephard) on a pay phone with the sound of traffic in the background. Initially the camera fulfils its characterological function, showing us Travis

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<sup>199</sup> The term originates from Seymour Chatman (1985).

taking in the first words of rejection from Betsy. But in the course of the conversation, the camera – unmotivated by moving action – tracks right and stops on an empty hallway while we continue to hear Travis off-screen (fig. 122-4). At the end of the hallway is a door opening onto the street.



Fig. 122-4. *Taxi Driver* (1976). The camera tracks from a shot of Travis talking to Betsy on the phone to an empty hallway.

There are at least three different meanings one could ascribe to the shot:

1. The camera movement relieves the spectator of the pain of watching Travis being rejected.
2. The camera movement invites the spectator to interpret the empty hallway as an objective correlative to Travis' state of mind.
3. The camera movement intensifies realism of place. By giving space such a privileged moment the shot lets a slice of a New York City space seep into the fictional fabric of the film.

Regardless of which of the abovementioned meanings one subscribes to, wandering camera tends to draw attention to narrative agency.<sup>200</sup> This movement is no exception and was already noticed upon its release by Pauline Kael's in the *New Yorker* where she referred to it as Scorsese's "Antonioni Pirouette" (Kael 1994: 684). Wandering camera marks "traces of enunciatory activity" and thereby reveals a transition "from one level of narration to another" (Johnson 1993: 49).

Another orthogonal function related to narrative agency is that wandering camera creates a momentary "conflict in tense experience" because it marks a "shift in emphasis from the story as something understood to be already

<sup>200</sup> Scorsese himself acknowledges that the hand of the artist was showing in this scene. The signature function of the camera movement is substantiated by the fact that it was the first shot Scorsese thought of for the film (2003: 54).



complete, to the story in the process of being created" (p. 50). The wandering camera can therefore be said to re-emphasize an aliveness of the medium.

Not all autonomous camera movements are examples of wandering camera. Kenneth Johnson defines the term too broadly as "those moments when the camera as a narrating entity wanders on its own, detached from supporting the story through a character's point of view" (p. 49). This is a necessary but not a sufficient criterion. Consider the creeping dolly movements in 'empty' establishing shots in *Insomnia* (2002) and *Lara Croft: Tombraider* (2001). None of these are 'told through a character's point of view' yet they are unobtrusive and do not belong in the same category as the *Taxi Driver*-example. The term wandering camera will be reserved for those instances that display at least an implicit intention of puzzling the spectator, of making him or her wonder about the direction of the camera and its ultimate purpose. "Why is the camera doing this?" Thus we can exclude from the category 'wandering camera' those diegetically motivated autonomous camera movements mentioned earlier (see 1.2.7).

Wandering camera is a slippery effect that is engaged and disengaged in the course of a shot. Both individual films and traditions of filmmaking train spectators to expect certain functions of style. You often find autonomous camera movement within the classical paradigm but generally spectators have been cued to expect that, when detaching itself from a central character, the camera will bring new information into frame to justify the move and reinstate significance to the movement.

A borderline case is the tradition of letting the camera pan off specific motifs and actions deflecting attention from scenes of sex (e.g., masturbation in *Punch-Drunk Love*) or violence (e.g., murder in *The Village*). These examples are just as reflexive in the sense that they strongly suggest what the film *could* have shown the viewer but simultaneously flaunt a decision to deliberately withhold that information from us. After all, those scenes of sex and violence could have been cut out entirely relaying the information of the events by other means such as dialogue.

However, the reflexive effects of wandering camera movement are more powerfully engaged when neither the initial motif/action nor the final motif/action that the camera comes to rest upon provide clear motivation for

the move. This is the case in the phone conversation-example from *Taxi Driver* described above for it is not clear whether the camera move is in the process of showing us something new outside the field of view or in the process of diverting our attention from the initial motif.

Considering Pauline Kael's term 'Antonioni Pirouette' one should not be surprised to find in Michelangelo Antonioni's *Professione: Reporter / The Passenger* (1975) a structurally similar example of wandering camera. The opening minutes of *The Passenger* show journalist David Locke (Jack Nicholson)<sup>201</sup> wandering around in an unspecified area of North Africa trying to locate a guerilla army. What they are fighting for and what Locke is hoping to get from them is unclear at this stage in the film (we later come to know that he is working on a documentary). After Locke's jeep becomes mired in sand his frustrations culminate in a fit of rage, leading him to beat his jeep repeatedly with a shovel, kneeling down in resignation, shouting "All right, I don't care!" at the desert sky while throwing sand up into the air. There is a cut to a wider shot of Locke prostrating himself in the sand before the camera detaches itself from him and pans out across the desert. The meanings we may ascribe to this move are not radically different to those meanings suggested as regards the *Taxi Driver*-example, i.e. an emphasis on place and setting (e.g., the power they exude over human destiny), the desert as an objective correlative of his psychological state or as symbolizing his doomed project.

It bears the mark of wandering camera but - as opposed to the move from *Taxi Driver* - it is actually part of a playful aesthetic *patterning* of movements that is played out during the film's exposition. This individual example must be seen in relation to no less than four leftward wandering movements that precede it. While Locke is supposedly making progress in pursuit of the militia, the camera subverts his objective and turns on him by panning or tracking off him to the left, i.e. instead of leading him on and anticipating what lies ahead, the camera keeps returning to motifs or characters that he left behind.

The breakdown of Locke's car marks the end of the militia pursuit. He is at point zero. And it is at this stage that the camera again detaches itself from Locke but this time the camera pans to the right of him showing the spectator a

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<sup>201</sup> The following is not a full interpretation of the film but an analysis of the functions of wandering camera in the film. The possible implications of character names (e.g., the allusion to John Locke) and many other aspects of the film will not be dealt with here.

view of the desert that lies ahead. Not only do the traces of his pursuit vanish in the contours of that desert, so does his life as an investigative reporter. In consequence, the mobile shot marks a transition in the film. That does not obliterate symbolic meanings of the shot. In fact, it is precisely the physical vacuum of the desert and its symbolic reference to Locke's existential vacuum that mark this as a starting point for the 'real' story line of the film - Locke's taking over of another man's identity.

### 2.6.3 Authorial Camera Movement

Many factors can shape the way camera movement is staged in a particular film. If you were a director and did not work at Universal in 1930 you could not orchestrate sweeping crane shots. If you *did* work at Universal but were *not* directing a musical calling for extravagant set pieces, you might also have a hard time persuading front office to let you indulge with the Broadway crane. Authorial claims concerning camera movement are of course prey to the critique of auteurist studies in general, i.e. that it harbors romantic notions about individuality, that it is a personality cult, that an auteurist perspective underestimates or misconstrues the mode of production - the "genius of the system" as Bazin referred to it:<sup>202</sup> the economic and organizational structure of production systems, the sociology of the actual production milieu and so forth.

Nevertheless, there is actually statistical evidence to suggest that interpretive critics and scholars are not completely mistaken in attributing stylistic characteristics to particular directors. The statistical analyses conducted by Barry Salt actually indicate that editing pace, range of shot scale and number of camera movements are more likely to be director-specific than studio-specific or genre-specific for instance (Salt 1992: 215, 219-24).

There is also the contribution of other members of the production crew to consider. Even the most adamant auteurist would acknowledge that cinema is a collaborative art form and that the cinematographer, the camera operator, the key grip, the dolly grip and so forth can influence the orchestration of camera

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<sup>202</sup> André Bazin: "The American cinema is a classical art, but why not then admire in it what is most admirable, i.e. not only the talent of this or that film-maker, but the genius of the system [...]," in "On the politique des auteurs," reprinted and translated in Hillier (1985: 258).

movement. As regards camera movement and the director-cinematographer relationship, Barry Salt is surprisingly cocksure:

[R]eal camera movements are only made when authorized by the director, and further than that they are nearly called for by him rather than anybody else, so I hope that one day we will see the end to the practice of film reviewers referring to such and such a cameraman's "fluid and intricate camera movements." (1992: 223)

One does not have to subscribe to Salt's rigid account of a working-relationship that is often more flexible than indicated above<sup>203</sup> to acknowledge that there is such a thing as director-specific camera movement. Indeed, director-specific camera movement can be traced back to filmmakers like Yevgeni Bauer in the mid-teens and as early as 1928, F. W. Murnau described the camera as "the director's sketching pencil" (1928a: 72). Note that this is less aggressive compared to the "pen" referred to by Alexandre Astruc in his famous 1948-essay "The Birth of a New Avant-Garde: La Caméra-Style" but in fact this merely emphasizes the different authorial conceptions of camera movement (remember that Astruc was *also* a filmmaker with a proclivity for mobile long takes, see Bacher 1978: 83-5).

Authorial specificity can manifest itself in many ways. One type of director-specific camera movement defines a particular relationship between the spectator and the characters. Robin Wood, John Gibbs and Douglas Pye all argued that Otto Preminger moved his camera in a way that restricted the viewer's access to the characters' thoughts and emotions. They emphasized the tendency to maintain distance to the characters and that objects passing between the camera and the characters were part of that strategy. Similar points could be made regarding other directors. As mentioned in 2.4.4. regarding camera movement and decor in Kenji Mizoguchi's later thirties films, the spectators access is not merely restricted but *obstructed*.

The camera movement of a particular director may have certain structural characteristics which then effect the functions and meanings of the shots in which they occur. Whereas some directors prefer lateral camera movements others – such as Paul Thomas Anderson – show a predilection for axial camera

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<sup>203</sup> In my interview with dolly and key grip Jimmy Leavens, he explains that even on bigger budget films such as *Little Shop of Horrors* (Frank Oz, 1986) he has suggested specific camera movements that are in the final film. See also a recent article on Michael Ballhaus (Pizzello 2007).

movement. Again and again in Anderson's films one finds a forward-moving camera: follow shots that penetrate space along with characters and fast or even ultra-fast push-ins propelling towards static or semi-static characters from as far back as what Barry Salt refers to as Very Long Shot (1992: 142). Instead of simply presenting the nine main characters of *Magnolia* (1999) in static shots, Anderson drives his camera – or zooms – towards them with irresistible and hysterical energy. Although every move is applied slightly different from the other, it becomes a collective staging strategy that stylistically suggests a convergence of fate between the characters. In other films such as *Punch-Drunk Love* this strategy is less pronounced but even here he will use a pair of extended push-ins when introducing a scene with bad-boy mattress salesman Dean Trumbell (Phillip Seymour Hoffman).

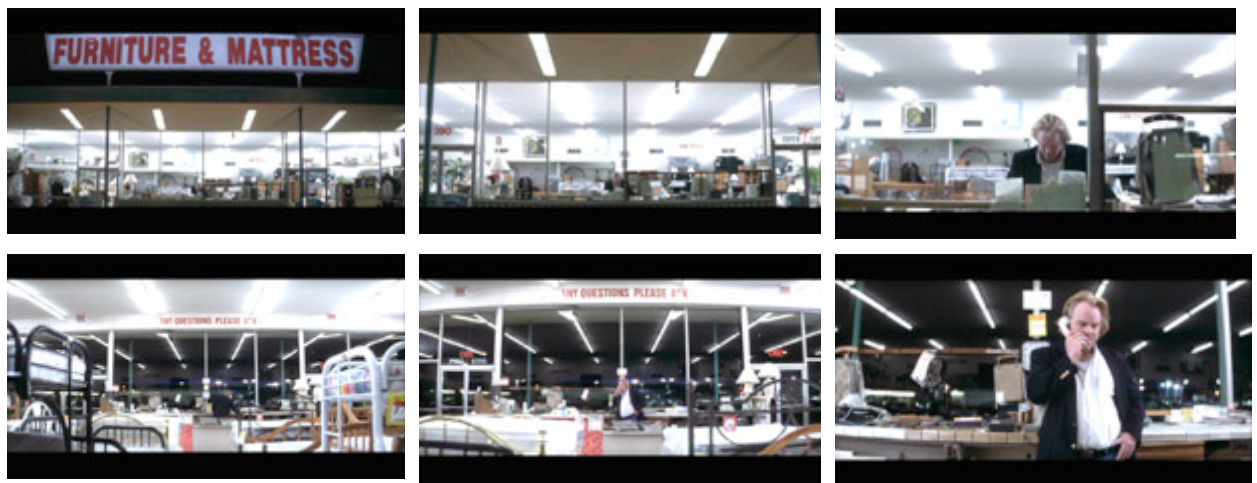


Fig. 125-30. In *Punch Drunk Love*, a sense of spatial rigidity is often induced by Anderson staging the action or the movement of the camera along perpendicular lines, or at a 90 degree angle to the previous vantage point of the camera. Thus, Anderson's frenetic push-ins clash against stilted and blank planimetric compositions creating a disquieting effect.

A single structural characteristic is not always sufficient when articulating authorial differences. A low angle follow shot in a Mizoguchi-film may be staged to maintain the appearance of an unobtrusive distance.<sup>204</sup> In Douglas Sirk's films, which contain more low-angle shots than the norm, the low-angle follow shot amplifies a sense of grandeur and lends an almost operatic quality to the characters.

<sup>204</sup> Note also, however, that Mizoguchi occasionally experiments with surprisingly close foreground objects or characters (Bordwell 2005: 101, 111-2).

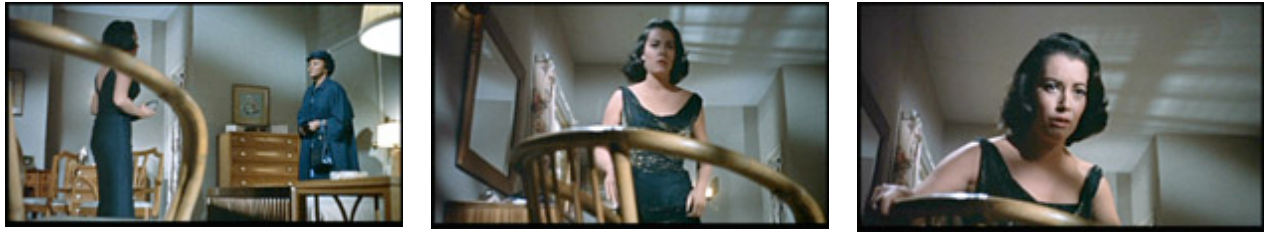


Fig. 131-3. *Imitation of Life* (1959). As Annie comes to see her daughter for the last time, the camera reframes from its low-angle position in the corner of the room. It is a style of operatic amplification.

Finally, director-specific camera movement can also issue from inflection, i.e. what type of feelingful qualities does a particular filmmaker lend to his shots? Or there might be a recognizable set of feelingful qualities that a director attempts to elicit from spectators by means of camera movement. Naremore's account of camera movement in Stanley Kubrick's films demonstrates this admirably:

Like Welles and Max Ophuls, he was a virtuoso of the moving camera, except that he usually created a more rigidly geometrical feeling; his tracking movements follow the characters in a lateral direction, travelling past objects in the foreground, or they advance remorselessly down a fearsome corridor toward impending doom, rather like the inexorable march of a military maneuver. Set over against this technique is his repeated use of handheld shots, often positioned at bizarre angles, which usually depict violent combat. (Naremore 2006: 4)

As with many other authorial characteristics, authorial camera movement can be "consonant with classical norms," i.e. they can operate within films without subverting the unity of the classical narrative (Bordwell, Staiger, Thompson 1985: 77-82). However, once spectators become *aware* of authorial camera movement, it can become an object of engagement that may be both integral to or run parallel to the on-going unfolding of narrative events.

#### 2.6.4 The Mobile Long Take

As illustrated in the previous section, the mobile long take as such was not foreign to Hollywood studio production. Particularly in the 1940s and 1950s many filmmakers working in Hollywood displayed a proclivity for long-take camera movement. Barry Salt has surveyed how the mean average shot length of Hollywood films increased during the forties and early fifties: 1934-9 (9 seconds), 1940-5 (8.97 seconds), 1946-51 (10.47 seconds), 1952-7 (10.13 seconds).

For the following five year period (1958-63) the editing became more brisk (8.8 seconds) and average shot lengths have continuously decreased ever since (Salt 2004: 67-8, 1992: 214). However, mobile long takes were not merely pushed on by idiosyncratic directors. As filmmakers - with the aid of new camera supports<sup>205</sup> - could orchestrate more complicated camera movements without surrendering narrative efficiency or photographic quality, a journal such as *American Cinematographer* which voiced such ardent criticism of the rotambulating trend, could now endorse mobile long takes: "The 'fluid' camera has become a dominant part of contemporary cinematographic technique, and the best Hollywood scripts are written so that as much of the story as possible can be filmed in long, continuous takes" (Lightman 1958: 374).

Although accounts vary, at least some commentators argued that by decreasing the number of different lighting set-ups, narrative-expressive long takes (in Bacher's definition of the term) could actually be a financial benefit to a production (Garmes 1950: 322; Lightman 1948: 376 and 1958: 374).<sup>206</sup> However, as Lutz Bacher's work on Max Ophuls demonstrates, certain types of mobile long take very more acceptable than others.

Ophuls met the strongest opposition over his preference for fluid set-ups, that is, rhythmic long takes with few 'stops,' that are consequently difficult to shorten in editing [...] Not stopping the flow of camera movement meant the take could only be shortened by cut-away. Ophuls did not want to supply these nor point of view shots, reverse angle or close shots on the same visual axis for the few stops that did occur in rhythmic long takes. This was an implicit challenge to the authority of the producer and the front office to affect the content of the film [*The Exile*] in post-production. (Bacher 1982: 41-2)

Various modes of production are more or less hospitable to fluid mobile long take filmmaking. Operating within the Hollywood studio system, covering

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<sup>205</sup> The Houston and Selznick crab dollies became available in 1946 and 1948 respectively. The former was known as Houston Camera Dolly and the latter was nicknamed 'Rosie's Dolly' after its inventor Morris Rosen (Sheridan 1948: 305). Weighing 1000 pounds and without the low-slung chassis of the later crab dollies, the Houston Camera Dolly was not quite the breakthrough that its early production date suggests. Although its front wheels could be rotated 90 degrees, the rear wheels were much smaller making it more suitable for transitions from linear movement to circular movement than for the 90 degree 'crabbing' shifts facilitated by Morris' design. In 1950, the Dual Steering Dolly became available which aside from had a hydraulic hoist that could be operated manually (Garmes 1950: 307, 321-2). According to Garmes, the hydraulic elevator was to be motorized "at an early date" allowing for more smooth "'boom shot' action" (1950: 307). The automatic hydraulic rise was a feature of the 1953 Multidolly (Freund 1953: 296). In 1952, a small crane with the maneuverability of a crab dolly also became available: *Model TC-1* (Bacher 1978: 89, Salt 1992: 231). For a full survey see Bacher (1978: 73-8, 87-9).

<sup>206</sup> See also Boris Kaufman's article on organizing and executing a shot with 18 different camera stops into one continuous shot in *12 Angry Men* (Sidney Lumet, 1957).



scenes in a continuous shot can be a way of assuming editorial control over the final shape of the film. However, the use of mobile long takes in Hollywood cinema would generally be sanctioned in one way or another.

Other production circumstances have proven favorable to other types of mobile long takes. Many different issues are at stake here: proclivities of filmmakers, financial backing, the amount of control the producer and the front office exercise over a production, issues of genre, niche markets etc. In the case of Ophuls, he found the French studios more receptive to rhythmic long take staging (Bacher 1978: 80, 142-4).

Although Hollywood filmmaking was fairly hospitable to narratively efficient mobile long takes such as editing-in-the-camera long takes in the 1940s and 1950s, there were limits to its stylistic bounds. Ophuls' rhythmic long takes provide one example but there are other strategies. Occasionally, Hollywood films contain a brief exhibition of a virtuoso camera movement such as the one from *Casbah* (John Berry, 1948) described in the *Classical Hollywood Cinema* (Bordwell et al 1985: 21) but these would typically be otherwise motivated, for instance narratively by serving as establishing shots. The question is what other types of mobile long takes - besides Ophuls' rhythmic long takes - deviate from the narrative-expressive or walk-and-talk long takes that one can come across in Hollywood studio productions?

For instance, one does not see the continuous display of virtuoso camera movements that occur throughout a film such as *The Cranes are Flying* (Mikhail Kalatozov, 1957). *The Cranes are Flying* exhibits mobile long takes the likes of which would not appear in American filmmaking until the mid-seventies when the invention of the Steadicam allowed for more smooth transitions from crane to 'man-carried' camera movement.



Fig. 134-6. The biopic *Bound for Glory* (Hal Ashby, 1976) is the first to exhibit these possibilities as Steadicam inventor and operator Garrett Brown was placed on a Titan crane while photographing a migrant camp as men gather around a truck where workers are recruited; gradually the crane is lowered to eye-level and Brown steps off the platform and follows Woody Guthrie (David Carradine) as he walks through the crowd. The transition from crane movement to single-man-operating was seamless.



Approximately 25 minutes into *The Cranes are Flying* there is a mobile long which even exceeds the bravura Steadicam shot from *Bound for Glory* (see fig. 134-6) in complexity yet appears remarkably effortless. Veronika (Tatiana Samoilova) and Boris are blissfully in love but are torn apart as WW2 erupts and Boris, much against Veronika's wishes, volunteers. The shot in question shows Veronika rushing back to the Ivanovich apartment to see Boris off: it opens on a medium close up of Veronika in a bus, then as the bus comes to halt, a handheld camera follows her out of the bus, through a bustling crowd, towards a blocked off street. However, as Veronika breaks the line and runs into the street, rushing away from the camera down the middle of the road between two lines of army tanks, the camera cranes up to a high angle view without a break in the film (fig. 137-9). The only way the filmmaker's could have achieved this shot would be to stage it so that the handheld operator<sup>207</sup> moves onto a crane platform just prior to Veronika running out amongst the tanks. This difficult transition appears seamless on the screen even though there are little more than two seconds of transitional rest in which the crane can pick up the camera operator.



Fig. 137-9. *The Cranes are Flying* (1957). The combined handheld & crane shot. There are many other virtuosity long takes in *The Cranes are Flying*. A number of remarkable crane shots follow Veronika struggling to move through the masses (which so often seem to come in the way of her and Boris).

Although there is a substantial amount of handheld camera movement in *The Cranes are Flying* as well as in Kalatozov and Urusevsky's later collaboration on the Russian-Cuban agitprop epic *I am Cuba* (1964) it is in the service of a completely different aesthetic than the handheld work on *Shadows*. Both crane and handheld camera movement is shot with wide-angle lenses in *The Cranes are Flying*. This practice is continued in *I am Cuba* only more so with 90% of the

<sup>207</sup> Perhaps also the director of photography, Sergei Urusevski, who operated some of the handheld cameras on his later collaboration with Kalatozov on *I am Cuba* (1964).

film shot with a 9.8mm lens and the rest with a 18mm lens (Turner 1995: 80).<sup>208</sup> Similar to the handheld camera movements in *Shadows* these camera movement do not lay out the unambiguous and coherent space of classical cinema but as opposed to the cinema vérité-look of *Shadows*, they lay out a warped and eccentric space where elongated volumes appear to float past the camera.



Fig. 140-7. *I am Cuba* (1964) is a collection of long take set pieces. One of the most remarkable virtuosity shots starts with the camera on street level during a funeral. The camera ascends to one rooftop over pointy metal bars then moves across the street. The chief camera operator Alexander Calzetti described the production of *I am Cuba* in these terms: "We tried to use the camera like basketball players, with somebody beginning the scene and passing the camera to another" (Turner 1995: 80). Apparently, this is what happens subsequently in the shot as the camera wanders across the rooftop where seamstresses are in the process of producing Cuban flags. One would think that the end of the rooftop would constitute the end of the camera's route. This is not the case. As the camera has ventured across the rooftop, it is then either handed over to another operator or the current one has moved onto a crane that continues over the crowd forever and ever.

As with Ophuls rhythm was important to Urusevsky:

Rhythm is the key. Obviously when the cameraman is running alongside the heroes, first close to them, then approaching them again – peering into trees, falling down – the panorama cannot be and ought not to be even. This technical 'failing' is in fact an artistic virtue. (Urusevsky quoted in Turner 1995: 79)

Naturally, Urusevsky is referring to a rhythm altogether different from the decorative visual rhythm of Ophuls' films. In the case of *I am Cuba*, an inner agitation was the driving force behind the camera, according to Urusevsky. He wanted to have the camera be "more expressive and alive" (Turner 1995: 79).

It is also significant that *The Cranes are Flying* (1957) was successful on the European film festival circuit, winning the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film

<sup>208</sup> The entire film was shot with an Éclair Cameflex (Calzatti in Turner 1995: 80). With a budget of 600.000 USD it was probably the most expensive film shot entirely with a single Cameflex camera.

Festival in 1958. There *was* a prestigious market for alternate modes of long take cinema, namely the art cinema market. It would be reductive to claim that Kalatozov and Urusevsky only indulged in mobile long takes to display virtuosity or to differentiate their work aesthetically but at least it was *part* of what they achieved. This aesthetic differentiation-strategy is actually David Bordwell's subtly provocative explanation of how Theo Angelopoulos developed his own brand of mobile long take shooting:

But there was also a problem. So many people were embracing the long-take technique that originality was hard to come by, and sheer repetition could sooner or later register as mannerism. Angelopoulos became, like most of his contemporaries, a synthesizer who developed a distinctive style by mixing and revising available schemas. (Bordwell 2005: 158-9)

In other words, mobile long take staging was not – or not merely – a profound form of expression whereby an artist could communicate inner thoughts, ideas and emotions, but a way of differentiating one's film on the art cinema market. Other commentators are even less favorable: "the higher the pretensions, the longer the take" (Salt 1992: 283). Whether one endorses this critical remark or not, Salt (1992: 266, 283) and others (Bordwell 2002: 21) have persuasively shown that long take filmmaking has become *the* central formal distinction between mainstream cinema on one hand and 'indie' films and art films on the other.

The theories of André Bazin have been significant to the way in which different critics and scholars discuss long take filmmaking - mobile or static - and in order to position the different types of mobile long takes it might be useful to introduce a distinction made by Mark Le Fanu in an article entitled "Metaphysics of the 'Long Take': Some Post-Bazinian Reflections." Le Fanu distinguishes between static and mobile long takes but also qualifies that there are different kinds of mobile long takes. In brief he singles out the smoothness of contemporary film syntax, the fluid repositioning abilities of the camera and a tendency to follow a shot to its conclusion, and another modality that is still "alive and kicking": "the one-off set piece, often opening or closing the film, that signals the director's virtuosity" (1997: 14). One should be careful of banalizing the mobile long takes of *The Cranes are Flying* and *I am Cuba* as sheer displays of virtuosity but at least they are *also* that, in fact *I am Cuba* consists of, not one, but a continuous *string of set-pieces*.

Against the smoothness-modality and 'the one-off set piece,' Le Fanu places another type of long take that is often stationary but can also rely on the properties of the mobile camera:

[H]ere it is not the skill or the technical dexterity of the artist that is at issue, but the integrity and patient intensity of his gaze. And of course that goes back once again into the origins of silent cinema: to the wonderful moment when it discovered it could achieve its effects quietly, without recourse to the histrionics of traditional stage acting. (Le Fanu 1997: 15)

This type of mobile long take has proven a valuable resource for many filmmakers but what is its contribution to cinema? In a recent book on Kenji Mizoguchi, Le Fanu proposes an answer (or at least a provisional answer) that is remarkably similar to Johnson's argument about the effect of the wandering camera:

In brief, the long take draws us into the scene in question with a particular dramatic force and intimacy. Delivering the audience over, as it does, to real time, it delivers us over to the suspense and awkwardness that present-tense drama entails: the sense that the outcome of the scene *hasn't yet been settled*, that it is still in the air, and that we are somehow complicit in making it land rightly. (Le Fanu 2005: 3)

Le Fanu also makes another distinction between puristic long take filmmakers such as Miklós Jancsó and Theo Angelopoulos who commit themselves exclusively to mobile long take filmmaking and other directors whose proclivity for long take filmmaking goes hand in hand with a genuine interest in the resources of editing. Already in 1971 Brian Henderson reminded us to not merely analyze long takes in themselves but to consider them in relation to editing. Few films, he argues, consist of sequence shots only (i.e. one scene=one shot). There are several kinds of intra-sequence cuts, Henderson argues, but he also stresses the 'expressive' power of the cut that terminates a mobile long take (Henderson 1971: 6-11).<sup>209</sup>

This is particularly valid in terms of some filmmakers whereas Le Fanu's 'purists' do not terminate their mobile long takes with an 'expressive' cut. Andrei Tarkovsky, for instance, argues that editing for him is merely a way of assembling shots that have similar 'temporal pressure': "The distinctive time running through the shots makes the rhythm of the picture; and rhythm is

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<sup>209</sup> The term expressive is used on p. 9.

determined not by the length of the edited pieces, but by the pressure of the time that runs through them" (1991: 117). It is difficult to precisely define what Tarkovsky means by 'temporal pressure' but one can think of a shots' temporal articulation as a qualitative component that can be shaped to different ends.

We can tenuously highlight a strategy of foregrounding - in various ways - cinematic time or *durée*. Based on the work of Henri Bergson, Gilles Deleuze even carved up film history on the basis of a similar notion (1989). For our purposes it is sufficient to consider temporal articulation as an aesthetic parameter which camera movement can help articulate. This is a matter of pacing and often filmmakers will pace their mobile long takes in order to inflect their shots with particular 'feelingful qualities' sometimes referred to as 'mood,' 'atmosphere' or 'emotional tonality.' We may also notice variety among filmmakers such as the ennui of Antonioni or the hypnotic lyricism of Tarkovsky. These feelingful qualities are not wholly produced by camera movement nor are they permanently present, but camera movement can substantiate them at given moments. Tarkovsky's films for instance – partly because of the pacing of his camera movements – can install in the spectator a finely articulated pace or temporal structure that is so utterly different from the rustle and bustle of everyday affairs. The temporal structure built into a film such as *Stalker* (1979) transfers to the receptive spectator a 'temporal frame of mind' not unlike the way a child experiences time. Unlike the classical cinema where time is benchmarked by announced deadlines, sign-posted dinner parties and villains to terminate, characters in Tarkovsky's world have all the time in the world to contemplate a leaf of grass.

## 2.7 What's New?

David Bordwell has recently claimed that many of the fundamental principles of classical storytelling and classical stylistics are still in place, yet argues that one can identify an *intensification* of specific devices: "Intensified continuity is traditional continuity amped up, raised to a higher pitch of emphasis" (Bordwell 2002: 16). Not only is intensified continuity "the dominant style of American mass-audience films today" (ibid.) it is also "the baseline style for both international mass-market cinema and a sizable fraction of exportable 'art cinema'" (p. 21). Bordwell singles out four central tactics of visual

intensification, which can be summed up as faster cutting, closer shot scales, greater span between applied focal lengths and free-ranging camera movements (Bordwell 2002: 16-28, 2006: 117-189). This last parameter is the one of interest here and has also been backed up by recent statistical evidence conducted by Barry Salt (2004: 76).

But what else can we say about camera movement in contemporary cinema except for “there is more of it”? We can question the radicality of change, for instance. According to Bordwell there are organizational principles subtending the surface structure of the work and *they* determine whether a development is *radical* or whether or not *classical* cinema has become *post-classical* cinema: “What has changed, in both the most conservative registers and the most adventurous ones, is not the stylistic *system* of classical filmmaking but rather certain technical *devices* functioning within that system” (Bordwell 2006: 119). In other words, the continuity system is intact.

In 1940 a mainstream film was likely to have an average shot length of around 10 or 11 seconds, in 2000 a film is likely to have an average shot length of 4 to 5 seconds. This may not seem as much on the page but if one watches a film that one knows well and imagines it having more than twice as many shots, one will start to get an idea of the difference. In contemporary blockbusters such as *Lord of the Rings: Two Towers* the *norm* is the mobile shot, not the static shot.<sup>210</sup> To follow Gimli, Legolas and Aragorn in motion a brief tracking shot or pan will not do. Instead we will see them in a series of swooping aerial SpaceCam shots. Rather than reserving the push-in for one specific purpose within a scene (and only for select scenes at that), the contemporary mainstream film may intercut push-ins in a wide variety of scenes. Whereas in studio days one may have shot an entire film with a 40mm lens, contemporary filmmakers cut together a 25mm with a 100mm without blinking (Nielsen 2006). Whereas the medium shot was the workhorse in classical stylistics, the close up and medium close up range is where the action is today. Furthermore, there are developments of visual style that Bordwell does not highlight here such as the CGI. “And the change hasn’t been radical,” writes Bordwell. Bordwell’s delivers a fine description of those stylistic

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<sup>210</sup> In this case, Barry Salt’s statistical results are slightly misleading (2004: 76) because he does not include smaller reframing movements. Nevertheless, a reframing movement is also a camera movement. The mobile shot being the norm is only valid if one includes all movements.

parameters but does he not underestimate their impact? Even these four parameters highlight a change that is *profound*.

One of the significant differences regarding camera movement in contemporary mainstream cinema versus camera movement in the studio era can be described as greater stylistic pluralism. Again the 1960s appear to be the central transitional era but the stylistic pluralism has a multitude of sources.

Although handheld camera movement had been used occasionally in studio filmmaking, it was weaved into mainstream film syntax in a much more pervasive way in the course of the sixties. Although *Shadows* undoubtedly had some impact on filmmakers like Martin Scorsese (Christie & Thompson 2003: 14-5) and independent or 'maverick' cinema in general (Andrew 1998: 12-4), the strongest causal factor was "the tripple influence of cinema verité documentaries (e.g., *Primary*, 1960), French New Wave films (e.g., *The 400 Blows*, U.S. release 1959), and British films borrowing from the New Wave (e.g., *This Sporting Life*, U.S. release 1963)" (Bordwell 2006: 137). Even though a film such as *Primary* was not seen by many at the time, by the mid-1960s, popular commercial films such as Richard Lester's *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) and *Help!* (1965) had exposed millions to cinema verité-like handheld shooting.

On the other hand, the influence of Italian art cinema such as Federico Fellini, Michelangelo Antonioni and Bernardo Bertolucci, as well as cinema stylists such as Orson Welles, Sam Fuller and Alfred Hitchcock, on the 70s generation of filmmakers may have helped to popularize autonomous camera movement. According to Paul Schrader,<sup>211</sup> autonomous camera movement even became a characteristic signature of his generation of filmmakers with both Brian de Palma, Martin Scorsese and particularly in recent years also Steven Spielberg offering plenty of examples (Jackson 1990: 211). The 'rivalry' of de Palma and Scorsese - referenced by Bordwell (p. 135) - as to who could carry off the most complex mobile long take recalls other rivalries in the history of camera movement (e.g., that of Bauer and Protazanov in the mid-teens). The actual functions of these autonomous camera movements naturally have to be accounted for within their context but as a general contrast to classical Hollywood filmmaking they generally elicit functions of a reflexive character as they both mark a stronger authorial presence and also sometimes echo earlier camera movements or camera movement strategies. For instance the arcing

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<sup>211</sup> I owe this reference to Bordwell (2006: 136).

shots around Carrie (Sissy Spacek) and Tommy (William Katt) on the dance floor in *Carrie* (1976) convey the classical inflective function of enclosing them in a private space but their slightly mannerist execution displays a consciousness of the tradition of which they are a part.

Proximate sources of stylistic diversity also come from changes regarding the availability of different types of camera support. Helicopters allowed for a greater flexibility in aerial photography. One of the earliest examples of a helicopter shot was photographed by then camera operator Haskell Wexler for the final shot of *Picnic* (Joshua Logan, 1955).<sup>212</sup> The helicopter shot visually connects the bus that Madge (Kim Novak) is traveling on, and the train that Hal (William Holden) is traveling on to their joint destination in Tulsa. At the end of the 1960s a big budget feature like *The Bridge at Remagen* (1969) would display ten swooping helicopter shots before the film was past the three-minute mark! And then much later in the film, testifying to the wider menu of options, it will rely intensely on handheld camera movement for about ten minutes of screen time (see cinematographer Stanley Cortez's remarks in chapter 1). Since the late 1980s and early 1990s many advances have been made in aerial photography: A gyro-stabilized remote-controlled camera support known as SpaceCam became available for feature film, not only allowing for more smooth and soaring movement but also for photographic vantage points on the action that were previously inaccessible (Hirsch 1999: 62-3).

The influence and aesthetics of Steadicam is one of the few well-documented areas in the history of camera movement (Ferrara 2001, Geuens 1993). Significantly, Garrett Brown's introduction of the Steadicam in the mid 1970s provided handheld work with the fluency of a crane. Garrett Brown is the inventor of other camera support systems such as the SkyCam which is designed for concert and stadium coverage but which has occasionally been used in a feature film such as the sequence which simulates the flight of a bird in *Birdy* (1984). The Steadicam, however, has had a more profound influence on shooting practices than any other novel camera support in the last 30 years but as demonstrated by the example from *Bound for Glory* also made it exceedingly easier to shoot complex long takes. Technically it allows for a closer simulation of human perception but interestingly some filmmakers also consider its

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<sup>212</sup> James Wong Howe was the Director of Photography.



weightless and often subtly floating movement to be “a little too boring” for subjective camera work and prefer to draw on the tradition of handheld camera movement to establish a shot as subjective even though it is not as true to our everyday locomotion (Leavens in Nielsen 2003d).

Development in postproduction has played an increasingly significant role to camera movement in recent years. Cinematographer David Tattersall recalls how *Radioland Murders* (1994) provided one of the first opportunities to shoot blue-screen footage with a more free-ranging camera. Prior to that, Tattersall argues, bluescreen work was done “in a careful, very monitored sort of way, which would allow the audience to spot a bluescreen shot coming from a mile away. The camera would suddenly stop moving, the visual effect would happen, and then the film would begin again” (1999: 1). On *Radioland Murders*, Tattersall remembers that “we shot things as if the bluescreen didn’t exist. All of the camera moves—pans, tilts and dollies—were matched later in post.” The marriage of computer-based motion tracking and digital compositing tools has made it increasingly easier to blend live-action with computer-generated backgrounds without relinquishing camera mobility (O’Hanian 2000: 101-3).

Since the advent of CGI camera movement in the late 1990s, or virtual camera movement, and the possibilities of digitally compositing different types of camera movement, the menu of options is close to boundless (Hirsch 1999: 62). A 2007-article in *American Cinematographer* will call the reader’s attention to the dolly tracks on the ground: “The filmmakers strove to create many of the film’s effects in real time, in camera.” (Silberg 2007: 52). It is revealing of the digital capabilities that the article *makes* that point.

Fig. 148-55. *War of the Worlds* (2005). A car chase anno 2005. With the aid of CGI, the camera knows no bounds and weaves its way in and out of a car in full-speed flight. These are all stills from the *same* nearly two-and-a-half minute mobile long take.





### 2.7.1 Shot Snatching

David Bordwell claims that intensified continuity often yields a “catch-as-catch-can quality” (2006: 168). In *The Way Hollywood Tells It* (2006) an in-depth analysis of a specific scene in *Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* (2002) exemplifies this claim. The scene in question is the one in which King Théoden must make a decision regarding the hastily advancing Uruk-hai army. The Fellows of the Ring urge him to face the army head-on but Théoden is reluctant. Bordwell’s critique includes these comments on the use of push-ins in the scene:

[T]he cuts and camera moves display no overarching pattern; the shots do not progress in a way contoured to the dramatic arc or emotional dynamic, except for the same sort of progression from medium close-ups to tight close-ups we found in the 1999 *The Thomas Crown Affair* and in *Two Weeks Notice*. So, for instance, a slow, sustained track in to Théoden brooding on advice given from off-screen would have accumulated greater force than the compromise we get: three slices of this camera movement, interrupted by cutaways and two shots of Théoden and Gandalf from a striking but dramatically irrelevant angle [...] Oddly, a strategy designed to amp up energy serves to dissipate it. (2006: 165)

Assuming for the moment that Bordwell’s critique is not only correct with regards to the scene in question but also symptomatic for intensified continuity in general, a likely source of the catch-as-catch-can quality as opposed to the comparatively modest yet more precise application of camera movement in the studio era could be the increasing use of multi-camera shooting:

During the studio era, the rules for style were embedded in concrete practice. They were just the way you did things. If you were a director, your choices were constrained by tacit but strongly felt boundaries, matters of taste and judgment as much as anything else. You could move the camera but you shouldn’t cut in the middle of the movement. You could shoot extreme close-ups, but rarely. Every piece of action demanded one right spot for the camera, which it was your task to find. You didn’t (for reasons of economy as much as professional pride) set up four cameras to grab action haphazardly. (Bordwell 2006: 118)

With these remarks in mind compare to John Seale's description of the shooting of *Poseidon* (2006):

[W]e had three cameras all the time, four a lot, five consistently, and six very occasionally. We often got entire scenes in one hit. After blocking a scene, the A camera was Wolfgang's [Peterson] bank – he got his movie with the A camera. Then B and C would be crosscutting the action and D might be covering the scene from another room, capturing the actors as they approach, and E could be in the mix, getting a little shot from another angle. (Seale quoted in Williams 2006: 57)

The introduction of the Steadicam may have facilitated a greater variety of camera movements to choose from in editing: "During the 1980s, the B camera was frequently a Steadicam, roaming the set for coverage, and the fluidity of its movements around static actors may have made circling shots and push-ins strong candidates for inclusion in the final cut" (Bordwell 2006: 154). To further back up this claim, Bordwell quotes an entry in *American Cinematographer* on *Gladiator* (2000) where a dialogue scene was filmed with no less than seven cameras: "Someone has got to be getting something good," the director of cinematography explains (Bankston 2000: 38). Taking into account that contemporary mainstream movies are cut faster today than ever before<sup>213</sup> it is not difficult to imagine how the large majority of individual camera movements get only a few seconds to carry out their intended function. In my interview with dolly and key grip Jimmy Leavens, he paraphrases a recent conversation he had with a photographer about the transformation of their craft:

All those *years* of strain and experience that it took to fine-tune the practice of setting the camera in motion *gently*, then accelerate its motion and then *gently* slowing down the pace again to a stop. This is a specific tradition of craftsmanship that it has taken *years* to develop and all that is almost unnecessary today because it is constantly edited *out* of the finished picture. (Nielsen 2003d)

Similarly, specific types of camera movement such as the crane shot have changed in function. In the studio days a crane shot would be given time to develop force. Lutz Bacher describes how in the studio days the dolly was the "workhorse" whereas the crane was "the 'star' piece of equipment that could be used to spectacular effect in musicals and other high budget films" (Bacher

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<sup>213</sup> According to statistical surveys by Barry Salt the mean average shot length of 1035 feature films from 1994-1999 was down to 4.93 seconds. The corresponding mean average shot lengths for previous years was: 1988-93 (5.85), 1982-87 (6.13), 1976-81 (6.55), 1970-75 (6.63), 1964-69 (7.11), 1958-63 (8.80), 1952-57 (10.13), 1946-51 (10.47), 1940-45 (8.97). See Salt (2004: 67-8)

1978: 76). In other words the use of crane shots was codified and used in specific contexts. Today the crane shot does not necessarily need any strong narrative motivation:

If somebody goes for a piss these days, it's usually a crane shot. You look back at the films you love and think, 'They wouldn't have used a crane unless there was a really strong psychological reason for it.' Now they just want to play with the toys, I think. So I try to discipline myself by cutting out all of that. (Figgis 1999: 108)

Mike Figgis both acknowledges what Bordwell has termed the crane shot “as casual embellishment” (2006: 135) *but also* that he has to discipline himself *in the editing suite* when confronted with a multitude of crane shots that were apparently shot although they were less than absolutely necessary.

Still, we should not radicalize the development beyond reason. A crane shot is still more likely to appear at the beginning of a scene than in the middle of it and they will probably continue to do so as long as conversation scenes are at the heart of mainstream cinema. After all, there is a limit to how much crane movement one can pack into a conversation scene if it is of any importance to transmit the interaction of two characters. For instance if one takes a closer look at a film such as *The Matrix* (Wachowski, 1999) one finds a fairly sharp distinction between scenes that convey important story information and scenes of sensational vistas and visceral impact. The former tend to be remarkably conventional in their editing and staging - typically conveyed in shot/reverse shot - with relatively modest camera movement. Scenes in which the camera is given place to roam are intermediate scenes and scenes with limited narrative obligations such as fight scenes. The communicative and the sensational impulses are most efficiently united in scenes where *verbal delivery* communicates and *visual imagery* captivates as when Morpheus' voice-over informs us about the fate of civilization while a free-ranging camera takes in the vast scenery of human capsules.

Perhaps this is yet another manifestation of stylistic pluralism for there certainly is a discrepancy at play. According to Paul Thomas Anderson contemporary filmmakers (late 1990s) face a real problem of integrating conversation scenes with scenes of spectacle: “[They are] structuring their movies in a way so that if they want to have a moment where two people stop

and talk it's not going to flow within the movie" (Anderson 2000). Paradoxically, Anderson himself has never been shy of risking homogeneity by displaying bravura camera movements as when he pays homage to a virtuoso long take from *I am Cuba* where the camera ultimately follows a character into a swimming pool. "I feel proud that we came back up out of the pool for dialogue," Anderson tells us (ibid.).

Such inherent contradictions are also at work as regards cinematographers. Again we may recall John Seale's proposed adherence to the unobtrusive follow shot (Colbert 1997: 8; Ettegui 1998: 139) and then compare to his (new?) practice of focusing specifically on significant shots of the film and then working more hastily on shots of lesser importance:

I'd rather spend extra time on the most important or dramatic shots of a scene, the ones that leave a lasting impression on the audience and therefore create the overall 'flavor' of the film, instead of equally distributing my resources across every shot and possibly blowing the schedule. And, generally, those magic shots in a scene are predetermined in a production such as this [*Poseidon*, ed.]. (John Seale quoted in Williams 2006: 56)

If one has seen the opening CGI shot of *Poseidon*, one can safely assume that by "magic shots" John Seale does not refer to a pan from A to B but more likely to intricate – very likely autonomous<sup>214</sup> – camera movements, i.e. the 'money shots' sometimes chided by other cinematographers:

Unfortunately, there are a lot of indulgent camera moves in films today. Sometimes I'll see a film and the photography is quite beautiful, but the moves are totally indulgent. They take me out of (the picture), and I think that's always a shame. Too often a camera move is in there to make up for other things that should be there, but aren't. (Deakins in Silberg 2003b: 53)

Judging from these comments it seems that camera movement in contemporary mainstream cinema represents a stylistic pluralism which showcases the worst of two worlds, i.e. a dissipation of the functional contribution of camera movement in 'ordinary' conversation scenes mixed with overly designed, gratuitous virtuosity shots. Is that really a correct assessment?

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<sup>214</sup> Jimmy Leavens explains that the most difficult camera movements to execute – and the ones that demand strongest motivation – are those autonomous camera movements that are designed to make a particular story point. Particularly in big budget films shots like these are most likely to appear in the shooting script (Nielsen 2003d).

### 2.7.2 Camera Movements Suggest Every Subtlety

In the June 2006 issue of *American Cinematographer*, cinematographer Peter Pau expresses surprise at the number of camera movements director Chen Kaige had in mind for *Wu Ji/The Promise* (2005). Pau explains that they shot “a full 80 percent of the film with a Power Pod [remote head] on a Tulip Crane” (Oppenheimer 2006: 14). Expatiating on this remark, Pau comes to suggest another way in which we can account for the functional contribution of camera movement in contemporary mainstream cinema (of which *The Promise* is surely a part): “Kaige wanted camera movement to suggest every subtlety” (ibid.).

Regardless of the actual strategies of camera movement in *The Promise* this is an explanation that should not be rejected. Maybe the increasing number of camera movements testify that filmmakers have found that the device can serve more functions than it was allowed to in the past? We can, in fact, test this question by looking at Bordwell’s scene from *Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*. Bordwell argued that the camera movements “display no overarching pattern” and that except for a development towards closer shot scales the shots “do not progress in a way contoured to the dramatic arc or emotional dynamic” (2006: 165). He also argued that three push-ins were a compromise and that the movement would have accumulated greater force if it were one sustained track.

No doubt many camera movements in contemporary cinema have little other function than sustaining a continuous flow of images but there is cause to challenge this specific analysis on a number of points. There is in fact a closer correlation between the push-ins and the dramatic arc of the scene than Bordwell gives them credit for.

The key point in the scene is, as finely illustrated by the chapter heading on the DVD release of the film, *The King’s Decision*. Suspense is doubly folded: the competence of the King, whose mind has only recently been unshackled from Saruman’s control, and the decision on whether to go to war against the army of Uruk-hai.

The King’s decision is the culmination point of the scene although the actual answer to our question is given in the first shot of the subsequent scene. Bordwell counts 29 shots in the scene, 22 of which include camera movement of some sort. This is more or less identical to what I have found in the scene. Of the


29 shots, three shots are completely static whereas six contain miniscule movement. There are no less than ten push-ins in the scene, three on Aragorn and seven on King Théoden - alone or with Gandalf in the frame. But as to the function of the push-ins, there is cause to argue that they *both* serve individual functions yet are *simultaneously* contoured to an overarching dramatic arc.

In brief the push-ins have a cumulative function. They substantiate the increasing pressure on Théoden to arrive at a decision. Jackson *could* have opted for a single long push-in as in a more classical scene but the whole range of push-ins adopted here in fact reflects a greater attention to the subtleties of the scene. Below is a list of the four types of push-ins applied in the scene.



1. Push-in on Théoden and Gandalf, frontal perspective (3)
2. Push-in on Gandalf and Théoden, profile perspective (2)
3. Push-in on Aragorn (3) and Théoden (1)
4. Push-in on Théoden facing the throne (1)

Whereas the total orchestration of push-ins serves to build up to a culmination point, the King's decision, each of the above categories of push-ins reflect different *types of pressure*. The different calls for action vary in form, intensity and rhetorical mode. First of all, pressure is exerted from different characters: Eowyn, Gandalf and Aragorn.

The three push-ins on Théoden and Gandalf from a frontal perspective (category 1) are shots 3, 7 and 9 in the scene. They are different from the other push-ins because they are tied to a rhetorical mode of persuasion that invokes terror and injustice to appeal to Théoden's compassion and paternal instinct:

Shot 2	Eowyn: "They had no warning..."	
Shot 3	1 <sup>st</sup> push-in Eowyn, off-screen: "They were unarmed."	



Shot 7	2 <sup>nd</sup> push-in Gandalf: "This is but a taste of the terror that Saruman will unleash. His fear ever more potent now that he is driven by Sauron."	
Shot 9	3 <sup>rd</sup> push-in Gandalf: "Draw him away from your women and children" (soft-spoken, gently places his hand on Théoden's arm rest).	





The two push-ins on Gandalf and Théoden from a profile perspective (category 2) are referred to by Bordwell as two shots that merely interrupt the abovementioned push-ins and show Théoden and Gandalf "from a striking but dramatically irrelevant angle" (Bordwell 2006: 165). Although it can be said to be more 'striking,' the new angle is not dramatically irrelevant. The change in angle is motivated because it reflects an alternate rhetorical strategy of appealing to Théoden's warrior instinct:

Shot 8	1 <sup>st</sup> push-in Gandalf: "Ride out and meet him head-on!"	
Shot 10	2 <sup>nd</sup> push-in Gandalf: "You must fight!"	

Intercutting the two types of push-in (shots 7-10) indicates a strategic uncertainty on Gandalf's part that is completely in line with the nuances of the story line: Gandalf cannot be completely sure of Théoden's psychological state so shortly after having had his mental health restored and therefore tests different rhetorical terrains of persuasion.




The third category of push-ins is connected to yet another type of pressure. Aragorn is calling for the same response that Gandalf did in shots eight and ten but in a different manner. Aragorn's persuasive strategy is more confrontational. There are three push-ins on Aragorn (shot 11, 22, 26) and one on Théoden, facing Aragorn (shot 25).

Shot 11	1 <sup>st</sup> push-in Aragorn: "You have 2000 good men riding North as we speak..."	
Shot 22	2 <sup>nd</sup> push-in Aragorn: "Open war is upon you. Whether you would risk it or not."	
Shot 24	Théoden: "When last I looked..."	
Shot 25	3 <sup>rd</sup> push-in ...Théoden, not Aragorn, was King of Rohan."	
Shot 26	4 <sup>th</sup> push-in Aragorn's reaction shot.	

Aragorn's diction is not only more aggressive; he also flaunts superior knowledge and an assured sense of the correct way for a King to respond to the threat at hand. Aragorn challenges Théoden's authority in both of the first two push-ins. By pointing out to Théoden the whereabouts of Eomer's banished army, the spectator is given a piece of information that might otherwise resurface as a question in the spectator's mind: Why does not Eomer's army come to the rescue? But the line spoken by Aragorn, and accentuated by the push-in, also implies that Théoden does not have a full grasp of his military options in this particular situation. The second push-in accentuates the most confrontational line. Théoden's resolve in standing firm against Aragorn's

challenging remark is yet again accentuated by a push-in before a short push-in on the displeased Aragorn shows him taking in the reprimand.

Théoden silences Aragorn but does not resolve the key issue. Gandalf insists that he meet his responsibility and asks: “Then what is the King’s decision?” As Théoden turns, facing the throne, the camera subtly pushes in for a close up as he prepares to make the final decision. This is the final push-in and the final shot of the scene.

Shot 29	Théoden turns towards the camera (and the throne) while the camera subtly pushes in to a close up.	
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It should be clear to the reader by now that the various types of push-ins applied in this scene both adhere to an overarching design and simultaneously reflect the intricate nuances of the scene. The push-ins do not dissipate energy but are subtly orchestrated to underline various tensions and pressures in the scene.

The analysis presented above should also help explain other patterns in the scene. For instance, Théoden’s decision to leave his throne and walk out into the room is a provisional response to the cumulated pressure exerted in the first half of the scene - a pressure which the push-ins in shots 3, 7-11 are chiefly responsible for accumulating. In taking the floor, Théoden attempts to puncture the tension, to regain his poise and composure so that he can take charge of the situation. But Théoden’s action does not alleviate the pressure. His sudden stride is a physical action but it also alters the spatial configuration in a way that is detrimental to his original intentions. It places Théoden in the middle of locale, dislocated from his throne, surrounded by the characters from which the call for action comes. The shot which shows Théoden taking the floor is not a result of coincidental shot snatching. It comes exactly mid-way through the scene and perfectly marks a mid-point in the overall dramatic development of the scene.

The prolific use of camera movement also has some surprising advantages. In a scene where almost every shot is mobile, it becomes doubly

significant when the camera is stationary. Whereas the classical Hollywood film would typically reserve the push-in to accentuate a particular gesture, emotion or line of dialogue, the contemporary blockbuster can now use the *static shot* for accentuation and punctuation. Such is the case in this scene when Théoden stands firm against pressure: "I will not risk open war!" Out of the scene's 29 shots, this is the only shot featuring Théoden in which the camera does not move. This *could* be a matter of coincidence but the subsequent scene contains a similar use: Four intercut push-ins evoke the rising intensity in Gandalf and Aragorn's conversation. The fourth push-in stops on Gandalf's line "*have*" in this sentence: "The defences *have* to hold!" "They will hold," says Aragorn in the next - also static - shot.

Rather than taking the staging of the scene to represent a catch-as-catch-can quality, one could instead argue that it represents an overambitiousness. The filmmakers are trying to stylistically inflect the subject matter or idea behind every shot instead of toning down style and reserving the inflection for a particular point in the scene. Bordwell's original description of intensified continuity was more on-the-spot for this is an 'amped up' style, raised to a 'higher pitch of emphasis.' If every 'ordinary shot' is inflected then the money shot must be doubly so.

A possible key to understanding the increasing contribution of camera movement in contemporary cinema is to consider it in relation to scoring. In those instances in Hollywood studio films where instrumental scoring was sufficient to add flow and to subtly inflect scenes with feelingful qualities, one now finds camera movement amplifying or substantiating those qualities pictorially.<sup>215</sup> Naturally, the correlation of music and camera movement goes back to the German musical tradition of the early 1930s but filmmakers increasingly employ camera mobility to supplement those feelingful qualities that are often referred to as 'atmosphere,' 'mood,' 'energy' or 'emotion.' In order to explain why he and Christopher Nolan kept the camera moving in brief establishing shots without principal actors, (an otherwise typical B-unit

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<sup>215</sup> I do not mean to say that camera movement has therefore supplanted the score. Film scoring itself has changed from being primarily based on classical instrumental music to an increasing dependence on popular song. I am not sure that this has had a particular impact on the functions of camera movement in contemporary cinema.

shot) Wally Pfister replied: "It gives it a little life, gives it pacing and flows well with the music" ("*Insomnia*" 2002).

Consider the brief funeral scene in *All the King's Men* (1949) after a flight of stairs collapses during a fire drill killing a number of children. Save for two minute reframing movements the scene is presented in seven static shots. Composition (two low-angle shots), lighting and performance naturally give spectators a sense of the nature of the scene but the chief means of inflecting the shot with feelingful qualities is musical scoring. A contemporary film is much more likely to also substantiate such feelingful qualities pictorially by means of camera movement.

Thus contemporary camera movement stakes a claim on the areas of contribution formerly reserved to scoring. Not supplanting it, of course, but perhaps in closer collaboration. Camera movement is not exactly as fundamentally necessary as scoring but we can think of camera movement as moving in that direction.

Naturally, the scene from *Lord of the Rings* is merely one scene in a film containing dozens, in a Hollywood industry that releases hundreds of films a year. But it nevertheless demonstrates that apparently gratuitous, unmotivated and powerless camera movements are in fact carefully tailored to narrative nuances. Claims regarding the omnipresence of gratuitous, unmotivated, powerless and functionless camera movements are exaggerated. If one really stops to analyze the actual staging of such a scene, one is likely to find that camera movement instead underlines every subtlety.

### **3 A Taxonomy of Functions**

The following section will present a tentative model that schematizes the central functions of camera movement in narrative cinema. The reader should bear in mind that it is a tentative model, which is open to both alterations and extensions. All the functions and sub-functions will be exemplified. As stated in the introduction the taxonomy is informed by the extensive viewing performed in order to chronicle the history of camera movement (Extensive Sample) but in order to work out a taxonomy of functions, more in-depth analyses were deemed necessary. Consequently, a corpus of between 20 and 30 camera movements were selected within seven categories of movement (Select Sample): push-ins, pull-backs, arcing shots, handheld shots, booming and aerial shots, follow shots and autonomous movements. These camera movements were analyzed individually, their functions extracted and assembled into a list of functions for each type of movement. The functions of each of the seven types were compared to each other. In the process of organizing these type-specific functions into a taxonomy of functions for camera movement per se, they were held up against the wider base of the Extensive Sample. Please consult **Appendix 1** for more information on selection criteria and analytic procedure.

Following the presentation of the model, six concrete examples of camera movement will be analyzed in order to demonstrate how individual camera movements will often serve more than one function. Some of these camera movements are idiosyncratic but it is important to keep in mind that almost any camera movement can be seen to ‘multitask.’

#### **3.1 Functions of Camera Movement in Narrative Cinema**

Based on the Select Sample, and underpinned by the Extensive Sample and the literature on camera movement reviewed in **1.1-1.12**, I will suggest that camera movements in narrative cinema serve six major functions. The six functions are:

- 1) Orientation: orienting the viewer spatially.
- 2) Pacing: contributing to the cinematic rhythm of the film.

- 3) Inflection: inflecting shots in a suggestive, commentative or valiative manner.
- 4) Focalization: associating the movement of the camera with the viewpoints of characters or entities in the story world.
- 5) Reflexive: inviting spectators to engage with the artifice of camera movement.
- 6) Abstract: visualizing abstract ideas and concepts.

These are not necessarily the *only* functions that camera movements can serve in cinema but they are the primary ones. Below is a presentation of each of these six main functions including declensions and sub-functions, exemplified with concrete examples. At the end of the chapter these points will be summed up in a schematic overview.

### 3.1.1 Orientation

Camera movement can orient the viewer spatially in different ways and it is possible to distinguish between three main parameters: lending more *depth* or *volume* to the image, *directing* the viewer's attention to salient story information and articulating the *scope* of action.

Using camera movement to articulate depth and volume may be regarded as central to the entire medium of film but it has also been a definite and specific strategy of many filmmakers, for instance Vilmos Zsigmond:

We decided to create a third dimension on a two-dimensional film not only with lighting and composition but also with constantly moving the camera. Since the objects change positions differently in different planes, the camera move reveals the right perspective of the objects in space, thus creating the missing third dimension. (Zsigmond to the camera in Carson 2002)

Since movement parallax can be read from the *entire* image as a result of 'the camera movement-effect',<sup>216</sup> camera movement will usually supply the image with more depth cues enabling the viewer to make a better assessment of the relative distance of objects in the frame. Furthermore, camera movement can also allow the viewer to read volume from the dimensions of the objects (see e.g., fig. 78-80). This is most often a relatively inconspicuous function, but

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<sup>216</sup> See Bordwell (1977). Also referenced in 1.9.

occasionally it forms the basis of a revelatory function as in this example from *Svengali* where it is precisely *because* of the camera movement that we are given ‘the missing dimensional information’ that was concealed from us before (fig. 156-8).



Fig. 156-8. *Svengali* (1931). What looks like a tombstone turns out to be a road sign.

The ability to lend volume and dimension to the represented objects is a point that Allan Dwan brought up when discussing the predilection that he had for camera movement at the beginning of his career:

Of course, even in dollying, as a rule we find it's a good idea to *pass* things in order to get the effect of movement. We always noticed that if we dollyed past a tree, it became solid and round, instead of flat. So we used to take buildings with pillars and get a wonderful effect dollying past. (Bogdanovich 1997: 97)

Dwan and Zsigmond here emphasize how a two-dimensional plane can come to articulate depth and volume by means of camera movement. Garrett Brown (inventor of the Steadicam, the SkyCam as well as many other novel camera supports) and George Miller (director of *Mad Max*, *Lorenzo's Oil* etc) similarly address this function but do not only consider it in relation to surface structures of the image:

When the camera begins to move, we are suddenly given the missing information as to shape and layout and size. The two-dimensional image acquires the illusion of three-dimensionality and we are carried across the divide of the screen, deeper and deeper into a world that is not contiguous to our own. (Brown 2003)

It's a compulsion of mine to move the camera, and I now know why. It enhances three-dimensionality. It puts you in the space, and if you move the camera the audience becomes aware of the space. (Miller quoted in Bordwell & Thompson 2004: 269)

Zsigmond and Dwan's explanations do not *have* to rely on a conception of the camera as a substitute for the movement of the viewer whereas Brown and

Miller specifically address this type of spatial orientation in relation to an expressed goal of transporting the viewer into the diegetic space of the movie.

Camera movement can also minimize cues of depth and volume – for instance by swish-panning or otherwise making a blur or ‘smear’ out of the image. Lateral camera movements that retain frontality and remain perpendicular to the background plane of the setting may yield fewer depth cues than diagonal movements but camera movements rarely play a *constitutive* role in bringing out the planar and graphic surface structures of an image.<sup>217</sup>

At least as pervasive as the depth/volume-application is the function of using camera movement to direct the attention of the viewer at salient story information. In this regard one can refer to the camera’s function as a pointer. What Michael Chapman, ASC, has said about cinematography in general is particular true of this function: “The job of the cinematographer is to tell the audience where to look.” (To the camera in Glassman 1992)

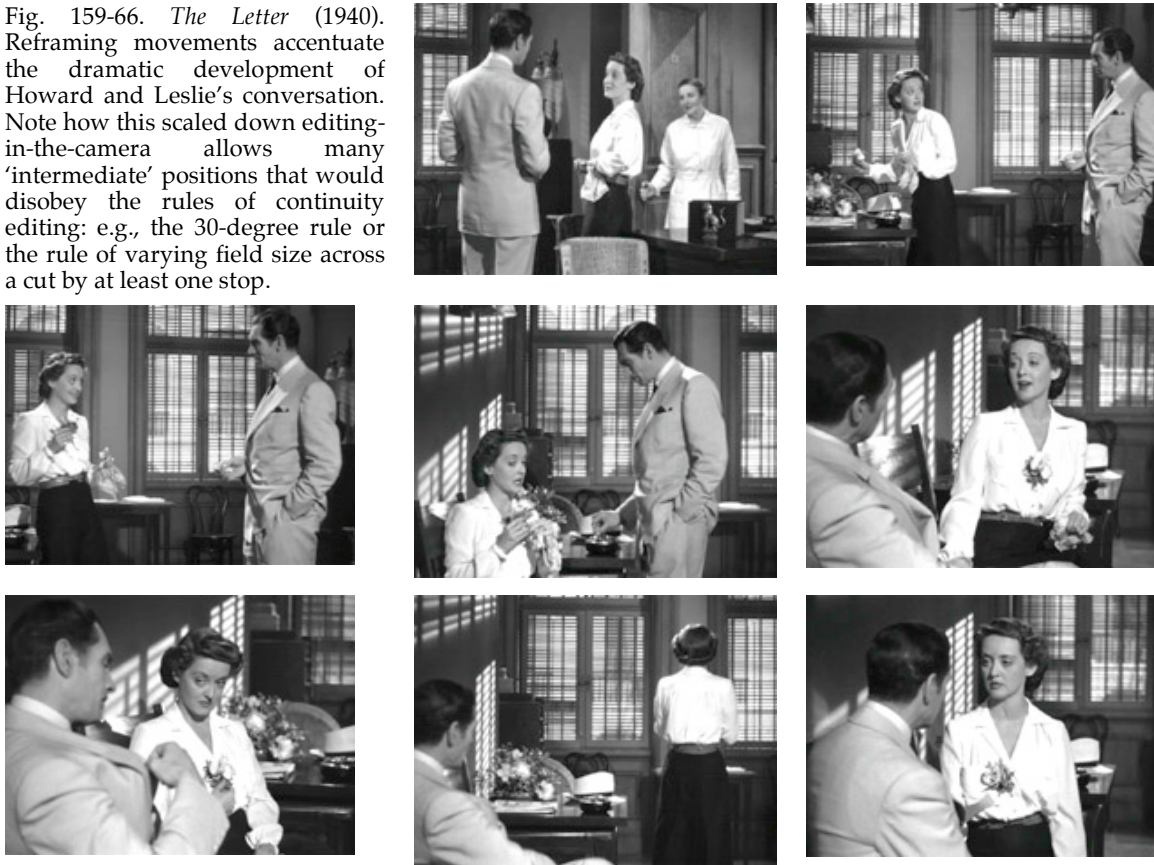
Many different structural types of movement can accomplish this task, for instance lateral tracking shots that keep the viewer’s attention on one particular character by accompanying her through a crowd (*accompaniment*). A great deal of editing-in-the-camera that Burch and Bacher referred to as narrative-expressive camera movement (see chapter 2) modulates the attention of the viewer through the course of a scene. To some extent this even takes place in small automatic repositioning pans that keep an actor within frame, but it is better illustrated by more deliberate reframing movements that accentuate the dramatic development of a scene. A case in point is the four-minute long take in William Wyler’s *The Letter* (1940) in which the camera repositions to accentuate each development in the duel of words between Howard (James Stephenson) and Leslie (Bette Davis) (fig. 159-66).

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<sup>217</sup> See Noël Burch (1979: 127-132) for a discussion of surface/depth-articulation in Japanese film.



Fig. 159-66. *The Letter* (1940). Reframing movements accentuate the dramatic development of Howard and Leslie's conversation. Note how this scaled down editing-in-the-camera allows many 'intermediate' positions that would disobey the rules of continuity editing: e.g., the 30-degree rule or the rule of varying field size across a cut by at least one stop.



Other films direct the viewer's attention with more elaborate movements whose compositional stops reconstitute a whole range of shot scales and compositional units such as two-shots, over-the-shoulder shots and singles.



Fig. 167-70. *The Royal Tenenbaums* (2001). This series of two-shot, over-the-shoulder shot and singles is 'edited' by means of camera movement. By moving independently of the characters, the camera itself reconfigures field size and character framing thus shifting character-dominance from stop to stop.

Directing attention can also take the form of *interplaying* two motives, for instance two characters and a symbolic motif as we saw in *Scherben* (1921). Of course, direction can extend beyond the frame by *connecting* a motif with another one outside the field of view as in the final helicopter shot of *Picnic* (1955) for instance.

A more subtle way of directing attention is to allow for *planar interplay* during a camera movement such as when the camera follows the agitated Baron Eggersdorff (Gustaf Gründgens) in *Liebelei* (1933) down a flight of stairs passing a statue of a roaring lion on his way or when the two rivals André (Charles Boyer) and Donati (Vittorio de Sica) pass a couple of fencers in *Madame de..* (1953).

By including instances where the camera connects or creates interplay between one or more motives, one is in fact discussing a type of camera movement that can achieve functions similar to those obtainable in editing (fig. 167-71). Nevertheless, one must of course stress that the total effect resulting from connecting or juxtaposing two or more motives by means of camera movement can be close to limitless since the possible configurations depend on the number and *nature* of the motives being juxtaposed. However, the claim made here is not that the terms *interplay* and *connective* encapsulate the full *meaning* of the *shots* in which they are engaged but simply that they capture the *functional contribution* of camera movement.



Fig. 171-75. The opening shot of *Asphalt* (Joe May, 1929) uses camera movement to line up a number of objects that in unison serve to describe and introduce the household.



Directing the viewer's attention by means of camera movement can be

achieved in a multitude of ways. Camera movement can also single out or locate a motif amongst a variety of possible focal points (*excerpt*). A minor modality would be the push-in that singles out an action such as Brandon (John Dall) clutching a gun in his pocket in *Rope* (1948), whereas a major modality would be the famous crane shot from *Young and Innocent* (1937) which locates the twitching eyes of a drummer man in the midst of a crowded room.



Fig. 176-9. *Young and Innocent* (1937). The famous crane shot from Hitchcock's film, which - within a giant room - singles out the 'twitching eye' that the main characters are looking for.

So pervasive is the function of directing attention that one may ask which camera movements do *not* direct attention? Even camera movements that deflect our attention from a specific action are re-directing our attention (fig. 183-4). I would argue that the brief, minute and almost unnoticeable dolly or zoom move on establishing shots (the so-called *Moving master*) do not serve to direct attention, pull-backs that do not emphasize new information at the edges of frame but simply magnify the spatial layout would be another example; many of the depth and volume enhancing diagonal tracking shots in *Cabiria* (1914) are clearly coordinated according to character movement and particular objects but they are not *synchronized* with character movement, i.e. in many



cases the movement is not directed at particular characters or motifs. Instead it is rather the characters that step into the mobile frame at carefully choreographed moments (fig. 180-2). Hence the movement of the camera is not as much directing attention as it is providing a continuously changing playing space.



Fig. 180-2. *Cabiria* (1914). The movement of the camera is not as much directing attention as it is providing a continuously changing playing space that the characters can step into or out of.



Fig. 183-4. *The Village* (2004). The lateral camera movement and a zoom deflect our attention from the brutal murder.

The last parameter of spatial orientation is scope. Here the function is not so much to direct attention towards specific characters or objects but to establish or re-establish the scope of action. The opening shot of *His Girl Friday* (1940) mentioned earlier (1.4.3) precisely and economically establishes the Morning Post workspace (fig. 185-7). Contemporary films are often more zealous. Ron Howard's *Far and Away* (1992) opens with a title designating the setting of the film as Western Ireland whereupon an aerial shot takes in the rough seas of the Atlantic before crossing over onto the green island where it picks up a horse-drawn carriage on its way to a small village near the cliffs. The extravagance of this aerial shot is preserved for the opening shot but a less virtuoso modality is pursued in the course of the film where crane shots establish new settings: a barn at the Christie-estate in England, the Boston setting in America, the mid-western plains and the camp at the Oklahoma Territory for instance. Other

filmmakers will use follow shots to articulate scope. Paul Thomas Anderson likes to use extended follow shots to take “a relaxing moment to watch someone walk through their world” (Anderson 1999). In *Boogie Nights* (1997) the articulation of scope and the connective function are combined when a Steadicam shot follows Jack Horner (Burt Reynolds) walking through his house and yard thus stringing together the members of his peculiar ‘family.’ One also finds Woody Allen using long receding tracking shots that integrate his characters into the setting, in his case often a New York locale thus creating a stronger link between his characters and the spaces they inhabit.



Fig. 185-7. *His Girl Friday* (1940). Establishing locale (read from right to left).

Besides establishing the *spatial layout* of a scene, camera movement can also make a point out of *revealing* scope as when the camera cranes up at the end of *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (1966) to reveal the immensity of the graveyard and hence the impossible task of finding the right gravestone (fig. 188-90).



Fig. 188-90. *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (1966). A crane movement reveals the scope of the graveyard

Camera movement may also serve to *conceal* the spatial scope of a scene as in *Play Time* (1967) where the camera - and Hulot (Jacques Tati) - from their vantage point on the second floor register Giffard’s placement amidst the office cubicles below. But as the camera descends along with Hulot on an escalator, the former spatial supremacy vanishes and the scope of the space is concealed from us (fig.191-93).



Fig. 191-93. *Play Time* (1967). A camera movement conceals the scope of the space.

The final sub-function to be highlighted is *envelop*. Here the function of the movement is not so much to reveal new information as to envelop a group of characters in a shared space. In *Le Crime de M. Lange* (Jean Renoir, 1936) a pull-back envelops the community gathering around Lange (Rene Lefevre) after the assumed death of their boss Batala (Jules Berry).



Fig. 194-5. A pull-back envelops the community in *Le Crime de M. Lange* (1936).

One should also point out that camera movement can refuse to articulate the full scope of action as can be witnessed in the opening shots of Rouben Mamoulian's *Silk Stockings* (1957). The film opens on a shot of Paris at dawn with the Seine in the middle of the shot and the Eiffel Tower in the left background but as the camera follows moving action in the subsequent shots it restricts itself to showing the feet of the performers. It is not that these shots are uninformative: The headlines and photographs on the front page of the newspapers that the feet walk up to supply the viewer with information that is essential to the ensuing dramatic action ("Hollywood Producer to Make Film in Paris", "Producer Signs Russian Composer"). Furthermore, the clothing of the character, the ground surfaces that the feet stride across and the different types of feet that they bump into or pass (stationary feet of servants, elegant ladies' feet) are very much revealing of class, social standing and character traits. The

photographs on the newspapers even disclose the likely identity of the character that we are following: the producer played by Fred Astaire. Nevertheless the film does not at this time endeavor to establish the more local spatial scopes of action within the Paris-setting as if the film was retaining the ubiquitous and homogenous 'Paris'-feel conveyed by the opening shot.

### 3.1.2 Pacing

Chapter 2 discussed the pitfalls of understanding camera movement as a stringing together of expressive stops and emphasized the significance of the interplay between camera movement and compositional stops, i.e. that camera stops are charged with meaning by the movement that sought them out and that camera movement gains tension qua the assumption that the movement will eventually rest upon a specific motive. Camera movement is a *visual process* as opposed to the visual shift brought about by the straight cut and as such camera movement is not only apt at connecting elements or following action but also very well suited for processual effects.

With a few exceptions, all camera movements articulate both space and time. Those articulations are integral to the very on-screen effect of 'camera movement' and spatial orientation both depends on and is modulated by the time it takes the camera to present the spatial layout. Temporal articulation is an orthogonal category that applies to all camera movements, i.e. a *resource* that camera movement can make use of to bend a shot to different functional ends

However, it is possible to extrapolate an identifiable function of 'temporal articulation' that will be referred to as *pacing*. Pacing is taken to be a deliberate strategy of 'temporal articulation' in which camera movement – for instance a mobile long take or a series of movements – actively contributes to the cinematic rhythm of the film.

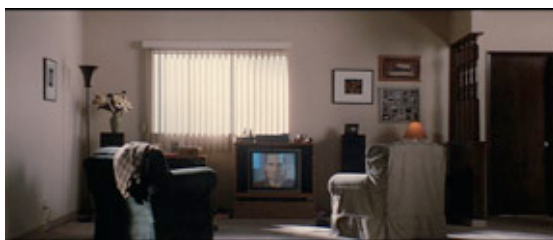
Cinematic rhythm is articulated by means of a whole catalogue of devices: cutting rate, pace of delivery, music, the movement of the players and objects, the fluctuations of shot scale, the duration and 'temporal structure' of events shown, their frequency and their presentation. A gun shot takes fractions of a second but may be presented in 20 seconds of slow motion while a flight



across the Atlantic takes about 7 hours but may be presented in three two-second shots.<sup>218</sup>

The contribution of camera movement to cinematic rhythm is in itself complex. It is of course a question of the velocity of the camera itself but more significantly of the graphic rhythms engendered by the movement of the camera *in relation* to mise-en-scene and the contribution of camera movement to informational delivery. To specify and simplify matters, I will define the function as that of *using camera movement to determine the pace at which visual information transpires*. Information is used here in a broad sense encapsulating everything from graphic details to significant objects. Various films testify that camera movement has indeed been used as a central means of manipulating cinematic rhythm in at least these three ways:

1. Retard. When camera movement is used to deflate or retard the pace at which visual information is disclosed to spectators. The slow and measured camera movements in Carl Th. Dreyer's *Ordet* (1955) exemplify this modality, as does *The Last Betrothal* (1973), which stretches out the disclosure of objects and characters (see chapter 4 for an analysis of a camera movement in the film).
2. Cumulate. When camera movement is used to intensify the flow of images to a rising cumulation. The relentless forward tracking shots and zooms in the beginning of *Magnolia* (1999) exemplify this modality (fig. 196-201).
3. Sustain. When camera movement is used to sustain the visual flow of images. The creeping push-ins seen in establishing shots in *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* (2001) and *Insomnia* (2002) sustain a sense of visual smoothness and fluidity (fig. 202-203).



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<sup>218</sup> This breaking down of the components involved in cinematic rhythm has its origin in Bordwell (1981: 140-143).





Fig. 196-201. *Magnolia* (1999). Push-ins are used throughout the prologue and all of Anderson's nine main characters are introduced by means of a forward moving camera or a zoom-in.



Fig. 202-203. *Insomnia* (2002). A slow creeping dolly move on a shot with no principal actors serves little other purpose than to sustain a sense of visual flow.

Taken as a whole these modalities emphasize how camera movement can modulate the tempo at which we take in visual information in the course of a film. While these modalities also suggest short-term applications, pacing can also be used by a film as a more generalized strategy of orchestrating visual flow over longer stretches of time: One may specify the meditative and reflective pace of camera movement in Andrei Tarkovsky's *Stalker* (1979), the somber, narratively retarding pace of camera movement in Carl Th. Dreyer's *Ordet* (1955), the smoothness of contemporary visual syntax or the kinetic and dynamic pace of the continuously reappearing intricate follow shots in *The Cranes are Flying*.

One of the conceptual problems with pacing is that it is often combined with other functions. The above examples indicate that when camera movements are used to determine the pace at which visual information transpires, they generally combine with the function of inflection, i.e. they also come to carry particular feelingful qualities. One must of course keep in mind

that although the structure of movement definitely contributes, the represented actions play a substantial part in shaping these 'qualities'.

While pacing is a conceptually problematic category, it is also a pervasive function. Even though the previous chapter suggested that the push-ins in *Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* underlined various subtleties in the scene, one must also acknowledge that quite often - particularly in contemporary cinema - the camera moves for no other reason than to sustain a continual flow of images: "The camera often moves even if nothing else budes" (Bordwell 2006: 135). This is *not* to say that the smooth and fluid flow of mobile framings is completely without function but they permeate visual syntax in a very general way. The reason the camera *does* move 'even if nothing else budes' is often a matter of pacing, i.e. of sustaining the visual flow.

### 3.1.3 Inflection

Camera movements can also be used to inflect shots in a suggestive, commentative or valiative manner. Functions such as *accompaniment* and *excerpt* tell an audience where to look but what can camera movement say *about* characters? What we are discussing here is the ability of camera movement to *imbue* and *inflect* the motifs that it captures ( $A \rightarrow A'$ ).

For instance some camera movements not only direct the viewer's attention towards a motif or action but also imbue it with dramatic intensity or narrative significance. In this case the movement of the camera adds dramatic magnitude and partially overlaps with orientation: One could call it a type of *imbued* or *intensified orientation*. The push-in from *Rope* (fig. 204-5) obviously directs the viewer's attention by singling out Brandon's hand clutching a gun within a wide composition but the rapidity with which the camera suddenly breaks into a semi-static scene, the distance it travels and the closeness it achieves inflect the shot with dramatic intensity.



Fig. 204-205. Intensified orientation in *Rope* (1948).

Another example of dramatic magnitude is the camera movement which highlights an *encounter* as being of particular significance within the narrative. Such a camera movement can be witnessed in Carl Th. Dreyer's *Ordet*. In a key scene Johannes (Preben Lerdorff Rye) promises Maren (Ann Elisabeth Rud) that he will resurrect her mother. In this scene Dreyer does not limit himself to simply orienting the viewer about the space and the characters inhabiting it but highlights the encounter and suggests that we should attribute particular significance to it within the film as a whole by presenting the scene to us by means of a slow 360 degree arcing shot - a camera movement that is unique in the context of the rest of the film.

In Milos Forman's *Hair* (1979) one again finds the arcing shot serving to inflect a shot but here it assumes a valuative function because it signposts the relative status of one character over others in the scene. During the performance of *Aquarius*, the soloist (Ren Woods) is represented in no less than six arcing shots. The arcing shots set her off from the other characters in Central Park as none of the other dancers or performers are embraced by such a camera move. Other devices help to distinguish the singer – for instance her costume and performance – but the arcing shot contributes with something specific: In the first of the arcing shots the camera spirals downward making *her* appear to spiral upwards towards the sky. Hence it sets her off from the other characters on a vertical plane and makes her appear to be spinning in mid-air. Combined with – at times – a low angle view that makes her sing against the backdrop of tree tops and a blue sky, the arcing shots untie her from gravity and suggests superhuman qualities as if she were a connective link between the firmament and the people of the world – an earth mother (fig. 206-11).

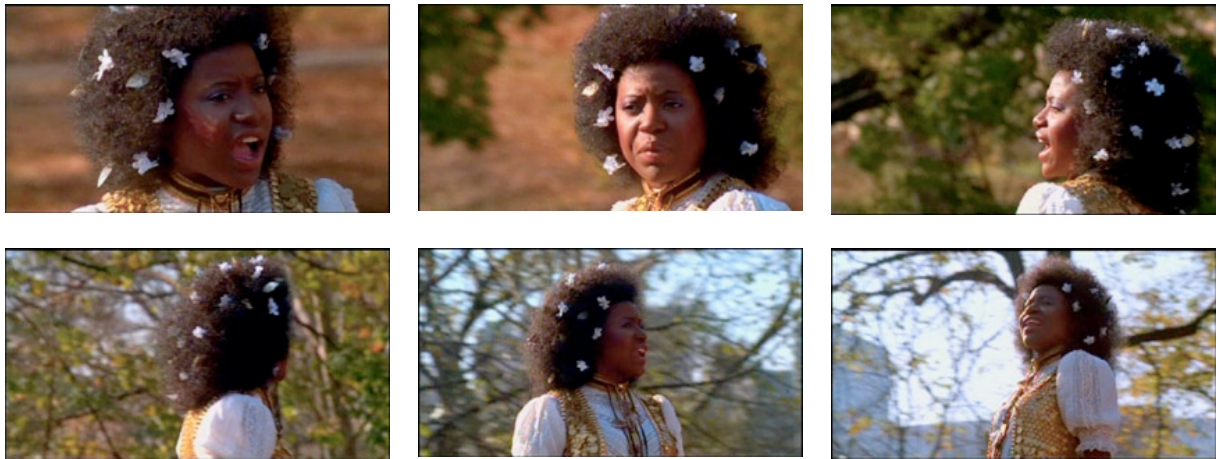


Fig. 206-211. *Hair* (1979). The arcing shots embellish Ren Woods.

The moves from *Hair* also invoke another function: *portrayal*. Camera movement can enhance physical appearance and behavior without necessarily assigning value to them, for instance by following a stout elderly man by means of robust, weighty and slow dolly movements, or alternately by following a nimble gazelle by means of a weightlessly drifting Steadicam. The preceding narrative action may have established the elderly man as a leading character whereas the nimble gazelle is only included in the film as the object of a male protagonist's fleeting attention. In consequence, the camera may simply be bringing out qualities that enhance the physical *traits* of a character.

Other camera movements enhance or add to our understanding of characters' *behavior*. *Far From Heaven* (2002) offers an example of how movement can enhance surface actions and behavior without necessarily remaining true the character's inner psychological state. In this case graceful camera movements substantiate *the way in which* Cathy Whitaker (Julianne Moore) soars around the Whitaker house at a party trying to stay afloat of the situation while dodging insinuating questions from provocative guests and humiliating remarks from her drunk husband (Dennis Quaid). The camera substantiates her *performance*, enhances her movement and shows *no* awareness of the turmoil that we infer from other communicative sources is really going on inside her mind (fig. 212-14).<sup>219</sup>

<sup>219</sup> It is instead the slightly jarring framings of her husband Frank which breaks up the flow of the camera. Hear Ed Lachman's useful comments on this scene on the DVD-edition of the film.





Fig. 212-14. *Far from Heaven* (2002).

Camera movements can also substantiate a character's behavior while remaining true to his or her psychological state. *Magnolia* (1999) features a scene where Claudia (Melora Walters) - high strung, cocaine in her blood, loud music running on her stereo - is desperately trying to stow away her drugs while screaming replies to policeman Jim (John C. Reilly) who is standing outside her front door asking to be let in. The hectic and frantic behavior that characterizes Claudia is substantiated pictorially by means of edgy and erratic handheld camera movement.<sup>220</sup> The camera does not make valuative statements but simply enhances the portrayal of her behavior (in fact, the film is very much *with* Claudia).

Apart from commenting on character traits and behavior, camera movements can also *evoke* psychological and emotional activity. In the example from *Magnolia* the psychological properties of the scene are chiefly conveyed through Melora Walters' performance, which the camera action complements. But camera movement can also play a more constitutive role in *evoking* or even *bringing out* psychological qualities that would otherwise only have a latent existence in a scene. F. W. Murnau seemed to think that the camera could convey such qualities by itself when writing that the camera should "whirl and peep and move from place to place as swiftly as thought itself, when it is necessary to exaggerate for the audience the idea or emotion that is uppermost in the mind of the character" (Murnau 1928b: 90).

However, it is difficult to imagine that the camera can reveal *character* psychology without relying at least partially on the expressive features of the

<sup>220</sup> I am thinking particularly of a handheld medium shot of Claudia desperately trying to clean coke from off her coffee table. We saw the coke in previous shots but do not see it in this particular shot; instead the camera focuses on Claudia and her behavior. The scene is cut up in two sections and this shot is located in the first of these about 46 minutes into the film.

human figure. Even when assuming a constitutive role in evoking psychological activity the camera generally needs some sort of basis in performance.<sup>221</sup>

One such movement is the push-in, which has by convention become a strong cue of psychological activity on the part of the character whom we are witnessing: a sudden realization, a flow of powerful feelings or oncoming recollections.<sup>222</sup> Preceding narrative information will often have led us to associate the movement of the camera with a particular psychological activity and beyond this pre-coding the camera move can also be staged in conjunction with a performative and a musical cue.

An even more forceful way of suggesting psychological activity in the mind of a character takes place in the Danish films *Okay* (Jesper W. Nielsen, 2002) and *Dykkerne* (Åke Sandgren, 2002). In *Okay* Nete (Paprika Steen) arrives at the hospital to visit her father. We are first presented with a shot of Nete walking into the ward, then a shot that shows us her point of view of the bed that used to hold her father but is now empty; a reverse shot shows us Nete in close-up. Steen's performance, a quiet musical cue and the context in which the shot occurs does to some extent let us in on the thoughts and emotions that is harboring: Has he died etc? Nevertheless it is a camera movement that makes the most powerful contribution in suggesting psychological and emotional activity (fig. 215-9). Whereas Nete's facial expression does not change in the course of the shot, the camera initiates a Dutch tilt on the close up of her face and it is primarily the movement of the camera which carries the meaning of the shot by *bringing out* the gradual realization and on-rush of emotions and memories that Nete's facial reaction withholds from us.

Fig. 215-9. *Okay* (2002). The camera suggests psychological and emotional activity by doing a Dutch tilt on Nete as she sees the vacant bed that is supposed to hold her father. The camera comes up slightly again at the end of the shot



<sup>221</sup> An empirical study - not unlike the Kuleshov experiment - deserves to be made to determine whether or not a push-in on an *uninflected shot* (a character whose mimicry and gestures are minimized) will suggest psychological activity on the part of the character whom we are witnessing.



There is an almost identical Dutch tilt in the contemporaneous *Dykkerne* (fig. 220-1) in which nurse Birthe (Ditte Gråbøl) sees her son being rushed into the hospital. Interestingly, dolly grip Jimmy Leavens who worked on *Dykkerne* has expressed a dislike of these types of Dutch tilts on close ups because he feels that the camera was not respectful of the contribution of the performers and argues that the only case in which he might accept it is in shots where the actor or actress cannot deliver the performative cues needed in the scene. Leavens' thoughts on these types of movement are particularly interesting because he recognizes that camera movement may bring out psychological values that the actor's performance neglects to supply (Nielsen 2003d).<sup>223</sup>



Fig. 220-1. *Dykkerne* (2002). Communicating psychological and emotional change.

Despite Leavens objections these Dutch tilts still represent relatively subtle ways in which camera movement can evoke emotional or psychological activity. We must of course not forget that camera movement can also *magnify* a physical or emotional outburst as in the example from *Shawshank Redemption* mentioned earlier where the camera cranes up so as to visually extend his expressive gesture (fig. 222-3).

<sup>222</sup> So established is this convention that Woody Allen can effectively mock it in *Bananas* (1971). The joke *depends* on the viewer's belief in the commentative function of the push-in for Allen to be able to deflate the convention.

<sup>223</sup> A brief segment of the interview with Leavens appears in Nielsen (2006).



Fig. 222-3. *The Shawshank Redemption* (1994). Magnifying emotional and physical outburst.

Occasionally, a camera movement brings out features of performance that we would simply not register physically were it not for the move itself. An example of this occurs in *Mildred Pierce* (1945) when the camera pushes in on Mildred (Joan Crawford) standing at the window of the newly decorated Beragon estate looking at her daughter Veda who has returned with her father Bert Pierce in order to live with Mildred and her new husband, Monte Beragon: Because of the movement of camera the angle at which the light reflects from her eyes into the lens has changed and this enables us to see what appears to be a tear forming in her left eye. Note also how - for the same reason - less of her face is cast in shadow at the end of the push-in. This shot exemplifies how the movement of the camera bends other communicative devices - performance and lighting - to the advantage of the shot as a whole (fig. 224-5).



Fig. 224-5. *Mildred Pierce* (1945). The push-in allows us to see a tear in Mildred's left eye.

It is not only that these communicative aspects would have been lost on us had the camera stayed in its original position - although this is certainly the case - but even a zoom-in would not have brought out these different enunciatory qualities of the shot because the angle at which the motive reflected light into the camera lens would not have changed: The image would simply



have been magnified. Thus it is the very movement of the camera that brings out these significant cues in performance and appearance thus enabling us to assess both the genuine happiness that characterizes Mildred's psychological and emotional state at this moment as well as the renewed exposure to hurt which her change sets up.

Her face is not only exposed in a literal sense, the film has also coupled Mildred's tears to vulnerability. Mildred can be tough as a coffin nail but tears repeatedly form in her eyes when she shows vulnerability: We see a tear forming in her eye in the second scene of the film after a policeman has rather sardonically prevented her from committing suicide, we see Mildred wiping away tears when her husband Bert leaves the house, and we see tears after she has slapped her daughter Veda. While in this example Veda's return brings a tear of joy to Mildred's eye, the associations build around tears in the course of the film cause us to question promises of a blissful reunion. Here this apparently simple push-in taps into the complex meanings built around tears and shade in the course of the film.

Camera movements can reveal a great deal about character psychology from external vantage points. In *Der letzte Mann* we see a shot of Emil Jannings' character seated on a chair, circling back and forth in the room. The camera does not represent his point of view yet still conveys to us the effect of drunkenness on him.<sup>224</sup> Yet how can camera movement that is external to the character let viewers in on the emotional or psychological state of said character?

One option is to view camera movement as part of a set of stylistic conventions that viewers have been taught to decipher in specific ways. In other words, through extensive viewing spectators have learned to associate a particular camera movement with specific functions such as 'emotional intensification' or 'dramatic accentuation'. This interpretive option is most persuasive in connection with the push-in or as in *Okay* and *Dykkerne*, the roll of the camera on a close shot.

Another option is that the movement of the camera attempts to offer the viewer a visual experience akin to that experienced by the character we see on the screen. The presumption would then be that because we see a specific

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<sup>224</sup> Note however, that only two shots later we do in fact get a mobile point of view shot which does not merely suggest his subjective state but mediates it directly.

character on screen we associate the structure of movement with that experienced by the character. This is a paradoxical way of arguing but it is nevertheless applicable to some of the early examples of inflective camera movements. For instance in *Kri-kri e il Tango* (1913) discussed in the previous chapter as well as the above example from *Der letzte Mann*.

Camera movements not only inflect and imbue individual characters but also bring out psychological or feelingful qualities in spaces, interactions and situations. Many camera movements are less directly tied to the psychological activity of a single character and instead inflect the *situation* at hand. A cliché example would be the arcing shot around the couple as they are becoming emotionally involved, embracing or kissing. Filmmakers can also stage such types of interaction by placing camera and characters on a turntable and making it appear as if the surrounding space is spinning around them as can be witnessed in a key scene in the Danish romantic comedy *Den eneste ene* (1998).

When filmmakers broach this topic they often talk about camera movement's ability to inflect the 'mood, 'tone' or 'atmosphere' of a scene or sequence. It is these types of adjustments that cinematographer Robert Elswit describes when he accounts for his collaboration with Paul Thomas Anderson: "There is a big difference to Paul in a dolly, why it's handheld or Steadicam; working that out is done in prep. The specifics of the shot often change because of the locations and what the actors end up doing" (Tran 2000). And according to The Columbia Studio Press Book for *The Reckless Moment* (1949) Max Ophuls held to a similar view: "[M]oods and changes of pace can only be highlighted by corresponding camera action – a nervous, quickly moving camera for excitement, a slow, methodical camera for building tough story points" ('Mason-Bennet' 1949).

The inclusion of pacing in the quote illustrates how closely pacing and inflection can be intertwined but whereas pacing is best thought of as a more generalized strategy, i.e. a way of orchestrating visual flow over time then situational inflection is the result of a *shot-specific* or *scene-specific* movement. The structure of the camera movement may be of all possible sorts depending on what one could call *the genre of the scene*: For instance camera movement will often be used to enhance certain *types of interaction* such as romantic encounters, a scuffle or an argument by substantiating the type of interaction pictorially: For

instance all the way back to the late twenties - in *Napoleon* (1927) and *Dans le nuit* (1929) for instance - handheld camera movement has been applied to substantiate situations of physical action pictorially whether it be a snowball fight or a skirmish or as in the much later Hollywood film *Body and Soul* (1947) a boxing match.

Not all situations are necessarily defined by interaction (e.g., a funeral scene) but that does not prohibit camera movement from inflecting these with feelingful or psychological qualities - even though the movements of the camera are simply magnifying a solemnity brought out by music, locale or performance. A slow, solid and heavy camera style would be the cliché way of substantiating the 'tone' of a funeral scene but since there are traditions of handling particular types of story action, filmmakers may of course choose an irregular pattern of movement. Traditions of handling particular types of scenes have changed over time. The brief funeral scenes in *All the King's Men* (1949) and *The Searchers* (1956) relied primarily on music and performance - not camera movement - for inflection. A contemporary film is much more likely to use camera movement to inflect such scenes with feelingful qualities.

A camera movement may also serve a function that one can refer to as spatial inflection. In this case the camera movement is not merely establishing the spatial layout of the scene but is either assigning particular significance or psychological qualities to the space. In *Judgment at Nuremberg* (1961) there is an arcing shot around the prosecutor (Richard Widmark) as he is presenting his view of the case. The main difference from two other arching shot that will be discussed in the next chapter from *Der Krieger und die Kaiserin* (2000) and *Jackie Brown* (1997) respectively is the relationship of character to setting. As the camera arcs around Widmark's character, the background remains in relatively sharp focus. Stylistically the shot conveys that this is not an ordinary case but a case that calls into question the very setting in which the action takes place - The House of Law. Hence, the arcing shot underscores the prosecutor's comments: "The case is unusual in that the defendants are charged with crimes committed in the name of the law...Therefore, you, your honors, will be sitting in judgment of judges in the dock and this is as it should be for only a judge knows how much more a court is than a *court room*. It is a process and a spirit. It is the House of Law". The arcing shot underscores that line of dialogue in at least two senses: 1) at this stage in the film the camera movement is unusual as

is the case and 2) the plasticity that the arcing shot lends to the space underscores the question about the very setting posed by the prosecutor (as well as by the defendant later on): the status of the House of Law.



Fig. 226-231. *Judgment at Nuremberg* (1961). Spatial inflection.

### 3.1.4 Focalization

Inflection refers to camera movements where the vantage point of the camera is clearly external to the characters yet can nevertheless be said to magnify or add to the emotional or psychological resonances of the shot. Focalization on the other hand refers to camera movements taking or approximating the viewpoints of characters or entities in the story world.<sup>225</sup>

Camera movements can do so directly by means of an *optical p.o.v.* shot which mediates the viewpoint of a character in the fiction. There are examples of such camera movements in *Vertigo* (1958) as Scotty is approaching Madeleine (Kim Novak) in the cemetery. Preceding the mobile p.o.v. is a p.o.v. sandwich consisting of three static shots. In the pay-off shot from that construction, Scotty begins to advance towards camera; the camera recedes with Scotty in medium shot as he continues to direct his eyes out of frame left (fig. 232). Then comes the

<sup>225</sup> The concept “focalization” was introduced by Genette (1980: 189) in order to define various ways in which narrative is mediated by characters in literature. The concept has subsequently been adopted in film studies by narratologists and cognitive theorists, e.g. Edward Branigan (1992: 101-107) and Murray Smith (1995: 83).

cut to his mobile p.o.v. - the tempo of the camera move matches that of the previous shot and the sound of his feet are still audible (fig. 233-4). There follows a cut back to a medium close-up of Scotty - still in motion, still being followed in an equally paced receding tracking shot (fig. 235). A shadow falls on Scotty (fig. 236) and he bends over slightly as if he was trying to peak around an object.<sup>226</sup> The cut back to the second mobile p.o.v. confirms this assumption as we see a bush drifting out of Scotty's view into off-screen space (fig. 237). As the mobile framing slows down and almost comes to a halt, there is another cut back to Scotty who stops. Not only has the transition to a mobile p.o.v. been eased by means of the preceding p.o.v. construction, there is also careful matching of pace, sound, position, cast shadows from objects and Scotty's physical reaction to those objects intervening his sight line.



Fig. 232-7. *Vertigo* (1958). Optical p.o.v.

Camera movements can also function as *affected p.o.v.* where the subjective state of the character is conveyed by the structure of the movement. One may argue that the smooth and subtly floating p.o.v. shots from *Vertigo* do more than simply represent Scotty's optical p.o.v. but more clear-cut examples

<sup>226</sup> Having already established in the medium shot of Scotty that the sun comes into frame from the right side, the filmmakers would not even have been obliged to cast shadows on Scotty. By the logic of light directions, the shadows cast on Scotty would come from objects to the right of him – not those intervening his sight line - but the filmmakers have even taken the trouble to match these cast shadows with the positions of intervening objects and their *potential* shadows. Maybe they have covered their bases so carefully because the medium shot where Scotty leans forward was done in front of rear-screen projection.

include wobbly handheld camera movements to represent the point of view of a drunken man.

In a few cases the mobile camera can come to represent actions as viewed in *the mind's eye*.<sup>227</sup> These mobile shots do not represent the sensory experience of a character in an optical or affected form but represent actions as a character imagines them – in a dream sequence for instance. *Der letzte Mann* (1924) contains an impressive long take where the porter (Emil Jannings) in a drunken stupor imagines himself walking into Hotel Atlantic carrying a huge suitcase and tossing it up in the air as if it were light as a feather.<sup>228</sup> These events are presented in distorted images and by means of a camera mounted on Karl Freund's chest<sup>229</sup> following Jannings' character through the revolving door. Although shots representing the mind's eye do not have to contain the presence of the character imagining these events, the porter's presence within the mobile shot allows us to say for a fact that the shot is not merely an affected p.o.v.

Camera movement can also function as *approximate p.o.v.* when camera movement is assigned to a character without occupying the exact position of said character. There are both examples of *optical p.o.v.* and *approximate p.o.v.* within the first fifteen minutes of *E.T.* (1982). As E.T. is being chased while attempting to return to his space ship before it must depart there are - intercut with shots of the search team - three examples of assigned p.o.v. All of these feature a lead-in shot of E.T. running and although they are taken from a distance that does not clearly disclose his features, it is easy enough for us to assign the movement in the p.o.v. shot to E.T. and to see the movement as embodying the viewpoint of E.T. (fig. 238-40)

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<sup>227</sup> The mind's eye is a term borrowed from David Cook (1996: 120-121).

<sup>228</sup> The degree of image distortion makes it difficult to say with certainty but it appears as though the porter enters an illusory space as he moves through the revolving door. It does not appear to be the hotel lobby but a hybrid of the restaurant at the hotel and a courtyard not completely unlike his own. There are seated guests and tables but also street lamps and balconies. One can still see the elevator going up and down to the right-hand-side of Jannings but one also sees what looks like the trumpet player from his backyard playing in the background of the shot. This seems to be an illusory space formed in his mind where he can succeed in two worlds at once.

<sup>229</sup> Freund carried his Mitchell camera on a wooden tray supported by shoulder straps. See bio sketch of Freund on [filmportal.de](http://filmportal.de) and note 16 in Brownlow (2004: 276).





Fig. 238-40. *E.T.* (1982). The camera occupies a position somewhat lower than the eye-level of an adult, we hear the sounds that E.T. makes up close and we see lights on the space ship that E.T. is moving towards.

However, there are also examples where the camera only approximately mediates the viewpoint of E.T. There is an example of such an *approximate p.o.v.* about four minutes into the film when the movement of the camera mimes the point of view of an alien moving towards a young tree (fig. 241-2). We associate the movement with one of the aliens because we can hear its tapping feet and its “breathing” noises but as its hand pops into frame moving towards the tree it does so from screen left. While we realize that the camera clearly did not and does not occupy E.T.’s exact position it still approximates its viewpoint and we still remain within its experiential field. The choice of approximate p.o.v. may stem from the fact that for reasons of suspense we have not yet been presented with a clear visual presentation of E.T. and by avoiding a conventionally assigned p.o.v., Spielberg can refrain from showing us a lead-in or pay-off shot. On the other hand by giving us a *glimpse* of E.T. moving at the edge of the frame we are lead to associate the movement with this specific alien as opposed to an unassigned *presence*.



Fig. 241-2. *E.T.* (1982). Approximate p.o.v.

An *approximate p.o.v.* typically approximates the viewpoint of a single character but there are also examples where a p.o.v. is shared by more characters. This is more common in static p.o.v. shots<sup>230</sup> but there are also examples where a mobile camera represents the viewpoint of more than one character. In the shared p.o.v. the camera will occupy a position somewhat

<sup>230</sup> Shared p.o.v.’s occur in e.g. *Rear Window*, see Orpen (2003: 23).

between the positions taken up by different characters. Since two characters do not inhabit the exact same point in space the shared p.o.v. is a form of *approximate p.o.v.*

When an unassigned camera moves in a way that invokes the presence of an anonymous observing entity the movement functions as *invoked presence*. This is exemplified by the handheld camera movements in *Citizen Kane* (1941) that indicate that the footage was shot illicitly. *Invoked p.o.v.* is a fourth type that is to be distinguished from invoked presence by the fact that although invoked p.o.v. shots are unassigned at the moment that they occur they nevertheless invoke the p.o.v. of a character identified by the diegesis either in advance or retrospectively. In *Der Himmel über Berlin* (1986) the exact viewpoint of the film's many free-ranging camera movements are not assigned but because of the story world of this particular film, the free-ranging camera may be associated with the point of view of angels; in *The Mothman Prophecies* (2002) the film teaches us the movement of the monster so that it can later move the camera in such a way and thereby invoke its p.o.v. without concretely establishing it.



Fig. 243-5. *Citizen Kane* (1941). Invoked presence.

A fifth type is the *projected p.o.v.* where the camera moves as though it extends from the viewpoint of an assigned character. As opposed to examples where the camera approximates the viewpoint of a moving observer, projected p.o.v. wanders in the direction of a glance extending the viewpoint of an observer and closing the gap separating the observer from the object of viewpoint. Some examples of projected p.o.v. will also be affected p.o.v. because the speed of movement can carry psychological implications: If the camera moves quickly towards an object it might suggest that the character takes in the new piece of information with a shock, if it moves slowly towards an object it might suggest intent reconnaissance. Most examples of projected p.o.v. extend from the viewpoint of physically static or semi-static characters.



For instance one type can be seen as a restaging of an ordinary p.o.v. sandwich where the lead-in and the point-of-view shot are combined in one shot. The subsequent pay-off shot may also be part of the same camera move (*Rope*) or the filmmaker may cut to the pay-off shot (*The Mark of Zorro*). In both cases a return to the face of the observer establishes the previous shot as assigned.

There are examples that bear a resemblance to p.o.v. shots where the camera visualizes the movement of inanimate substances such as gas or sound but these really belong to a different functional category: the abstract function. Focalization only includes cases where one can argue that the camera mediates a *viewpoint*. The movement of the camera may of course also be associated with narrative agency or perspectives that come from outside the diegesis but in that case we are talking of the *reflexive* function.<sup>231</sup>

Finally, there is a type of focalization where the camera does not pretend to mediate the viewpoint of a character but still includes the viewer in the character's experiential field.<sup>232</sup> An example of this *shared field of view* occurs in Otto Preminger's *Where the Sidewalk Ends* (1950) as Sgt. Dixon (Dana Andrews) arrives at a scrubby destination in Chelsea, Manhattan to check on Ken Paine (Craig Stevens). Dixon steps out of the cab and as the cab drives away the camera tracks slightly to the right in effect moving Dixon over to the left side of the frame; as Dixon walks up to the building and down a flight of stairs, the camera follows him, looking over his shoulders, as he spots an elderly woman in a basement apartment. At no time during the move does the camera mediate his viewpoint but it *does* let us into Dixon's field of view. I have not come across an example where both *optical p.o.v.*, *affected p.o.v.*, *approximate p.o.v.* and *shared field of view* are combined within a single shot but in theory a shot can fluctuate between the different types.

### 3.1.5 Reflexive

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<sup>231</sup> It is of course also possible for camera movement to slip into and out of p.o.v.

<sup>232</sup> Edward Branigan refers to this type of focalization as external focalization (1992: 101).

The term reflexive does not wholly explain the range of functions referred to in this category but is rather a starting point. Reflexive camera movements invite spectators to engage with the artifice of movement camera movement and therefore appeal to specific *types of engagement* divergent from viewers' involvement in the on-going story.

Some of these camera movements disrupt or subvert the integrity of the fictional world but the term *reflexive* is used here in a broader and more positive and constitutive sense. Reflexive camera movements can be engrossing in their own right; they only by-pass the storytelling resources of the medium in order to elicit other types of engagement and appreciation.

For instance camera movements can be staged as *virtuoso attractions* in their own right. Camera movements tend to do this in one of two ways. Either the move is staged so as to produce or enhance aesthetically pleasing visual rhythms in the structure of the image. An example of this type of camera movement would be the rhythmic lateral tracking shots of Eric Charell's *Der Kongress tanzt* (1931) or Max Ophüls' *La ronde* (1950), *Le plaisir* (1951) and *Madame de* (1953). One of the ways in which these filmmakers achieve this graphically decorative effect is by designing shots so that objects intervene between the camera and the motive at set intervals thus creating pleasing visual rhythms.

Apart from this *decorative* or *ornamental aesthetics* is another type of movement that has become increasingly prominent in contemporary blockbusters. What is highlighted here is the type of transport at play: how fast the camera can fly, from what heights it can plummet, through what objects it can pass and from what positions it can view the action. I call this sub-function *virtuosity of transport*.

One can distinguish between several modalities of *virtuosity of transport*. There is the type of shot that provides the viewer with what Geoff King calls a '*large-scale vista*.'<sup>233</sup> King's use of the term does not necessarily entail a mobile vantage point and his description of this type of spectacle aesthetics is based more on Elseworld-mise-en-scene than on camera movement. Nevertheless in contemporary blockbusters such as the *Matrix*- and the *Lord of the Rings*-trilogies the very sensation of a vista often comes to us by means of camera movement,

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<sup>233</sup> Geoff King, "Spectacle and Narrative in the Contemporary Blockbuster," in *Contemporary American Cinema*, ed. Linda Ruth Williams, Michael Hammond (N.Y.: McGraw-Hill, 2006): 340.

allowing us to take in a scenery from free-ranging privileged viewing positions.<sup>234</sup>

Another modality can be called ‘impact aesthetics’<sup>235</sup> and here it is not so much the ‘fly-over’-quality of the former examples as a ‘fly-through’-quality that is highlighted. The opening shots of *Lord of the Rings – The Two Towers* has it both ways. The first three aerial shots – separated by dissolves - are mobile ‘vista movements,’ but the third shifts to impact aesthetics as the camera appears to fly straight through a mountainside continuing into the depths of the mountain where it locates Gandalf fighting a Balrog (fig. 246-51).

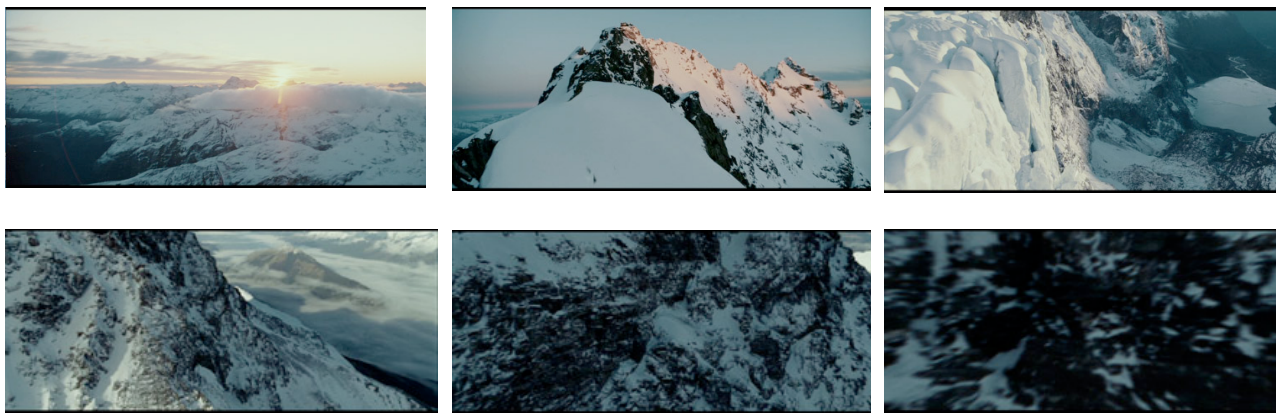


Fig. 246-51. *Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* (2002). From virtuosity of transport to impact aesthetics.

A less impact-driven ‘move-through-quality’ can be located as far as back as the teens. The best early example is the pull-back in Benjamin Christensen’s *Hævnens nat* (1916) which appears to move straight through the French door of Ann’s room (see the analysis of this shot in the subsequent chapter). Especially the seemingly impossible traversals invite the viewer to appreciate the artifice of the move as when the camera penetrates the El Rancho-nightclub sign in *Citizen Kane* (1941) or when the camera appears to move through window bars at the end of Michelangelo Antonioni’s *The Passenger* (1975) or when David Fincher uses CGI to visualize a camera movement through a waste basket and behind a refrigerator in *Fight Club* (1999). In many cases this is not the *only* function of these moves but it is definitely part of their appeal.

<sup>234</sup> The many aerial shots of New Zealand-landscapes in *The Lord of the Rings*-films almost seem to bear a double meaning. On the one hand, we are presented with a stunning display of a fictional setting. On the other hand, we are presented with a ‘touristic view’ of New Zealand landscapes.

<sup>235</sup> This is Geoff King’s term (2006: 340). See also my remarks on expansive camera movement in *The Matrix* (1999) in Nielsen (2003a).

A completely different type of reflexive camera movement is *parametric* movement. The term originates from Noël Burch's *Theory of Film Practice* (1973) and has been elaborated by David Bordwell in *Narration in the Fiction Film* (1985). By parametric camera movement I am here referring to an aesthetic strategy of moving the camera in a way that invites the viewer to be aware of (and to consider the implications of) stylistic patterning *across the course of the film*.<sup>236</sup> In Agnès Varda's *Sans toit ni loi/ Vagabond* (1985) a series of structurally similar follow shots are planted throughout the film. The shots share the following components:

- a. The movements are parallel tracking shots from right to left.
- b. At one time or another they show the main protagonist, Mona (Sandrine Bonnaire), vagabonding or simply walking in the same direction of the camera.
- c. The sedate pace of the movement is roughly the same.
- d. The same type of music accompanies the shots - Joanna Bruzdowicz's *Variations sur la vita*.
- e. The moves come to rest on a static motif – an object from everyday life but often presented as an abstract form.

The stylistic patterning of these camera movements – there are twelve in the course of the film – invite the spectator to diagram and analyze them as a part of self-contained stylistic design in the sense that the patterning acquires a meaning that is largely independent of – or at least runs parallel to – the unfolding narrative chain of events. In order to get the spectator hooked onto this playful way of engaging with style, the film plants no less than four of the twelve moves within the first fifteen minutes of the film so that we are likely to become aware of the stylistic patterning. In one sense these moves simply engage the spectator in the playful game of memory and recall involved in

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<sup>236</sup> Note that parametric differs from what was referred to as expressive schemes in the previous chapter. The 'expressive schemes' of camera movement in *Die Liebe der Jeanne Ney* (1927) or in contemporary films such as *The End of the Affair* (1999) are different from parametric camera movement because they are not staged as a game of form. E.g. the expressive scheme of *The End of the Affair* is staged so as to aid comprehension. 'Expressive schemes' have not been given a separate functional category of their own. I think of them as patterned ways of engaging one or more of the functions suggested here.

spotting similarities and variations of design: The first of the movements occurs approximately six minutes into the film and opens with the camera tilting up from a pedestrian crossing to a shot of Mona (Sandrine Bonnaire) approaching from the dunes near the sea; the follow shot is a parallel tracking shot that moves perpendicular to the background and retains approximately the same distance to Mona (fig. 252-4).



Fig. 252-4. *Sans toit ni loi* / *Vagabond* (1985). Parametric camera movement (read right to left)

The second of these parametric moves occurs only a few minutes later in the film but here the camera is angled at a diagonal to the background. In this second example Mona walks into the camera's field of view whereas it was the camera tilt that brought Mona into the field of view in the former example. The base on which the camera is placed – most likely a dolly – curves left at the end of the move and the actual camera pans left in the course of the movement. In effect the shot scale fluctuates from full shot to medium shot in the second example whereas the former was roughly in medium long shot throughout (fig. 255-7).



Fig. 255-7. *Sans toit ni loi* / *Vagabond* (1985). The second parametric camera movement (read right to left).





Fig. 258-60. *Sans toit ni loi* / *Vagabond* (1985). The third parametric camera movement (read right to left).

As illustrated by these examples the parameters are subtly varied in the course of the film but on a few occasions the film demonstrates that there is an acute awareness on the part of the filmmakers as to the way in which viewers also come to expect *sameness*. Nearly fifty minutes into the film we are presented with a shot of a big brick house with the camera angled perpendicular to the front of the house. As the camera begins to track leftward we expect to see Mona walking into shot at any moment as well as the accompaniment of the shrill violin music we remember from similar shots. However, Varda surprises us. While the base of the camera is tracking left, the head of the camera pans around to the right to show us that Mona is sitting in the front seat of a car and is still with the middle-aged lady whom we saw her dining with in the previous shots. We do hear Mona saying “There are so many big houses, so many rooms...” at the beginning of the shot - already a marked difference from the previous examples - but we cannot be sure of the diegetic status of the sound at this stage. It could be a variation within the bounds of sameness. Thwarting our expectations of style exceeds a mere surprise-effect. Invoking the staging pattern in order to negate it substantiates the fact that Mona’s encounter with Professor Landier (Macha Méril) will be of a different sort than the encounters she has with male truck drivers, farmhands and fellow vagrants.

Yet another variation of the move – in fact a reversal – demonstrates that Varda does not simply stage a play of form: The implications of the aesthetic patterning can *feed-back* into the way in which we ascribe meaning to the behavior of the characters and our understanding of the narrative arc. For instance one may notice that the follow shots are invariably placed at intervals in the film where Mona is vagabonding from one place to another. Mona is presented as restless, reluctant to settle down and even more reluctant to take

orders. Some of the characters that she encounters reveal to us that aspects of her way of life appeal to them or fascinate them. At times Mona herself seems to harbor romantic notions of waking the roads as a free and unattached individual without bosses looking over her shoulder: "I hated being a secretary. I quit those bosses but not to find another boss on the road," she tells a philosophically inclined farmer who complains about her laziness. Beyond these potentially positive notions of a life on the road – without a roof over one's head and outside of the law as the title suggests – walking the roads also marks progression in a physical sense. Nevertheless the directional patterning of the movements (of both Mona and camera) suggests that Varda wants to complicate the way in which we take in this outward appearance.

As Western viewers and readers we are accustomed to read and write from left to right and rightward movement would be the logical solution if one wanted to portray positive and progressive motion.<sup>237</sup> However, Varda decides to revert the movement, staging the shots so that camera and Mona move from right to left thereby suggesting that Mona's restless movement from place to place is not getting her anywhere but is in fact a kind of regression or as the farmer mentioned above informs us: "She's not vagabonding, she is withering."<sup>238</sup>

In fact, as Mona is *not* walking the roads but is resting at a chateau together with a lover called David, *then* Varda invokes the pattern only to *reverse* it. The lacuna-quality of this sequence of the film is marked by the unusual shot that precedes it: a shot that is devoid of characters but features a red stop sign and a large question mark painted in red on a house behind it. As David and Mona walk through the garden of the chateau, both they and the camera move left to right, the shrill violin sounds are replaced by more serene music, and the shot does not come to rest on a street sign, harvester or fenced-in thorn bush but a much more organic motif: the leaves of a green plant (fig. 261-3). Invoking the aesthetic patterning and reverting it makes the viewer aware of a breach between the film and the filmmaker who takes a stance in relation to it.

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<sup>237</sup> As mentioned in chapter two there is statistical evidence to suggest that rightward movements outnumber leftward movements in Hollywood films, see O'Leary (2003b: 21-2).

<sup>238</sup> Another implicit meaning that one can infer from Varda's directional strategy is that Mona may be taken to be eternally walking towards home. Just as an early camera movement in Mike Nichols' *The Graduate* (1967) prepare us for a going-home-experience by moving laterally with Benjamin (Dustin Hoffman) from right to left as he steps unto a rolling escalator, the leftward follow shots may have similar implications in *Sans Toit ni Loi* only Mona has no home to return to.

In this particular film Varda navigates this breach in a way that allows the viewer to ascribe positive and negative values by means of the stylistic patterning. Hence the parametric camera movement in *Sans toit ni loi* also becomes attached with valuative functions assigned by the filmmaker.



Fig. 261-3. *Sans toit ni lois /Vagabond* (1985). The film invokes the pattern in order to reverse it. This time the tracking shot is also sliced in half: There is a cut between 261 and 262.

Wandering camera is a term that Seymour Chatman introduces (1985) and which Kenneth Johnson invokes in an article that explores wandering camera as a specific functional category of movement. Chapter 3.6.2. explained how Johnson uses the term in a broad sense, invoking it for camera movements that serve some of the other functions launched in this chapter such as virtuosity of transport, invoked p.o.v. and invoked presence. Here it will suffice to present my own understanding of wandering camera.

Wandering camera is related to the parametric function but is listed as a separate category because of the different way in which it navigates the breach between the story world and narrative agency. In this case it is not *staging patterns* that invoke the hand of a narrative agent outside the story world but the way in which the camera detaches itself from the most salient conveyors of story information *and* where we are not, as in the examples from *Der Himmel über Berlin*, given reason to believe that the camera is invoking the point of view of characters within the fictional world. A good example of wandering camera is the camera movement analyzed in the previous chapter in Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* (1976) as Travis talks to Betsy on a pay phone. Initially the camera fulfils its characterological function showing us Travis taking in the words of rejection from Betsy but in the middle of the conversation, the camera – unmotivated by moving action – tracks right and stops on an empty corridor while we continue to hear Travis' side of the conversation off-screen.

Another type of reflexive function is the intertextual function. Intertextual camera movements invoke a camera movement from another film or the camera



movement conventions of another medium or genre (e.g., documentary, sports coverage). Intertextual camera movement can be invoked for parody as in *Bananas* (1971) or *Airplane!* (1980) which both mock a camera movement convention (push-in & swelling music to represent sudden realization and the arcing shot enclosing the embracing couple respectively).



Fig. 264-9. The arcing-shot-around-the-embracing-couple is invoked, partially embraced yet certainly parodied at the end of *Airplane!* (1980).

The intertextual function is not always engaged for parody. In *Any Given Sunday* (Oliver Stone, 1999) the coverage of the NFL football games references camera mobility as it would have been staged in TV coverage (Steadicam shots moving *around* the pitch, cameras placed high up in the stadium as well as overhead SkyCam shots) though without fully embracing it: The football games are also portrayed by means of an *on-the-field* Image Shaker-device which for obvious reasons cannot be used in TV coverage and which leaves the visual imprint of a stampeding herd. Used to seeing NFL football on the TV monitor the intertextual camera movements give the impression of an experience that is the *same but different*.

Similar to this latter function are camera movements that draw attention to the conditions of the *recording situation*, for instance to invoke the haphazard nature of the recording situation and thus – paradoxically – lend more authenticity to the movement. This is sometimes used in crowd scenes and scenes of turmoil where the likely presence of TV cameras make us infer that we are witnessing the events through such a camera. Unlike those camera movements in narrative cinema that deliberately invoke the conventions of another genre such as the fly-on-the-wall documentary, recording situation

suggests authenticity. This is a function which handheld camera movement often invokes as in *Shadows* (1959).

### 3.1.6 Abstract

Camera moves may also suggest abstract ideas and concepts. The first definition of “abstract” given in *Webster’s* is as follows: “conceived apart from concrete realities, specific objects, or actual instances: *an abstract idea*.”<sup>239</sup> This is a useful definition because it allows us to distinguish abstract from other functions such as *evoke* which is still addressing the ability of camera movement to suggest *actual* subjective experience.

Abstract concepts and ideas are sometimes attributed to camera movements by critics overstressing their hermeneutic muscle but in other cases filmmakers have genuinely invested their movement with abstract functions. A particularly interesting example is the pendulous camera movement in the ‘dying-motorcyclist-scene’ in *Der Himmel über Berlin* because it allows us to discuss various interpretations of the move in relation to the abstract function and various other functions launched previously.

This particular camera movement has been thoroughly researched by Richard Raskin (1997, 1999d) who has brought up the example in interviews with Wim Wenders, director of photography Henri Alekan (Raskin 1999b), Bruno Ganz (Raskin 1999d) and Agnès Godard who operated the camera (Raskin 1999c). Furthermore, Raskin has himself written two articles on the movement that integrate interpretations suggested by his students, the explanations given by Wenders and Godard (Ganz and Alekan say little about the actual movement) as well as his own contribution to the debate which focuses on the verbal component of this and the surrounding shots.

The scene in question takes place approximately one hour and fifteen minutes into the film and opens with a mobile shot: The camera moves forward smoothly yet quickly across a bridge. At the beginning of the shot the camera travels straight down the center of the road but it slides right in the course of crossing the bridge. As the camera reaches the end of the bridge we see the

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<sup>239</sup> Webster’s Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language (Rev. edition, 1994).

scene of an accident: a smashed car with smoke rising from the hood, a motorcycle and helmet lying on the ground as well as a number of bystanders. Near the right edge of the frame a motorcyclist rests awkwardly against the curb.

The initial pace and position of the camera suggests that it represents the point-of-view of a car but at the end of the move the camera curves to the right to focus attention on the motorcyclist in a manner impossible for an ordinary motor vehicle. There follows a cut revealing Daniel (Bruno Ganz) advancing slowly from roughly the position occupied by the camera at the end of the previous shot. Although there is no lead-in shot the cut to Daniel suggests that the movement across the bridge embodied the point-of-view of Daniel who as an angel would be able to float across the bridge in the manner conveyed by the camera move. Substantiating this interpretation is that the inner voice<sup>240</sup> of the motorcyclist – accessible to angels – began to fade in on the soundtrack as the camera was crossing the bridge.

As Daniel is now visible to us in front of the camera, the function of mediating his viewpoint has ceased.<sup>241</sup> Daniel leans down toward the motorcyclist and places a hand on each side of his head. And then comes the slow pendulous camera move that Raskin embraces as “so original and striking in its form that it may be seen as a new cinematic figure, invented by Wenders to fulfill a specific need” (1999d: 159). First the camera tracks right, then left, then right and finally left again sometimes combined with small reframing pans.<sup>242</sup> Raskin has demonstrated how each of these movements correspond to a verbal change in the scene:

When the camera first tracks right (2060 b), Daniel begins to recite the invocation for the dying man. When the camera then tracks left (2060 c), the dying man joins his voice to that of Daniel. When the camera once again tracks right (2060 d), the dying man alone recites the invocation. And when the camera tracks left for the final time (2060 e), the voice of the young man is heard, along with the dying man’s invocation. (1999c: 165-166)<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> For a definition of this as well as other types of film sound see Raskin (1992: 32-48).

<sup>241</sup> The camera could be taken to embody the viewpoint of *another* angel but this is unlikely given the structure of the pendulating movement.

<sup>242</sup> The various segments of the camera movement are illustrated in Raskin (1997: 89; 1999c: 166) and at [http://pov.imv.au.dk/Issue\\_04/section\\_1/artc5A.html#RTFToC4](http://pov.imv.au.dk/Issue_04/section_1/artc5A.html#RTFToC4)

<sup>243</sup> Raskin cites the screenplay in which the inner voice is referred to as “The invocation of the world.”

In Raskin's articles and interviews a number of different abstract functions are ascribed to the camera move. To Wenders the movement visualizes the tenderness and pain involved as the angel Daniel is gradually taking over the dying man:

I thought that going back and forth sort of showed more what Daniel was actually doing, in the way that he is - as the man is dying - that he's *taking him over*, so to speak. In a way, in a strange way, this "action" as well as the pain that came with it, were in that camera movement.

[...] as it was somehow about a transition between life and death, it did translate something: not so much his p.o.v., more a mental attitude. Daniel's tenderness and his care for the man were in that back-and-forth movement. (Raskin 1999a: 7)<sup>244</sup>

If the pendulous movement functions to convey the complex emotions of pain and tenderness embedded in Daniel's actions then it does not serve an abstract function but serves to *portray* certain characteristics of Daniel's behavior, i.e. how he handles the situation at hand. It would be useful to contemplate what *not* moving the camera would detract from this function. In that case Daniel's actions would have to be inflected by means of other devices such as performance, music and lighting in order to convey the tenderness and pain of his actions.

In his interview with Agnès Godard, Raskin mentions another function of the camera move which some of his students had suggested: The camera move visualizes how the motorcyclist oscillates between life and death. Particularly as the action takes place at the end of a bridge – itself a transitional construction - this is a persuasive interpretation (Raskin 1999c: 43). Godard takes a slightly different, but fundamentally similar, view of the shot. She takes the camera movement to be like “heartbeats that were slowing down” which would also mean that the camera “had to move in order not to be dead before the character. That's what I felt, in the rhythm, like a heartbeat that might stop at any moment” (ibid.).<sup>245</sup> Implicit in Godard's understanding of the shot is that if the camera stopped moving it would suggest that the character had died. Whether one endorses Godard's reading or that of Raskin's students one is still

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<sup>244</sup> Also cited in Raskin (1997: 91).

<sup>245</sup> While Wenders also argues that the camera movement has to do with the transition between life and death, he does not exactly describe the camera movement as visualizing the way in which the man drifts between life and death.

fundamentally arguing that the camera movement is *evoking* the dying man's subjective experience - though in a very unusual way.

Just as significant are Godard's remarks about her initial fears about the swaying camera movements appearing reflexive: "I was afraid that in reframing the shot, in going after the young man, *we* were imposing - by the very fact that we went looking for him, that we were reframing the angel and the dying man - that *we* were pulling the strings of the story" (ibid.) However, looking back at the pendulous camera movement Godard - and one can only agree with her - did not really fear that it would be reflexive in the sense of appealing to a level of engagement divergent from our engagement in the narrative. Camera movements can serve abstract functions without being reflexive if they are integrated within the world of the story.

However, if the move functions to convey that Daniel is 'taking him over' then the camera move conveys an abstract idea: for instance that an angel is accessing the mind of a dying man and helping him tune into an inner poem that already exists within himself but has to be unearthed. This is an interpretation suggested by Raskin but other interpretations of exactly what 'taking him over' means also convey an abstract idea. If one takes the scene to mean that Daniel senses that the motorcyclist will actually die, then his actions are not aimed at rescuing the motorcyclist but at preparing him for the passage by redirecting his thoughts away from the fragmentary, despairing, disappointed and regretful towards a tranquil and poetic formulation of what is significant in his life. Thus he will enter the realm of the dead with a serene mind.

Below is a schematic overview of the six prime functions as well as the sub-functions within these categories. Please keep in mind that a camera movement may serve more than one function.

## SCHEMATIC OVERVIEW

<b>Orienting</b> – using camera movement to orient the viewer spatially	<b>Volume &amp; Depth</b> – using camera movement to articulate or disarticulate depth or volume to the two-dimensional images		Svengali (1931)
	<b>Directional</b> – using camera movement to direct or divert the attention of the viewer.	<b>Reframe</b> –repositioning the camera to accommodate or accentuate small movements or shifts of posture.	The Letter (1940)
		<b>Anticipate</b> – camera movements that anticipate later development in the scene.	Casablanca (1942)
		<b>Accompaniment</b> – following characters or objects in extended motion	Love Me Tonight (1932)
		<b>Reconfiguration</b> – using camera movement to alter the configuration of characters in the mise-en-scene, e.g., to shift character prominence	Royal Tenenbaums (2001)
		<b>Excerpt</b> – singling out or locating a specific motive amongst a variety of possible focal points	Rope (1948), Young and Innocent (1937)
		<b>Deflect</b> – deflecting attention from a motive	The Village (2004) Punch-Drunk Love(2002)
		<b>Connective</b> – connecting characters or objects to one another	Picnic (1955)
		<b>Interplay</b> – juxtaposing objects or characters by means of camera movement or allowing for planar interplay during camera movement	Liebelelei (1933)
	<b>Scope</b> – using camera movement to articulate the scope of the action	<b>Layout</b> – establishing the spatial layout of a scene by means of camera movement	His Girl Friday (1940)
		<b>Reveal</b> - expanding our understanding of the scene by expanding the field of vision	The Good, the Bad and the Ugly (1966)
		<b>Envelop</b> – broadening the angle in order to allow other characters to move into the frame	Le Crime de M. Lange (1935)
		<b>Conceal</b> – using camera movement to conceal the scope of a scene or a motive within it	Play Time (1967)
<b>Pacing</b> - using camera movement to contribute to the cinematic rhythm of the film.		<b>Smoothness</b> – using camera movement to create a sense of visual smoothness and fluidity.	Insomnia (2002)
		<b>Cumulative</b> – the camera move is used to intensify the flow of images to a rising cumulation.	Magnolia (1998)
		<b>Deflate</b> – the pace and duration of the camera move is used to pare down the drama.	Ordet (1955)
<b>Inflection</b> – using camera movement external to the characters to inflect shots in a suggestive, commentative or evaluative manner.		<b>Highlight</b> – highlighting a shot as being of particular significance within the narrative.	Queen of Spades (1916) Vertigo (1958)
		<b>Portray</b> - using camera movement to substantiate or add a descriptive dimension to a character 's traits or behavior	Far From Heaven (2002)
		<b>Evoke</b> - using camera movement to suggest psychological or emotional activity	Okay (2002) Dykkerne (2002)
		<b>Magnify</b> - using camera movement to magnify physical or emotional outbursts	Shawshank Redemption (1994)
		<b>Valuative</b> – signposting the relative importance of one character over others in the scene.	Hair (1979)
		<b>Situational inflection</b> – using camera movement to inflect the mood or atmosphere of a situation, i.e. falling-in-	Den eneste ene (1998)

		<i>love scenes</i>	
		<b>Spatial inflection</b> – using camera movement to reinforce qualities inherent in the mise-en-scene or to assign new qualities to the space	Judgment at Nuremberg (1961)
<b>Focalization</b> – associating the movement of the camera with the viewpoints of characters or entities in the story world.		<b>Optical p.o.v.</b> - presenting images from the point of view of a character	Dark Passage (1947) Vertigo (1958)
		<b>Approximate p.o.v.</b> - giving an approximate visualization of a character's optical p.o.v.	E.T (1982)
		<b>Shared field of view</b> - the camera does not pretend to mediate the viewpoint of a character but still includes the viewer in the character's experiential field	Where the Sidewalk Ends (1950)
		<b>Affected p.o.v.</b> - presenting images from the point of view of a character in a way that conveys his subjective state	Der letzte Mann (1924)
		<b>The mind's eye</b> - representing what a character sees in his mind's eye	Der letzte Mann (1924)
		<b>Invoked p.o.v.</b> – invoking the presence of an anonymous but assigned or retrospectively assigned observing entity	Der Himmel über Berlin (1986)
		<b>Invoked presence</b> –invoking the presence of an anonymous and unassigned observing entity	Citizen Kane (1941)
		<b>Projective p.o.v.</b> – the camera moves as though it extends from the viewpoint of an assigned character	The Mark of Zorro (1940)
<b>Reflexive</b> - inviting spectators to engage with camera movement as artifice: e.g., stylistic patterning, spectacle, stylistic echoes, the agency of filmmakers, and the nature of the recording situation		<b>Virtuosity of transport</b> –camera movement that highlights the type of transport at play: how fast the camera can fly, from what heights it can plummet, through what objects it can pass and from what positions it can view the action.	Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers (2002)
		<b>Decorative</b> – using camera movement to produce visually pleasing or otherwise appealing effects (e.g., qua graphic rhythms, playful staging)	Madame de (1953)
		<b>Impact aesthetic</b> – using camera movement to produce stunning, visceral or jarring affects	Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers (2002)
		<b>Parametric</b> - moving the camera in a way that invites the viewer to be aware of (and to consider the implications of) stylistic and narrative patterning across the course of the film	Sans toit ni loi (1985)
		<b>Wandering camera</b> – it is not staging patterns that invoke narrative agency but the fact that the camera moves in a way that is detached from the most salient conveyors of story information	Taxi Driver (1976)
		<b>Intertextual</b> - camera movement that invokes a camera movement from another film or the camera movement conventions of another medium or genre. Often for parodic or satiric effect.	Airplane (1980) Bananas (1971)
		<b>Recording situation</b> - moving the camera in a way that draws attention to the conditions of the recording situation (e.g., to invoke a 'realism of the moment')	Shadows (1959) The Idiots (1999)
<b>Abstract</b> – using camera movement to visualize abstract ideas and concepts			Der Himmel über Berlin (1986)

Camera movements do not always fall neatly into one of the categories presented in the functional taxonomy above but the functions form the basis for combinatory variants. A way of analyzing camera movement is to picture a flow chart of layered functions. At one point a single function or a certain combination of functions will be engaged, sometimes to be replaced by another combination later in the same shot. Thus the taxonomy can be applied to both synchronic and diachronic analyses, i.e. establishing what functions are at play

in a particular segment of a shot and establishing how one set of layered functions weaves into another in the course of a shot.

Roman Jakobson's concept of the dominant is useful in this regard (1960: 36-52) although with regards to camera movement I have found that some functions typically form the platform for others, the primary ones being orientation and pacing. Hence I suggest that one studies a camera movement from the top down so to speak - asking first in what way it orients the viewer spatially, then how it is temporally articulated before moving on to consider the other functions.



#### 4 Analyses of Multifunctional Camera Movements

Whereas chapter 3 presented the main and sub-functions of camera movement, the following chapter singles out six examples for closer analysis in order to demonstrate how the various functions can mesh. The corpus is heterogeneous in terms of time of production, genre and national origin but the individual examples are not necessarily representative of their respective genre, stylistic grouping or national origin. Nor are they meant to accurately reflect the historical development of camera movement. This task is addressed in chapter 2.

The camera movements are from the films presented schematically below. The generic tags applied to the film in the last column are approximations based on the literature, press material and the films themselves.

Film	Direction/Photography	Country of production	Genre
<i>Hævnenes nat / Blind Justice</i> (1916)	D: Benjamin Christensen P: Johan Ankerstjerne	Denmark	Thriller / Melodrama
<i>Bomben auf Monte Carlo / Bombs Over Monte Carlo</i> (1931) <sup>246</sup>	D: Hanns Schwarz P: Günther Rittau / Konstantin Irmen-Tschet	Germany	Operetta / Musical
<i>Rope</i> (1948)	D: Alfred Hitchcock P: Joseph Valentine / William V. Skall	USA	Psychological thriller
<i>I soliti ignoti / Big Deal on Madonna Street</i> (1958)	D: Mario Monicelli P: Gianni Di Venanzo	Italy	Comedy
<i>Les dernières fiançailles / The Last Betrothal</i> (1973)	D: Jean Pierre Lefebvre P: Guy Dufaux	Canada	Drama / Art Film
<i>Der Krieger und</i>	D: Tom Tykwer	Germany	Romantic

<sup>246</sup> It should be noted that there is also an English language version of *Bomben auf Monte Carlo* entitled *Monte Carlo Madness*. This analysis only deals with the German version of the film.

<i>die Kaiserin / The Warrior and the Princess</i> (2000)	P: Frank Griebel		melodrama
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#### 4.1 Hævneens nat (1916)

*Hævneens nat* (1916) is the second film directed by Benjamin Christensen and a classic of Danish silent cinema. The story of the film takes its vantage point in the escape of murder suspect Strong John (Benjamin Christensen)<sup>247</sup> who flees with his baby boy and finds refuge at Ranton Manor. Hiding in a room he discovers per chance that the occupant is a woman named Ann who has a fondness for children and he decides to seek her help.

Within the history of international film style *Hævneens nat* is couched between two stylistic paradigms. On the one hand this was the “golden age of depth staging” (Bordwell 1997: 175) which nuanced the art of staging within a generally static frame, a tradition that was strongest in Europe. On the other hand was continuity editing which manifested itself in America around 1917.

The camera movement from *Hævneens nat* (1916) that I wish to discuss is the pull-back which occurs approximately twenty minutes into the film as Strong John (Benjamin Christensen) is trying to communicate his intentions to Ann (Karen Caspersen). We have seen John sneak down the stairs from his hiding place in the attic and his attempts to break into Ann’s chamber from the hallway before we see him – reflected in a mirror in the hallway - stepping outside the house. A cut takes us from the empty hallway into the chamber where we are presented with a medium long shot of Ann who takes three short steps towards the camera before breaking into a scream upon seeing what we assume is John (off-screen behind the camera). Then the camera pulls back and appears to move from inside the room through one of the window cells to the outdoors while we see Ann frantically trying to untie the rope around the door knob that she herself placed there earlier to keep out intruders (fig. 270-1). Not only does the camera put more distance to Ann, it also builds an extra spatial plane into the image, and by staging the shot so that the window frame comes to intervene between the camera and the prime motive, the pull-back enhances a sense of *depth*.

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<sup>247</sup> Credited as Benjamin Christie in the English-language version of the film.



Fig. 270-1. After Ann screams, the camera begins to pull back bringing the contours of a window cubicle into view. As the camera pulls back further we continue to see her face framed within the cubicle that has just come into view on the right in fig. 271. Although Ann's frantic actions occasionally cause her face to pop out of the cubicle, it also keeps returning to it (see fig. 272-3 below).

As the camera pulls further away from the window John slouches into frame from the right and moves to the left side of the window frame so that we may take in the tension caused by *interplaying* two simultaneous actions occurring within a single composition: John trying to get in through the French door in the left foreground of the shot and Ann frantically trying to untie the rope in the right background. The camera ultimately comes to rest as John opens the window in a medium long shot framing while Ann is still struggling to escape. John walks up to Ann and grabs her by the throat.

Instead of staging the intrusion as an escalating ping-pong of still shorter and closer shots of the intruder in the hallway and the damsel in distress in the chamber which Griffith orchestrates in for instance *The Girl and Her Trust* (1912), Christensen partially transposes Griffith's editing *principle* onto a single shot staged in depth using all the resources of the depth-staging tradition including finely nuanced blocking of character movement as well as careful use of light areas (chamber) and dark areas (outdoors), white (Ann's nightgown) and black (John's coat) to separate the two planes of action (fig. 272-3).



Fig. 272-3. As John moves across the frame and passes the spot where Ann is placed in the composition he slouches just enough to allow us to continue to see – accentuated by the aperture framing – Ann’s scared glances towards the intruder. When he has passed ‘Ann’s cubicle’ he draws himself more erect and takes up position against the window frame to the left, his right arm transgressing the boundary and bleeding over into the window frame that hold’s Ann’s body thereby compositionally anticipating the invasion of her private space.

The window frames naturally separate Ann from John in depth but the application of window frames as aperture framings also serves to separate the two characters on a surface plane (the lower left and right frames provided by the two window doors) and to direct our attention to Ann’s face (a window cubicle, fig. 272-3).

But Christensen does not simply transpose the two actions onto a static composition. In contrast to a static composition, the shot does not merely present suspenseful interplay of the two planes of action but dynamically *reveals* the nature of the interplay thereby generating and accumulating tension and suspense in the process of the move. Compared to decoupage-driven dramatic escalation by means of shorter and closer shots, the pull-back articulates and reveals in a single continuous shot the spatial proximity of an intruder outside the window about to invade Ann’s private space. Furthermore, the swift way in which the camera passes from inside Ann’s chamber to the outside suggests that both the distance and the obstruction separating Ann from the intruder are easily traversed.

Given our knowledge of John’s intentions the word ‘intruder’ may seem harsh but although the camera pulls back towards John’s viewpoint of the action the staging of this particular shot is really based on Ann’s perspective of the scene. By staging the shot so that John’s back is to camera and by letting him slouch and be cast in darkness, he is portrayed as an anonymous and sinister figure that one has good reason to fear. Given the more partial knowledge that Ann has of John, we can certainly understand and respond to her fear. Note,

however, that we value Ann's reaction to John by how we see him rather than from some imagined reverse shot that would genuinely represent how Ann sees him at this point in the story.

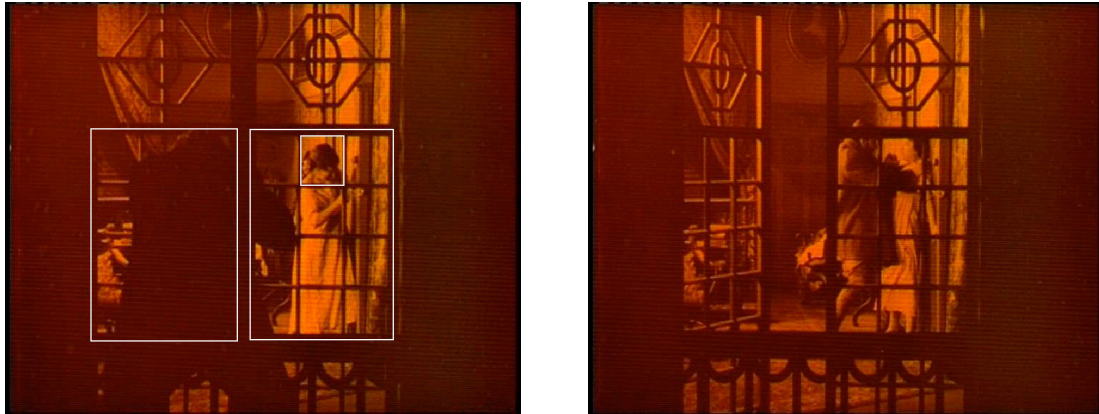


Fig. 274-5. After John has entered the window and has grabbed hold of Ann's neck his face is partially masked by the window bars whereas Ann's reaction is neatly framed within the window cell. That the shot is staged from Ann's perspective is also substantiated by the intertitle that follows seconds later: "Too poor little Ann, almost fainting from fright, it seems like a nightmare."

One might remonstrate that as the pull-back occurs have we not already been given reason to believe that John is a sympathetic character who intends no harm? And if so does this not corrode the tension and suspense that I have argued for? I would argue that it complicates my claims but does not invalidate them. Because of John's considerate actions in scenes with his baby boy we have already been given reason to believe that he is not a homicidal maniac, but the message from Lord Clifton about the gruesome murder he is held suspect for, the addition of the adjective "Strong" to his name and of course John's physical stature and desperate gestures still leave reason for us to be concerned about what he would do in a hopeless situation.

While *Hævnenes nat* makes ingenious use of many types of off-screen space such as the off-screen space behind objects in the optic pyramid – for instance a face hidden by a mirror, the mirror reflecting a face turned away from the camera – Christensen displays a particular pre-occupation with the off-screen space behind the camera. This is remarkably different to how Griffith activated the off-screen space *to the sides* of the frame in the attempted intrusion in *The Girl and Her Trust* not to mention the many instances where Griffith expands his spatial layout by having characters moving through adjacent rooms. Christensen's multifaceted activation of the off-screen space behind the camera is also idiosyncratic within the long take depth-staging tradition where

the filmmakers primarily exploited the narrative space in front of the camera – particularly on indoor sets and particularly in European films.

Christensen instead activates what Noël Burch refers to as the fifth type of off-screen space<sup>248</sup>: the space behind the camera – or rather the space behind the ‘capture area’ of the camera, i.e. the truncated point of the camera’s optic pyramid. It is as if Christensen’s finds different ways of wrapping this off-screen space around the spectator so better to situate and immerse her or him in the fictional world. In the course of only three shots, Christensen accomplishes this no less than three times. The pull-back is the third of these shots. Preceding it is one shot that represents John’s optical p.o.v. through the keyhole to Ann’s room where we see Ann peeking out towards the camera (here the activated off-screen area is the bodily extension of John behind the keyhole) and a subsequent shot where we see the reflection of John in a hallway mirror as he exits the house by means of a door that is placed behind the camera. This is not the place to fully account for and elaborate on the different implications of these three strategies but I do wish to elaborate on the way in which the pull-back activates off-screen space.

If for instance we cast a look at the pull-back from the contemporaneous *The Vagabond* (fig. 276-8), it appears structurally similar and shares a revelatory function with the pull-back from *Hævnenes nat*, but they *inflect* the action with completely different feelingful qualities. The generic framework of *The Vagabond* already rules out the thrilling suspense attached to the revelatory pull-back in *Hævnenes nat*<sup>249</sup> but there is also a significant difference regarding how the two pull-backs activate the off-screen space behind our entry point to the scene. In *The Vagabond* the camera pulls back from a portrait of a coquettishly smiling girl, in *Hævnenes nat* from a screaming Ann. Obviously, the latter example causes

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<sup>248</sup> See Burch (1973), chapter 2.

<sup>249</sup> The dramatic context in which the pull-back from *Hævnenes nat* takes place also comes to bear on our reaction to the move. A preceding intertitle not only informs us that the action occurs in the middle of the night, but also does so in a manner that highlights drama: “But when the stroke of two has sounded through the shadowy corridors ---.” The single flash light that John carries with him down the pitch black stairs and uses to cast light into Ann’s room also enhances suspense and so does John’s preceding attempt to break-in through the door and – in the case of the version of the film that I have seen – the piano accompaniment of Neil Brand that specifically accentuates the dramatic intensity of the move.



us to be more apprehensive about the off-screen space behind us that the camera is slowly disclosing.<sup>250</sup>



Fig. 276-8. *The Vagabond* (1916).

Another distinction is related to what goes on at the edges of the frame while the camera is pulling back.<sup>251</sup> Again a comparison with *The Vagabond* will help elucidate this point. As the camera pulls back in *The Vagabond* the art critics and the painter step into view as we simultaneously come to see more of the spatial layout of the scene generously expanding outwards from the centrally placed portrait. In *Hævnenes nat* the activity at the edges of the frame is staged differently because the camera tracks through the window cubicle. Before we recognize the shape of the cubicle there is a brief moment where dark and indeterminate shadows come into our field of view from both the left and right and from below and above the frame line and partially obscure our outlook.<sup>252</sup> This way of staging the move installs in us the sense that there are objects immediately behind us and immediately outside our field of view and as the four sides of what we later come to recognize as window bars seem to be pulled over our field of view like a noose, it causes – if only for a fleeting moment – apprehension about the objects and characters behind us.

However, one must also take into account that the camera does not simply let any object pass in front of it. Once the camera pulls away from the window we realize the “through the glass-effect.” The impossibility of a move

<sup>250</sup> The musical accompaniment will have a powerful influence on the ‘tone’ or ‘mood’ of the move but since we cannot be sure of the musical accompaniment, I have downplayed this aspect in this particular discussion.

<sup>251</sup> This aspect partially explains the tension and suspense of the move for the revelatory function of the camera move is actually not based on surprise regarding what character Ann is responding to: We know that it can hardly be anyone but John. Nor is it built on a Hitchcockian principle of suspense, which would exploit the distribution of knowledge, i.e. our awareness and Ann’s unawareness of the impending danger: In this example the camera only starts to move *after* she has screamed.

<sup>252</sup> The order in which the four sides of the cubicle come into view are as listed here: right, left, bottom and top. These ‘frame intrusions’ all occur within a second or two.

through glass invites the spectator to appreciate the cleverness and artifice of the move. Standards of virtuosity change and in 1916 this pull-back predates some of the later and more heralded examples of camera movement through glass such as the track-and-dissolve moves through glass in *Der letzte Mann* (as the porter receives his notice of dismissal) and *Citizen Kane* (the inquisitive move into the El Rancho Nightclub that is more cleverly masked by the drops of rain that fall on the window).

#### 4.2 Bomben auf Monte Carlo (1931)

In the early thirties one can witness a strategy in European as well as American films of opening films by means of long take camera movement. These camera movements generally lead the spectator into the story world of the film, but often do so with a virtuoso *Schwung* that exceeds their narrative function. Their overt nature is partly legitimized by the very fact that they occur early in the film when spectators still have non-diegetic information in mind such as the credit sequence, or the overt acts of narrative agency in the form of for instance an inscribed date of place and time or a hand turning pages in a book providing the spectator with story background.<sup>253</sup> That is not to say that these opening mobile long takes all serve the same functions (see earlier discussion of opening shots in René Clair's early sound films in 2.4.3).

Virtuoso mobile long takes were found in many genres such as social problem films (*Street Scene*, 1931) and mystery thrillers (*The Bat Whispers*, 1930) but they most often appear in the musical genre and not only to open the films but also as virtuoso set pieces introduced in the course of a film such as the rhythmic long take from *Der Kongress tanzt* (1931) that accompanies Christel – while singing *Das gibt's nur ein mal, das kommt nicht wieder* – out of town towards her new residence in the countryside. But other German musicals of the time also found novel uses for the mobile camera. I want to single out the opening camera movements of *Bomben auf Monte Carlo*, a German operetta directed by Hanns Schwarz and photographed by Günther Rittau and Konstantin Irmen-Tschet. As with other set-pieces of the time, the sheer length and duration of the third camera movement – at a time when mobile long takes were not easily

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<sup>253</sup> Classical narration often starts off as overt and then gradually sinks the spectator into the story world (Bordwell, Staiger, Thompson 1985: 27).



achieved - mark it as a subtle display of virtuosity but interestingly the pacing of the move literally downplays virtuosity.

The credit sequence carries an orchestrated score that opens melodiously but escalates into military bombast. As the score comes to an abrupt end, the UFA-logo fades to black. The film holds this stance for a few seconds. The slow ballad *Wenn der Wind weht* fades up as a dissolve carries us into the camera movement that opens the film. Music and lyrics are mentioned here because they are closely tied to the movement of the camera as well as the motives that it captures: The camera slowly pans from right to left across sea shore rocks and a number of fishermen bathed in sunlight while they leisurely go about their daily routines; some are perched on the rocks while repairing their nets, others enjoy a pipe of tobacco; the camera continues its panning movement out towards the sea, past fishermen's boats swaying in the water until the camera slides past a sail; as the sail covers the entire frame, there is a masked cut to yet another leftward camera movement that slides past the sail revealing a ship anchored at bay (fig. 279-81).<sup>254</sup> There follows a cut to a nearly two minute long leftward tracking shot that establishes the spatial layout of the scene while introducing us to the characters aboard the ship (fig. 282-87). Alike the fishermen ashore many indulge in daily routines but there is an even stronger impression of idle time as many fishermen lie scattered about the ship sleeping or resting. The camera also passes by different international colonies of sailors that participate in the performance of the song adding their own national 'flavor' to the genre and language of the song: German, English, Russian, Italian. The camera is as much scanning a soundscape as a visual landscape.



Fig. 279-81. *Bomben auf Monte Carlo* (1931).

<sup>254</sup> The camera movements are staged so as to flow into one another but I grant that the transitions between the three camera movements could have been staged more smoothly. The tempo of the second pan does not perfectly match that of the first pan, and there is a little visual hiccup in the transition between the second and third shot: The movement comes to a halt before the cut just as the camera is set in motion a split-second into the following shot.



Fig. 282-87. *Bomben auf Monte Carlo* (1931).

In conjunction with the actions of the characters and the melody of *Wenn der Wind weht* the slow-paced and leisurely movement of the camera substantiates a particular temporal quality in the film: idleness. The song also suggests a more abstract function for the camera: that it is carried by or, in fact, *visualizes* the gentle and slow movement of a breeze which is moving about just as idly as the fishermen and sailors are carrying themselves. Note also that all three camera movements are leftward and thus gently substantiate – by an analogy to Western reading and writing processes<sup>255</sup> – the humdrum of the characters' actions and the non-progressive situation in which the sailors find themselves. The leftward camera movements also gently convey a direction home, hooking into the lyrics of the ballad: "Spreche mein Lied in die Heimat." The leftward direction of the movement helps to suggest that the song of the sailors' is carried by the wind to their loved ones at home.

<sup>255</sup> In fact, human behavior may generally be said to be biased towards right since at least 70% of all people regardless of culture and race are right-handed as well as right-footed (Salt 2005: 103).

### 4.3 Rope (1948)

Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope* (1948) tells the story of two affluent, well-educated young men, Brandon (John Dall) and Phillip (Farley Granger), who decide to commit an immaculately planned and executed murder: They kill their friend, David Kentley, place him in a book chest in the living room and organize a party to which they have invited David's parents, his fiancée Janet, Janet's former boyfriend and the boys' mutual friend Kenny, as well as their former teacher Rupert (James Stewart). The finishing touch to their 'work of art' is that they will have the food served from the very chest that holds the body of David. Thrill seems to be their main motivation and their *raison d'être* is that murder is a crime for the ordinary man but a privilege – and artform - reserved for a few intellectually and culturally superior individuals.

*Rope* is best known as Hitchcock's attempt to make a film without cuts<sup>256</sup> but *Rope* is also a film where both visual and verbal expressions are invested with multiple meanings. Sometimes these result from the Hitchcockian trademark of playing with the distribution of knowledge among characters vis-a-vis that of the spectator. As Mrs. Atwater – who came instead of David's mother - looks at Phillip's hands and proclaims that they will bring him great fame, we as spectators understand that it may not be their artistic but their murderous capabilities that are likely accomplish that. While Mrs. Atwater remains ignorant about her insinuations, Phillip fully realizes the implications. This play of double meaning undoubtedly takes place at an explicit level of meaning, i.e. the film intentionally prompts such a reading of that pun. However, there is also a homosexual subtext to the film that takes place at an implicit level of meaning. The film itself never directly acknowledges this but it is invoked several times in the film both visually and verbally. Arthur Laurents who wrote the screenplay for the film has the following to say about this aspect of the film:

What was curious to me was that *Rope* is obviously about homosexuals. The word was never mentioned. Not by Hitch, not by anybody at Warners where it was filmed. It was referred to as 'it.' They were going to do a picture about 'it' and the actors were 'it.' (Laurents to the camera in Bouzereau 2001)<sup>257</sup>

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<sup>256</sup> The film contains five masked cuts and five 'ordinary' cuts. See Nielsen (2003c).

<sup>257</sup> According to Laurents, Cary Grant and Montgomery Clift turned down the part as Rupert because they did not want to be identified with homosexuality. Giving the role to James Stewart meant that the film was "curiously off-balance" and that it "lacked the sexual centre that it

According to Laurents the implication is not only that Brandon and Phillip who live together were homosexuals but that Rupert is also homosexual and had an affair with Brandon. Laurents claims that the Legion of Decency and the Catholic church's influence on the Breen-office caused the obliteration of homosexuality from the film, i.e. from the referential and explicit meanings of the film. However, both verbal and visual references to a homosexual subtext exist throughout the film adding to the layered meanings invested in the film.

About nine minutes into the film, and seven after Phillip and Brandon have killed David, there is a rightward panning shot during a pull-back from a two-shot of Phillip and Brandon that engages and functions in relation to these different layers of meaning (fig. 288-90). Upon Phillip's request Brandon has just described how he felt during the murder act. Brandon explains it in detail including how he felt "tremendously exhilarated" after David's body "went limp." As he returns the question to Phillip, Phillip can only avert his eyes and stutter a "Oh... I..." But the camera seems to answer the question for him by panning to the right just enough to bring the only crooked candle on the table into view. As the camera pulls back it simultaneously pans back to Phillip and Brandon so only to use the autonomous camera movement for a momentary interplay of character and elements of the setting. But in this film, which contains rich and tangled subtext on homoerotic tensions, the image becomes a visual metaphor of impotence.



Fig. 288-90. *Rope* (1948)

Naturally, it is not the camera move in itself that evokes an abstract concept but the nature of the object and the way in which the camera relates it

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should have." Laurents suggests that a James Mason would have been better for the part. Mason is actually mentioned in the film, perhaps one of the playful references to subtext.



to the discussion between Brandon and Phillip. However, the camera move *is* an important contributor because it detaches itself slightly from its purely characterological role of following moving action to *reach* for its destined motif. If one is *in on* the development of a homoerotic subtext to the action, then the move is also bound to be associated with the hand of a narrative agent operating outside or at the sideline to its diegetically subjected role. A playful point is being imposed from outside the story world.

One may argue that the filmmakers are simply opting for a wider composition to reduce the intimacy and tension of the medium close-up and to better anticipate a later movement by Brandon who places two glasses on the right hand side of the table and adjusts the candle. Even though the movement is partly legitimized later in the shot it does not justify the *way in which* the crooked candle is brought into frame: why pan off the two men and then back again? Other staging solutions seem more appropriate for achieving these functions: panning Brandon's later movement or pulling the camera straight back or combining the two.

But there is another possible reason why the camera momentarily detaches itself from Brandon and Phillip. The abstract function (invoking impotence) depends on the spectator being drawn to a detail within a wider composition: the crooked candle. As a matter of fact the candle not only stands out because of its anomalous placement, it also comes to occupy a prominent position of transitional rest in the frame - at least if one subscribes to compositional guidelines such as the rule-of-thirds (fig. 289). Even as the camera pans back while receding, it still keeps the crooked candle in-frame (fig. 290) and the miniscule back and forth repositioning at the end of the pull-back seem to issue from a desire to keep the candle in the frame. Nonetheless the focus of the camera may not be the candle but a somewhat more expansive object: the half-set dinner table. Failing to provide a response to Brandon's question, Phillip shifts the focus of their conversation by asking: "Brandon, you don't think the party is a mistake, do you?" We hear these words off-screen as the camera gives us a chance to gauge the dinner table that we have heretofore only glimpsed during a follow shot of Brandon and Phillip into the kitchen.

Consequently, the camera move also anticipates and substantiates pictorially the launch of a significant dangling cause: the party. This orientating function of the camera may be seen as a rival function to the abstract and

reflexive functions suggested above but instead of viewing these as mutually exclusive functions, I suggest that one sees them as two co-existing functions that appeal to two different levels of engagement: engagement in the explicitly communicated on-going story and engagement in the subtextual homoerotic plot.

#### 4.4 Big Deal on Madonna Street (1958)

*Big Deal on Madonna Street* is an Italian caper movie that focuses on a group of petty criminals as they plan and attempt to carry out a jewelry theft – with little success. The former boxer Peppe (Vittorio Gassman) takes the rap for a car theft and receives word of a sting from the real culprit Cosimo (Memmo Carotenuto) who himself heard about this ‘golden opportunity’ from another inmate. Tricking Cosimo into revealing the details of the job by counterfeiting a three-year jail sentence, Peppe – who in fact will be released on probation - takes the lead in organizing the heist.

Upon returning from prison Peppe is cornered by Cosimo’s accomplice Capannelle (Carlo Pisacane), Cosimo’s mistress Norma (Rosanna Rory) and the three other men that Capannelle tried to recruit as scapegoats for Cosimo: Mario (Renato Salvatori), Michele Ferribotte (Tiberio Murgia) and Tiberio (Marcello Mastroianni). Still situated in the apartment, Peppe begins to describe the sting to the group. He asks them if they know Via Della Madonna and the pawnshop there. The last phrase bleeds across a cut to a shot of the pawnshop. One of the men replies that he knows the pawnshop very well: “They even got my sheets there.”

At this point one must assume that the images of Madonna Street and the verbal account are separated spatially – maybe even temporally. Thus far the images appear as a visualization of Peppe’s account and the tracking, panning and tilting movement from the pawnshop, down the street and up towards a closed window as representing the work of a narrative agent directing the spectator’s attention to the visual details of the sting (fig. 291-2).<sup>258</sup> However, as

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<sup>258</sup> Overt camera movement that bears the mark of extra- or non-diegetic narrative agency is not entirely without precedent in the heist or caper film. In fact it may be generically motivated and its status can be seen as somewhat equivalent to the non-diegetic narrative voice-over in *The Killing* (Stanley Kubrick, 1956). It is not an isolated instance of non-diegetic voice in *Big Deal* either: intertitles appear throughout the film such as “So it was up to Mario to come up with the money.”

the camera locates the windows on the first floor the tables seem to have turned. Whereas the images initially appear to serve as a visual supplement to Peppe's verbal account, the verbal account suddenly appears to supplement the visual display, i.e. Peppe's comments do not merely explain verbally what we see visually but tell spectators where to orient their eyes *within* the mobile frame: "There – those are the windows [...] And that's the door." As this is a caper movie that spoofs heist films such as *The Asphalt Jungle* (John Huston, 1950) and *Du rififi chez les hommes* (Jules Dassin, 1955), spectators may supply generic motivation and assume that Peppe – though no longer visible – has begun to draw a map of the street to which he is referring. However, this understanding of the move is negated when Peppe says "follow me" upon which the camera tracks left from the door to a flight of stairs (fig. 293-4). Two questions arise: Who is Peppe addressing and who embodies the mobile vantage point?



Fig. 291-4. *Big Deal on Madonna Street* (1958).

As will be clarified later, Peppe is still addressing the other characters, not the spectator. But can one still hold to the view that a narrative agent is governing the mobile vantage point? The anchorage of camera viewpoint to Peppe's verbal comments makes it more likely that the viewpoint of the camera is in fact focalized by characters in the fiction. It would be logical to assume that the camera movement represents Peppe's point of view as it is he who is

directing the attention of the others: “Over there, on the right, see the coal bin?” The ensuing action confirms that the characters are present in the space presented: Peppe asks Ferribotte to check the padlock on the grille in front of the coal bin and in order to do so Ferribotte steps into frame from an off-screen position behind the camera. After having checked the lock he walks back into the off-screen zone (this time to the other side of the camera) and we hear him say: “8 mm pliers will do.” (fig. 295-7).



Fig. 295-7. *Big Deal on Madonna Street* (1958).

Allotting the point of view to Peppe would account for the dual function of eye and pointer served by the camera movement, i.e. the spectator is both witnessing what Peppe is seeing as well as what he is pointing out to the others. However, there is also a problem with this reading of the shot for in fact, the coal bin is not placed on the right hand side of the frame - which we hear is Peppe's vantage point on the action - but in the middle and closer to the left hand side.

Another candidate for the actual focalization is Capanelle. At this point it is not entirely logical why one should take the camera to be mediating Capanelle's point of view. One must look at the subsequent shots to see why. After Ferribotte's reply there is a cut to shot of the other side of the coal bin taken from inside a courtyard. Again the camera appears to serve a dual function of focalizing a point of view as well as pointing out a route to the other characters (as well as to the spectator of course). As the camera pans and tilts away from the coal bin to a flight of narrow wooden stairs, one hears Peppe's narration as well as comments supplied by the others: “There. From the coal bin we come out there...go down...take that stairway, see? Then up through the roof. Another little iron ladder. And from there, we come up to the terrace.” As the camera moves along the route pointed out by Peppe, the others continue to comment on Peppe's description: “Just like an elevator,” “Then what?” and so forth.



Once the camera has tilted up to the rooftop there is another cut: “Wait: move over so can see well.” The cut occurs between “wait” and “move over” and the verbal contents of the scene can be read as a way of motivating the cut to an overhead perspective during a focalized camera movement. “There, did you get to the terrace?,” asks Peppe. “I hope so,” replies Tiberio laconically referring to the future event: the actual heist. Peppe continues his description of the route they are to take: “Now we go across the skylight, quietly, everybody’s asleep, nobody hears us and we get to that window, the one with the bars. What do you see there?” (fig. 298-300). There is a quick zoom-in toward the window and the safe at the back of the room before a reverse-angle cut finally reveals the group to be standing on a roof-top across from the window (fig. 301-2). Only then do we see who has been taking in the visuals presented in the previous three shots: the five men, but not Norma. One of the reasons it is likely that the visuals of the three prior shots have been focalized by Capanelle is that Peppe’s last question appears to be addressed to him specifically and that Capanelle is holding a pair of opera glasses. It is likely that Peppe has actually guided Capanelle who equipped with the opera glasses would have the best view of the route. Capanelle’s opera glass-viewpoint could justify the quick zoom-ins on the coal bin and the safe, although we never actually see any of sign of adjustable focal length on the piece.



Fig. 298-302. *Big Deal on Madonna Street* (1958). A verbal comment motivates the first cut inside the courtyard.



While Capanelle actually turns out to be a more likely focalizer than Peppe, there are also reasons to suspect this interpretation. First, there are segments of these three shots where it is extremely unlikely that we are witnessing images as seen through Capanelle's binoculars: If Capanelle treaded the route from the window to the flight of stairs, why would he take in the scenery through binoculars? Furthermore, the relatively steady route of the camera does not match a way of orienting oneself in space that one associates with the fidgety Capanelle.

The unusual yet most persuasive interpretation is that the camera movement does not represent the point of view of an individual. Instead the camera movement is mediating the point-of-view of the entire group, i.e. the camera movement serves as a 'collective point-of-view.' Of course the movement of the camera only approximately shows us what the group is seeing as the single perspective offered here cannot accurately represent that of five or six persons, particularly not as one of the five men views some of the route through a set of binoculars. Nevertheless, the collective point-of-view conveys how all the members of the group are orienting themselves in the same *general* direction. Furthermore, a collective point-of-view is also justified on the basis of the plot, which places *the group* at the center.

The effect achieved by this unusual type of focalization can be referred to as kind of reverse or negated cubism in the sense that the frame is not splintered into multiple perspectives; instead multiple perspectives on the action are here forged into one. Ferribotte's detachment from this so-called collective p.o.v. would seem to counter this interpretation but in fact it is an entirely different kind of anomaly than examples where an individual walks into his own point of view – for instance the example of Travis (Harry Dean Stanton) in *Paris, Texas* (Wim Wenders, 1984).<sup>259</sup> Ferribotte's 'walking into the collective p.o.v.' is entirely motivated and unavoidable because Ferribotte only detaches himself in order to perform an individual task on behalf of the group. Significantly, he then *returns* to the collective vantage point immediately afterwards which is then sustained in the course of this and the ensuing shots.

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<sup>259</sup> For a discussion of this shot, see Richard Raskin's interview with Wim Wenders (Raskin 1999a).

#### 4.5 Les Dernières fiancailles (1973)

*Les Dernières fiancailles* is directed by Quebecois filmmaker Jean Pierre Lefebvre and photographed by Guy Dufaux. The film centers on the last days in the life of an elderly couple, Rosa (Marthe Nadeau) and Armand (J. Léo Gagnon). A car delivers their mail, others pass as they work the garden and a doctor comes to check Armand's health but basically Rosa and Armand are the only characters in the film (Marcel Sabourin who plays the doctor is the only other character credited). The film is deliberately slow-paced both as regards the types of events shown and the stretch of time in which they are presented. There is no background music and very little dialogue. The first line of dialogue is heard eight-and-a-half minutes into the film, a modest "good morning, my old girl."

The shortage of dialogue lends more significance to the lines actually spoken but the few lines spoken between Rosa and Armand are not philosophical aphorisms. They are colloquialisms teeming with allusions to their past, their health problems, their emotional pain as well as the finer points of their relationship. With an average shot length of 45 seconds across its 92-minute running time, it is also a film with few cuts. A substantial proportion of the shorter shots are static whereas every shot beyond 30 seconds is carried by at least some amount of camera movement. Most of the camera movements in the film are motivated by and keyed to the movement and actions of Rosa and Armand. The pace of these follow shots substantiates the slow and measured pace of Rosa and Armand's movements and actions. The pacing of these movements tune us into their life rhythms so to speak. But the rhythm of these follow shots not only helps to *portray* that they are old and cannot move with great ease and speed, it plays a fine and subtle role in conveying a sense of their lives being in the process of slowing down until – at the end of the film - both they and the camera come to rest.

However, not every camera movement of the film is a follow shot. Quite often the film features autonomous movement where the camera moves independent of the physical actions of the players. But the filmmakers extend the slow pace to these autonomous shots as well although they are not keyed to the physical movement of the players. Thus these autonomous movements sustain an overall pacing of the slowly unfolding narrative. Consequently, the

pace and rhythm of Rosa and Armand's lives are imposed on the pace of the narrative as a whole.

Both the function of substantiating the portrayal of physical and psychological traits and of sustaining the overall narrative rhythm are at play in the following example from the film but two other functions are invoked as well. The camera movement takes place approximately 27 minutes into the film. The shot in question is a long take of approximately two-and-a-half minutes and it can be segmented into five parts. For the first 45 seconds the camera follows Rose out the backdoor of the house and out into the chicken yard (1). For the next 30 seconds the camera remains stationary or semi-stationary as Rose feeds the chickens (2). Then comes the camera move that is particularly rich in meaning. The camera begins to track slowly to the left just as Rose pauses in contemplation off-balancing the composition by pushing Rose to the right side of the frame (3). Because we only see her in profile and because her face and body are partly cast in shadow, we cannot precisely assess her emotional state (fig. 303-5). The pared down style of the film prompt us to assign particular significance to small variations. As opposed to other slow-paced autonomous moves in the film this one is *suggestive* of that unique emotional reaction that we cannot quite elicit from her performance. Shortly afterwards she will leave the chicken yard again and speak out to herself, dry her eyes and thereby confirm that she was moved to tears. We do not know of her genuine reaction for sure before being exposed to this aspect of her performance but the camera move subtly suggests it.



Fig. 303-5. *Les Dernières fiancailles* / *The Last Betrothal* (1973). By paring down drama minute facial expressions and camera action gain in significance.



A fourth function of the move becomes evident as the rest of the shot unfolds. We learn that the camera also *anticipates* Rose's movement out of the chicken yard. The camera leads our eye, orienting us regarding the forthcoming development of the scene. After Rose has caught up with the camera and re-appropriated the center of the frame, the camera follows her back towards the house connecting her with Armand who has also exited the house (4). Rose complains that Armand cannot keep quiet for five minutes and suggests they go back to the house so she can prepare lunch/dinner but Armand persuades her to take a walk in the apple orchard. He notices a change in her eyes and asks about it, perhaps sensing that she has cried. The camera follows them right again past the chickens that Rose has just fed. As they pass the chicken yard the camera halts letting the couple exit frame right and holds the shot on the chicken behind the fence while we hear Armand saying "Don't overfeed my chickens." (5) This is not insignificant post-action lag for the chickens cease their cackling just as the couple pass, as if to highlight the serenity and beautiful tranquility of the following scene as they walk out in the blooming fruit orchard.

#### 4.6 Der Krieger und die Kaiserin (2000)

*Der Krieger und die Kaiserin* (2000) is a German film directed by Tom Tykwer and photographed by Frank Griebbe that centers on Sissi (Franka Potente) - a nurse at a psychiatric clinic - and her relationship to Bodo (Benno Fürmann) who unbeknownst to himself and to Sissi causes a traffic accident that leaves her fatally wounded. Trying to evade the two men who are following him, Bodo

tries to blend in with the crowd gathered around the accident. By means of a miraculous and creative rescue operation Bodo saves Sissi's life but leaves her at the hospital. 53 days later Sissi is released from hospital but has not forgotten the man who saved her life. For a number of reasons Sissi wants to see Bodo again and she seeks the help of Otto (Melchior Beslon), a blind young man from the clinic who accompanied her on the day of the accident.

They revisit the scene in order to search for clues that can help her locate Bodo. We are presented with a rapid zoom-in on Sissi that serves to visualize the prior movement of the advancing truck. The sound of screeching tires are added to the image and they bleed over into the next shot where we hear Sissi undramatically saying "boom" before taking a drop to the ground. We view this action in a high-angle long shot that allows us to view the spatial scope of the scene. The transition to the long shot is abrupt because we are suddenly yanked away from the close-up of Sissi to this distant framing that places us in the position of an external observer. Sissi turns toward Otto and a cut takes us close to the action again: a slightly high-angled medium close up of Sissi positioned in the left foreground of the shot with her back to the camera. Sissi asks Otto "Und dann?/And then?" Then follows a remarkable camera movement: After Sissi's question the camera begins to move away from her towards Otto whose feet are visible in the top-right corner of the frame at the beginning of the shot; the camera tilts up and moves in closer; as the camera approaches Otto's face, the diegetic sounds of the milieu change in character – a slightly distorted howling sound begins to dominate the soundtrack; as Otto leans his head to the right, the camera curbs to that side but only to begin an arcing movement that travels one-and-a-half times around Otto as he shifts his head around trying to remember the sounds following the accident. There is a cut to a closer shot of Otto as the camera does a half arc around him and Sissi before he puts out his hand and points to a position outside the frame where Bobo came from: "Da!/There!"

It is an immensely complex arcing shot that throws into question many of the boundaries separating the different functional categories. First of all, the arcing shot *imbues* the space around Otto and Sissi. Although in some sense we still see excerpts of the same *geographical* space that we saw in the previous long shot, the camera move – aided by the subjective sounds - makes us experience the space in a completely different way. First of all, the space becomes *assigned*



to a particular character, namely Otto. We come to see how he 'takes in' the space. At the end of the first arcing move Sissi steps in closer to Otto as if to be included in 'his' space (fig. 306-13).



Fig. 306-13. The arcing shot in *Der Krieger und die Kaiserin* (2000).

However, as Otto is blind the camera cannot be said to mediate his *viewpoint*. The manner in which the camera scans the landscape is *suggestive* of Otto's auditory activity. One could say that the camera projects Otto's auditory 'viewpoint.' However, this does not fully exhaust what actually takes place in the scene. After all, Otto is not merely orienting himself in the space around. What the camera movement comes to visualize exceeds sensory activity. It also exceeds the suggestion of a passively held psychological state. For instance in *Jackie Brown* (1997) an arcing shot around Jackie (Pam Grier) makes a blur out of the background thus suggesting the character's psychological state: disorientation and confusion.<sup>260</sup> However, in *Der Krieger und die Kaiserin* there is a stronger projective component, a suggestion of active psychological activity intending towards the represented space. The camera movement is *suggestive* of Otto's psychological 'scanning' activity because it indicates to us how his mind and senses are working actively to reconstruct a former auditory landscape. It is this visualized *reconstruction* of a past *auditory* landscape which pushes the

<sup>260</sup> Although this camera move actually *lies* about Jackie's psychological state for her confusion is only pretense.

function of the camera movement beyond focalization to the realm of abstract functions.

The analyses provided here have illustrated how the functional framework presented in chapter 3 can inform analysis and interpretation. I have attempted to show that the functional taxonomy can illuminate the various contributions of camera movement within the wider context of particular scenes and films, some well-known films, others virtually unknown. It is my hope that the chapter has also hinted at the immense intricacies of assessing that contribution amidst the network of other stylistic parameters.



## 5 Conclusion

Camera movement has held a fascination among filmmakers as well as critics and researchers for more than a century. Both filmmakers and researchers recognize that camera movement is a *significant* device that is central to our experience of watching moving images, an observation that goes all the way back to Louis Lumière's approving reply to cinematographer Alexandre Promio upon seeing what is supposedly the first traveling shot in film history: *Panorama du Grand Canal vu d'un bateau* (1896). However, a general impression left by the literature on the topic is that camera movement is also a remarkably *elusive* device. This combination partly explains why a substantial amount of literature on the topic is synoptic and essayistic. It stimulates interest, but its significance is difficult to pen down. First of all, it is difficult to come to terms with camera movement at the level of form because it intersects and interacts with other stylistic devices and overarching narrative designs. But it is also difficult to come to terms with because discussions of motivation, function and meaning quickly become entangled with theories of film form, narration, subjectivity, realism, point of view, ideology, the specificity or ontology of the medium of film. Chapter 1, *Perspectives on Camera Movement: A Review of the Literature*, laid out and discussed various perspectives from which filmmakers, critics, historians and theorists have accounted for camera movement whether they discussed camera movement in relation to our own movement in space, as an authorial strategy, as a way of directing attention, as a way of mending the two-dimensional planarity of the image, as a means of making us rediscover phenomenal reality, as an alternative to montage, as a way of assigning significant form to represented actions and characters, as a technique specific to the medium of film, or as a device which must be interpreted for meaning. Some of the perspectives are rewarding, others less so, but the sheer scope of vantage points on camera movement testify to its polyphonic, amorphous, chameleon-like quality. However, if one takes production of knowledge to be the primary research objective, then it is best to start off with simple questions. Hoping to deliver a qualified answer this dissertation poses such a question: What are the functions of camera movements in narrative films? Sometimes the simple questions are the most difficult to answer and it has been both

imperative and paramount to ransack the entire field before proposing an answer.

Chapter 2, *Camera Movement in a Historical Perspective*, is a work of historical poetics. It delineates the history of camera movement. The chapter describes salient trends, durable norms, and the repertoire of aesthetic and narrative functions engaged at particular historical junctures. The chapter illustrates that the history of camera movement does not align itself along any clear teleological arc. Silent cinema is shown to be particularly rich in mini-trends, perfunctory innovations and even (almost) inexplicable dead-ends. Although many of the fundamental functions of camera movement are launched early on, the technical and aesthetic resources have also changed considerably across time. The chapter traces the compelling development of camera movement across the transition to sound. The fate of camera movement is not *obliteration* as some accounts have it. On the contrary it is a period of *invention* and *reinvention* where the functional scope is adjusted to accommodate both new genres and a profoundly altered art form. The basic properties of studio era camera movement are also discussed as are various strategies explored by art house cinema. Finally, the chapter argues that the proliferation of camera movement in contemporary cinema need not be seen as a catch-as-catch-can quality, as window-dressing or as misdealed energy boosts. Instead it is proposed that filmmakers jostle to extend the functional contribution of camera movement to a greater range of expressiveness.

Chapter 3 is a work of stylistics. The object of analysis, camera movement, is a particular on-screen effect: the frame of the image appears to be moving in relation to the motive. Camera movement – or the on-screen effect of camera movement – is taken to play a constitutive role in the complex web of cinematic enunciation. A camera movement *actively contributes* to the way in which we understand the sound and images on the screen. A taxonomy of functions for camera movement in narrative cinema is proposed based on the premise that the functions of camera movement may be seemingly straightforward but inherently multifaceted. Most often one does not do the particular example justice by pinpointing only one function. Camera movements tend to multitask. Consequently, the functional taxonomy supposes that a given camera

movement may activate one or more of the proposed functions at any given moment. The functional taxonomy is a way of accounting for the organizational principles of the on-screen effect of camera movement. The taxonomy also distills and organizes the range of functions laid out in chapter 2. Six main functions are proposed and defined as follows:

- 1) Orientation: orienting the viewer spatially.
- 2) Pacing: contributing to the cinematic rhythm of the film.
- 3) Inflection: making commentative, suggestive or valiative statements.
- 4) Focalization: associating the movement of the camera with the viewpoints of characters or entities in the story world.
- 5) Reflexive: drawing attention to the filmmaker, the filmmaking situation, the narrative or stylistic patterning at play.
- 6) Abstract: suggesting abstract ideas and concepts.

Major parameters of declension are described, as are sub-functions, which are exemplified and organized schematically. The empirical base upon which the functions are located is diverse in terms of genre, geography, time of production and popularity: from pre-Eisensteinian silent cinema to German musicals of the thirties, to Quebecois art films, to contemporary Hong Kong action movies. Nevertheless, the taxonomy does not claim to be *representative* of all films at all time. It is only meant to capture the most significant ways in which camera movement can contribute to cinematic enunciation.

Chapter 4 analyses six concrete examples of camera movement in order to illustrate how the functions may mesh in individual examples. The analyses also illustrate how the taxonomy presented in chapter 3 can inform analysis and interpretation. More generally, the dissertation - and particularly chapter 4 - illustrates how two research perspectives, cinematic poetics and interpretive criticism sensitive to style, may gain from each other.

There is no reason why stylistically informed interpretive criticism should refrain from incorporating a functional framework. And there is no reason why one should refrain from using a functional taxonomy as a basis on which to launch interpretations of film style. There is a limit to how much one can say about camera movement without a full understanding of the range of functions that they operate within but there is also a limit to how far functional

analysis can take us towards establishing the contribution of a particular camera movement. Hence it is important to stress that the functional taxonomy does not exhaust what one can say about camera movement but to ask about the functions of camera movement is the first basic step towards asking about how they can articulate meaning. This is one of the staggering tasks that lie ahead but the functional taxonomy can assist many analytic and interpretative procedures or enterprises. It may assist analyses of individual camera movements within a given film but one can also use it as a framework for discussing authorial camera movement or genre-specific camera movement. For instance what functions do this particular director or genre incline towards? One can also ask what functions are engaged by films at a particular point in time. Do contemporary blockbusters explore abstract functions more than did blockbusters in the 1940s?

A lot of work still remains to be done on style generally and on camera movement in particular. Even after more than three years of research they can still baffle and surprise a trained eye and prompt me to revisit a specific movement again and again. One must look long and hard to capture the elusive effects of camera movement.

## 6 Bibliography

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## Appendix I

At the very bottom of the appendix you will find a list of the films viewed for this dissertation (Extensive Sample). The extensive viewing was integral to the historical perspective laid out in chapter 2 but also buttresses the taxonomy presented in chapter 3.

In order to work out a taxonomy, more in-depth analyses were deemed necessary. Consequently, a corpus of between 20 and 30 camera movements were selected from seven types of movement listed below (Select Sample).

Category of movement	Definition
1. Push-ins	Movements or zooms towards motives in the frame – typically static, quasi-static or advancing motives (regardless of camera support)
2. Pull-backs	Movements or zooms away from motives in the frame – typically static, quasi-static or receding motives (regardless of camera support)
3. Arcing shots	The camera arcs around the motive (regardless of camera support)
4. Handheld shots	Camera movements where the mobility of a human operator registers in the structural quality of the shot – the very few examples of handheld push-ins, pull-backs and arcing shots have been included in the former three categories.
5. Booming and aerial shots	Movements from a perspective that appears disconnected from the ground level, for instance booming through space, flying over a scenery.
6. Follow shots	Movements that follow moving action – for instance following characters by means of a pan, tilt, tracking shot or Steadicam shot. Booming, aerial and handheld follow shots are included in categories 5 and 6 respectively.
7. Autonomous moves	When the camera moves independently of moving action for instance panning off a character, pendulating movements, byzantine tracking shots, Dutch tilts (a sidelong roll of the camera).

It should be noted that the sample also includes complex camera movements

which combine in a single take two or more of the above-mentioned characteristics but in fact even here the distinctions were useful in providing a guideline for breaking camera movements down for closer analysis. Zooms are not a category of camera movement but they are a type of mobile framing and examples have been included in the categories most closely associated with the type of zoom, i.e. pull-backs or push-ins. The same procedure has been undertaken with regards to other types of mobile framing that do not – strictly speaking – involve camera movement, for instance computer generated camera movements (CGI) and Virtual Camera Movement.

Consequently, the categories have been defined according to different relationships of camera to motive.<sup>261</sup> The categories of movement used in statistical analysis such as tracking shots, pans and tilts remain too focused on the movement of the apparatus as opposed to movement in *relation* to a motive. Considering camera movement as an interplay between camera and motive makes it possible to divide the field into types. Specific and well-known ways of moving the camera in relation to a motive include push-ins, pull-backs, arcing shots, booming and aerial shots as well as handheld shots.<sup>262</sup>

Unruly as these categories may appear from a structural perspective, they had the advantage of correlating with terms used in craft literature and in fact it was only necessary to supply one category, autonomous movement, and redefine the categories of follow shot and autonomous movement so that they exclude movements discussed elsewhere (such as crane follow shots or handheld follow shots and autonomous aerial shots respectively)<sup>263</sup> in order to

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<sup>261</sup> As to what artistic devices belong to the art of mise-en-scene and to cinematography respectfully, I refer to the distinctions made in Bordwell and Thompson, *Film Art*, chapter 6 and 7. Bordwell and Thompson define mise-en-scene as the art of staging an event to be filmed whereas cinematography is the art of capturing what is put in front of the camera. Granted by focusing on the relationship of camera to motive, my criterion of selection does not involve ALL of the fine-grained levels of interaction between cinematography and mise-en-scene, e.g. of camera movement and lighting, but I take the relationship of camera to motive be the most important interaction.

<sup>262</sup> These categories of movement are well-known in craft literature. See for instance Herb A. Lightman's two articles, "Dramatic Emphasis With the Mobile Camera," *AC* 39, 6, (June 1958) and "The Function of Boom Shots in Feature Film Production." *AC* 34, 4 (April 1953).

<sup>263</sup> Naturally, both handheld and crane shots can follow moving action and push-ins, pull-backs and arcing shots are a type of autonomous movement but both their aesthetic and production technological specificities as well as the norms and traditions built around them warrant a separate category. As a consequence, the category of follow shots then comprises follow shots that are not handheld or aerial/boom shots and the category of autonomous moves comprises autonomous moves that are not either push-ins, pull-backs or arcing shots (there was still a great diversity of follow shots to consider and as has been demonstrated by Robin Wood's analysis of director-specific tracking shots discussed in chapter 2).



arrive at a structural typology that acknowledged a great deal of diversity of movement while still keeping the categories manageable.

The collection of different types of movement has only been a method of systematizing the empirical base of the taxonomy. In themselves types of movement say little about function and although the seven categories have been used as a guideline, alternate modes of movement not necessarily reflected in the major division have also been examined in order to assess possible differences of function, for instance Steadicam follow shots versus dolly follow shots. However the general procedure and line of approach that has been pursued in working with the Select Sample can be summarized in the following way:

- 1) analysis of the individual camera movements.
  - 2) an assembled list of functions associated with each of the seven types of movement listed above.
  - 3) the functions of each of the seven types were compared to each other.
- In the process of organizing them into a taxonomy of functions for camera movement per se, they were held up against the wider base of the Extensive Sample.

#### SELECT SAMPLE

Push-ins	Pull-backs	Arcing shots	Handheld
<i>Hooligan in Jail</i> <i>Cabiria</i> <i>Applause</i> <i>Street Without End</i> <i>Liebelei</i> <i>Dead End</i> <i>Stagecoach</i> <i>Mark of Zorro</i> <i>Casablanca</i> <i>Mildred Pierce</i> <i>Rope</i> <i>Gun Crazy</i> <i>Psycho</i>  <i>Take the Money and Run/</i> <i>Bananas</i> <i>MASH</i> <i>The Parallax View</i> <i>Martha</i> <i>Boogie Nights</i> <i>Magnolia</i> <i>Den eneste ene</i> <i>Dykkerne</i> <i>Okay</i> <i>Punch Drunk Love</i>	<i>After Death</i> <i>The Vagabond</i> <i>Hævnens Nat</i> <i>Der blaue Engel</i> <i>All Quiet on the Western Front</i> <i>The Golddiggers of 1933</i> <i>Footlight Parade</i> <i>Le Crimes de M.</i> <i>Mark of Zorro</i> <i>Rebecca</i> <i>The Lost Weekend</i> <i>The Strange Love of Martha Ivers</i> <i>Psycho</i> <i>L'Eclisse</i> <i>The Graduate</i> <i>The Parallax View</i> <i>Yigezibudedan sheng/Too</i> <i>Many Ways to Be No. 1</i> <i>Changfó/The Mission</i> <i>Far from Heaven</i> <i>Amelie</i>	<i>Suspicion</i> <i>Vertigo</i> <i>Ordet</i> <i>Judg at Nuremberg</i> <i>Catch-22</i> <i>Hair</i> <i>Martha</i> <i>Carrie</i> <i>When Harry Met Sally</i> <i>Freud flytter hjemmefra</i> <i>Jackie Brown</i> <i>Boogie Nights</i> <i>Anja og Viktor</i> <i>Der Krieger und die Kaiserin</i> <i>Lord of the Rings</i> <i>Matrix Revolutions</i>  <b>Other circular movements:</b> <i>Kri-kri and the Tango</i> <i>La signora de tutti</i> <i>Le Crimes de M.</i> <i>La tendre ennemie</i>	<i>The Story of the Glove</i> <i>Der letzte Mann</i> <i>Napoleon</i> <i>Citizen Kane</i> <i>Paisan</i> <i>Body and Soul</i> <i>Touch of Evil</i> <i>Shadows</i> <i>Band apart</i> <i>Easy Rider</i> <i>Jaws</i> <i>Chinatown</i> <i>Days of Heaven</i> <i>Raging Bull</i> <i>Husbands and Wives</i> <i>Manhattan Murder</i> <i>Mystery</i> <i>The Celebration</i> <i>The Idiots</i> <i>American Beauty</i> <i>Rosetta</i> <i>Insomnia</i> <i>The Son</i> <i>Dogville</i>

<i>Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets</i> <i>At kende sandheden</i> <i>Signs</i>		<i>Red River</i>	
Booming Aerial	Follow shots	Autonomous moves	
<i>Intolerance</i> <i>Robin Hood</i> <i>7<sup>th</sup> Heaven</i> <i>Broadway</i> <i>Le million</i> <i>Trouble in Paradise</i> <i>Svengali</i> <i>Street Scene</i> <i>Gone With the W..</i> <i>Casablanca</i> <i>Best Years ..</i> <i>Singin in the Rain</i> <i>Picnic</i> <i>Cranes are Flying</i> <i>Soy Cuba</i> <i>Major Dundee</i> <i>Far and Away</i> <i>The Shawshank R.</i> <i>Contact</i> <i>Th. Crown Affair</i> <i>There's Something About Mary</i>	<i>The Lost Child Girl and her Trust</i> <i>Sunrise</i> <i>Rain</i> <i>The Front Page</i> <i>Der Kongress tanzt</i> <i>Rules of the Game</i> <i>The Letter</i> <i>His Girl Friday</i> <i>Rebecca</i> <i>Magn. Ambersons</i> <i>Best Years of..</i> <i>Letter From an Unknown Woman</i> <i>Rope</i> <i>Madame de</i> <i>Le Plaisir</i> <i>Laura</i> <i>Angel Face</i> <i>Whirlpool</i> <i>La ballon rouge</i> <i>Cranes are Flying</i> <i>Imitation of Life</i> <i>A Time to Live...</i> <i>The Cardinal</i> <i>The Train</i> <i>Rocky</i> <i>Marathon Man</i> <i>Bound for Glory</i> <i>Sans toit ni lois</i> <i>Hard Eight</i>	<i>Blind Husbands</i> <i>Asphalt</i> <i>The Love Parade</i> <i>Svengali (2)</i> <i>Gaslight</i> <i>Rebecca</i> <i>Tokyo Story</i> <i>Mosekongen</i> <i>Ugetsu Monogatari</i> <i>Pigen med paraplyerne</i> <i>Red and the White</i> <i>The Travelling Players</i> <i>Taxi Driver</i> <i>Annie Hall</i> <i>Dressed to Kill</i> <i>E.T.</i> <i>The Shining</i> <i>Birdy</i> <i>Dances With Wolves</i> <i>Barton Fink</i> <i>Too many ways to be no1</i> <i>Fight Club</i> <i>Mary Reilly</i> <i>Mothman</i> <i>Insomnia</i> <i>War of the Worlds</i>	

Below you will find a list of the Extended Sample. In locating these films I have used the films mentioned in the existing literature as basis. However, the sample does not only represent films that have been identified within the literature on camera movement. Besides the fact that the literature on camera movement tends to privilege canonized films, many of the camera movements in the literature have been canonized *because* of their contribution to the art of mobile cinematography.

This has had two consequences, one relating to the strategy of filling out gaps (completing the make-up of) in the sample of films and one relating to examples picked out for analysis in the actual dissertation. In order to ensure that the sample represent a wide flavor of stylistic traditions and generic contexts, a further selection of films was made on the basis of nationality, time

of production, genre and production techniques. Thus the list includes everything from German musicals of the thirties to Hong Kong action movies of the nineties. Regarding the parameter of technique it was deemed necessary that a great variety of camera supports were represented (i.e. dolly, crane, Steadicam, helicopter mount, wires and so forth) because new structures of movement may bring with them new functions.

By no means does the sample claim to represent all films ever produced. Particularly the average mainstream production of quietly conventional films from all countries and the vast amount of straight-to-video films does not make out as substantial a percentage of the sample as it does of the overall output of films. Nevertheless a number of relatively inconspicuous mainstream films *are* represented by films such as *Taxi!* (Roy del Ruth, 1932), *Santa Fe Trail* (Michael Curtiz, 1940), *Holiday Inn* (Mark Sandrich, 1942), *Beneath the 12 Mile Reef* (Robert Webb, 1953), *The Swimmer* (Frank Perry, 1968), *Zigzag* (Richard A. Colla, 1970), *Little Shop of Horrors* (Frank Oz, 1986), *Arachnophobia* (Frank Marshall. 1990), *Okay* (Jesper W. Nielsen, 2002) and *The Mothman Prophecies* (2002).

The other consequence has been to only include functional analyses of films already written about in the literature when it was deemed that these analyses made a contribution to the existing literature.

## EXTENSIVE SAMPLE

<u>1890s</u>	<u>1900s</u>	<u>1910s</u>
<p><i>The Sprinkler Sprinkled</i> (Lumière, June 10, 1895)  <i>Leaving Jerusalem by Train</i> (Lumière, 1896)  <i>Panorama du Grand Canal vu d'un bateau</i> (Lumière, 1896)</p> <p>All films from 1894-1910s on these compilations:</p> <p><i>Primitives &amp; Pioneers vol. 1 + 2</i> (BFI)  <i>Film Classics: Origin of Cinema vol. II</i>  <i>Landmarks of Early Cinema</i> (Image Ent., 1995)  <i>More Treasures From the American Film Archives</i> (NFPE, 2004)  <i>Before the Nickelodeon</i> (BFI, 1982)  <i>The Lumière Brothers' First Films</i> (Kino, 1996)  <i>Griffith Biograph Shorts 1909-13</i> (Kino)  <i>Silent film screenings at Ritrovato, Bologna, 2004 and Giornata del Cinema Muto, Pordenone, 2005</i></p>	<p><i>As Seen Through a Telescope</i> (Smith, 1900)  <i>Le Tour Eiffel</i> (Lumière, 1900)  <i>The Man With the Rubber Head</i> (Méliès, 1901)  <i>Execution of Czolgosz with Panorama of Auburn Prison</i> (Porter, November 1901)  <i>Grandma's Reading Glass</i> (Smith, 1903)  <i>Hooligan in Jail</i> (1903)  <i>Mary Jane's Mishap</i> (Smith, 1903)  <i>Rube and Mandy at Coney Island</i> (Porter, 1903) - frame enlargement  <i>The Lost Child</i> (Biograph, 1904)  <i>Photographing a Female Crook</i> (McCutcheon, 1904) - frame enlargement  <i>The Suburbanite</i> (McCutcheon, 1904)  <i>Dream of a Rarebit Fiend</i> (Porter, 1906)  <i>The Policeman's Little Run</i> (Zecca, 1907)  <i>The Country Doctor</i> (1909)</p>	<p><i>The Girl and Her Trust</i> (Griffith, 1912)  <i>Kri-Kri and the Tango</i> (1912)  <i>Musketeers of Pig Alley</i> (Griffith, 1912)  <i>Det hemmelighedsfulde X</i> (Christensen, 1913)  <i>Twilight of a Woman's Soul</i> (Bauer, 1913)  <i>Cabiria</i> (Pastrone, 1914)  <i>Child of the Big City</i> (Bauer, 1914)  <i>After Death</i> (Bauer, 1915)  <i>Birth of a Nation</i> (Griffith, 1915)  <i>The Cheat</i> (DeMille, 1915)  <i>Daydreams</i> (Bauer, 1915)  <i>Evangeliiemandens liv</i> (Madsen, 1915)  <i>Regeneration</i> (Walsh, 1915)  <i>Hævnnens nat</i> (Christensen, 1916)  <i>Intolerance</i> (Griffith, 1916)  <i>The Queen of Spades</i> (Protazanov, 1916)  <i>The Vagabond</i> (Chaplin, 1916)  <i>Revolutionist</i> (Bauer, 1917)  <i>Wild and Woolly</i> (Emerson, 1917) - excerpt  <i>Blind Husbands</i> (Stroheim, 1919)</p>

1920s	1930s:	1940s
<p> <i>Erotikon</i> (Stiller, 1920)  <i>L'Homme du Large</i> (l'Herbier, 1920)  <i>The Mask of Zorro</i> (Niblo, 1920)  <i>La Terre</i> (1921, Antoine)  <i>Scherben</i> (Pick, 1921)  <i>Robin Hood</i> (Dwan, 1922)  <i>La Roue</i> (Gance, 1922)  <i>Crainquebille</i> (Feyder, 1922)  <i>Sylvester</i> (Pick, 1923)  <i>Aelita</i> (Protazanov, 1924)  <i>Au secours!</i> (Gance, 1924)  <i>Der letzte Mann</i> (Murnau, 1924)  <i>Miracle of the Wolves</i> (Bernard, 1924) - excerpt  <i>Waxworks</i> (Birinsky, 1924)  <i>The Big Parade</i> (Vidor, 1925)  <i>The Eagle</i> (Brown, 1925)  <i>The Freshman</i> (Taylor, 1925)  <i>Rebus Film no. 1</i> (Leni, 1925)  <i>Tartuffe</i> (Murnau, 1925)  <i>Variété</i> (Dupont, 1925)  <i>Faust</i> (Murnau, 1926)  <i>The Scarlet Letter</i> (Sjöström, 1926)  <i>The General</i> (Keaton, 1927)  <i>The Jazz Singer</i> (Crosland, 1927)  <i>Die Liebe der Jeanne Ney</i> (Pabst, 1927)  <i>Napoleon</i> (Gance, 1927)  <i>It</i> (Badger, 1927)  <i>Seventh Heaven</i> (Borzage, 1927)  <i>Sunrise</i> (Murnau, 1927)  <i>Abwege</i> (Pabst, 1928)  <i>L'Argent</i> (l'Herbier, 1928)  <i>The Crowd</i> (Vidor, 1928)  <i>Docks of New York</i> (Sternberg, 1928)  <i>The Last Command</i> (Sternberg, 1928)  <i>Spione</i> (Lang, 1928)  <i>Storm over Asia</i> (Pudovkin, 1928)    <i>Applause</i> (Mamoulian, 1929)  <i>Asphalt</i> (May, 1929)  <i>Broadway</i> (Fejos, 1929)  <i>The Cocoanuts</i> (Santley, 1929)  <i>Dans le nuit</i> (Vanel, 1929)  <i>Hallelujah</i> (Vidor, 1929)  <i>Jeanne D'Arc</i> (Dreyer, 1929)  <i>Piccadilly</i> (Dupont, 1929) </p>	<p> <i>L'Âge d'or</i> (Buñuel, 1930)  <i>All Quiet on the Western Front</i> (Milestone, 1930)  <i>Au bonheur des dames</i> (Duviver, 1930)  <i>The Bat Whispers</i> (West, 1930)  <i>Die Drei von der Tankstelle</i> (Thiele, 1930)  <i>Her Man</i> (Garnett, 1930) -excerpt  <i>Sous les Toits de Paris</i> (Clair, 1930)  <i>Westfront 1918</i> (Pabst, 1930)  <i>Zwei Herzen im Dreiviertel-Takt</i> (Forst, 1930)  <i>A nous la liberté</i> (Clair, 1931)  <i>Bomben auf Monte Carlo</i> (Schwartz, 1931)  <i>La Chienne</i> (Renoir, 1931)  <i>The Front Page</i> (Milestone, 1931)  <i>Ihre Majestät die Liebe</i> (May, 1931)  <i>Kameradschaft</i> (Pabst, 1931)  <i>Der Kongress tanzt</i> (Charell, 1931)  <i>M</i> (Lang, 1931)  <i>Le Million</i> (Clair, 1931)  <i>The Public Enemy</i> (Wellman, 1931)  <i>Svengali</i> (Mayo, 1931)  <i>Street Scene</i> (Vidor, 1931)  <i>A Farewell to Arms</i> (Borzage, 1932)  <i>Back Street</i> (Dahl, 1932)  <i>I am a Fugitive From a Chain Gang</i> (LeRoy, 1932)  <i>The Unrelated</i> (Naruse, 1932)  <i>Ich bei Tag und du bei Nacht</i> (Berger, 1932)  <i>I Was Born, But...</i> (Ozu, 1932)  <i>Die Dreigroschenoper</i> (Pabst, 1932)  <i>Love Me Tonight</i> (Mamoulian, 1932)  <i>Prestige</i> (Garnett, 1932)  <i>Rain</i> (Milestone, 1932)  <i>Shanghai Express</i> (von Sternberg, 1932)  <i>Taxi!</i> (del Ruth, 1932)  <i>Trouble in Paradise</i> (Lubitsch, 1932)  <i>Nightly Dreams</i> (Naruse, 1933)  <i>42<sup>nd</sup> Street</i> (Bacon, 1933)  <i>Footlight Parade</i> (Bacon, 1933)  <i>Golddiggers of 1933</i> (LeRoy, 1933)  <i>Die lachende Erben</i> (Ophuls, 1933)  <i>Liebelei</i> (Ophuls, 1933)  <i>Women of Tokyo</i> (Ozu, 1933)  <i>Dames</i> (Enright, 1934)  <i>The Scarlet Empress</i> (Sternberg, 1934)  <i>La signora de tutti</i> (Ophuls, 1934)  <i>La tendre ennemie</i> (Ophuls, 1934)  <i>Golddiggers of 1935</i> (Berkeley, 1935)  <i>Street Without End</i> (Naruse, 1935)  <i>Toni</i> (Renoir, 1935)  <i>Top Hat</i> (Sandrich, 1935)  <i>Le Crimes de M. Lange</i> (Renoir, 1936)  <i>A Day in the Country</i> (Renoir, 1936)  <i>Komédie om Geld</i> (Ophuls, 1936)  <i>Seven Courageous</i> (Gerasimov, 1936)  <i>Dead End</i> (Wyler, 1937)  <i>La Habanera</i> (Sirk, 1937)  <i>Young and Innocent</i> (Hitchcock, 1937)  <i>La Marseillaise</i> (Renior, 1938)  <i>Gone With the Wind</i> (Fleming, 1939)  <i>Last Chrysanthemums</i> (Mizoguchi, 1939)  <i>The Roaring Twenties</i> (Walsh, 1939)  <i>Rules of the Game</i> (Renoir, 1939) </p>	<p> <i>Foreign Correspondent</i> (Hitchcock, 1940)  <i>The Mark of Zorro</i> (Mamoulian, 1940)  <i>Rebecca</i> (Hitchcock, 1940)  <i>Santa Fe Trail</i> (Curtiz, 1940)  <i>Citizen Kane</i> (Welles, 1941)  <i>Suspicion</i> (Hitchcock, 1941)  <i>Holiday Inn</i> (Sandrich, 1942)  <i>The Talk of the Town</i> (Stevens, 1942)  <i>Casablanca</i> (Curtiz, 1942)  <i>The Magnificent Ambersons</i> (Welles, 1942)  <i>Le Corbeau</i> (1943, Clouzot)  <i>Hangmen also Die!</i> (Lang, 1943)  <i>Shadow of a Doubt</i> (Hitchcock, 1943)  <i>It's a Wonderful Life</i> (Capra, 1944)  <i>The Miracle of Morgan's Creek</i> (Sturges, 1944)  <i>Hail the Conquering Hero</i> (Sturges, 1944)  <i>Gaslight</i> (Cukor, 1944)  <i>Laura</i> (Preminger, 1944)  <i>The Clock</i> (Minnelli, 1945)  <i>Le Dames du Bois de Boulogne</i> (Bresson, 1945)  <i>Les Enfants du paradis</i> (Carné, 1945)  <i>Fallen Angel</i> (Preminger, 1945)  <i>Mildred Pierce</i> (Curtiz, 1945)  <i>The Best Years of Our Lives</i> (Wyler, 1946)  <i>Notorious</i> (Hitchcock, 1946)  <i>Shoeshine</i> (De Sica, 1946)  <i>Brute Force</i> (Dassin, 1947)  <i>The Exile</i> (Ophuls, 1947)  <i>Body and Soul</i> (Rossen, 1947)  <i>Nightmare Alley</i> (Goulding, 1947)  <i>The Paradine Case</i> (Hitchcock, 1947)  <i>Quai des Orfèvres</i> (Clouzot, 1947)  <i>Germany Year Zero</i> (Rossellini, 1948)  <i>Letter From an Unknown Woman</i> (Ophuls, 1948)  <i>The Naked City</i> (Dassin, 1948)  <i>Rope</i> (Hitchcock, 1948)  <i>Caught</i> (Ophuls, 1949)  <i>The Reckless Moment</i> (Ophuls, 1949)  <i>Whirlpool</i> (Preminger, 1949) </p>

<p><u>1950s</u></p> <p><i>La Ronde</i> (Ophuls, 1950)  <i>Where the Sidewalk Ends</i> (Preminger, 1950)  <i>Mosekongen</i> (1950)  <i>Le Plaisir</i> (Ophuls, 1951)  <i>Singin' in the Rain</i> (Donen, 1952)  <i>Umberto D.</i> (De Sica, 1952)  <i>Angel Face</i> (Preminger, 1953)  <i>Beat the Devil</i> (Huston, 1953)  <i>I Vitelloni</i> (Fellini, 1953)  <i>Madame de...</i> (Ophuls, 1953)  <i>Beneath the 12-Mile Reef</i> (Webb, 1953)  <i>Wages of Fear</i> (Clouzot, 1953)  <i>Carmen Jones</i> (Preminger, 1954)  <i>River of no Return</i> (Preminger, 1954)  <i>Les Diaboliques</i> (Clouzot, 1955)  <i>Lola Montès</i> (Ophuls, 1955)  <i>Picnic</i> (Logan, 1955)  <i>Street of Shame</i> (Mizoguchi, 1956)  <i>Forty Guns</i> (Fuller, 1957)  <i>The Cranes are Flying</i> (Kalatozov, 1957)  <i>Big Deal on Madonna Street</i> (Monnicelli, 1958)  <i>Tarnished Angels</i> (Sirk, 1958)  <i>Vertigo</i> (Hitchcock, 1958)  <i>Anatomy of a Murder</i> (Preminger, 1959)  <i>Bonjour Tristesse</i> (Preminger, 1959)  <i>Imitation of Life</i> (Sirk, 1959)  <i>Pickpocket</i> (Bresson, 1959)  <i>Shadows</i> (Cassavetes, 1959)</p>	<p><u>1960s</u></p> <p><i>L'Avventura</i> (Antonioni, 1960)  <i>Little Shop of Horrors</i> (Corman, 1960)  <i>The Testament of Orpheus</i> (Cocteau, 1960)  <i>Judgment at Nuremberg</i> (Kramer, 1961)  <i>King of Kings</i> (Ray, 1961)  <i>Lola</i> (Demy, 1961)  <i>The Young Savages</i> (Frankenheimer, 1961)  <i>Advise and Consent</i> (Preminger, 1962)  <i>L'Eclisse</i> (Antonioni, 1962)  <i>The Cardinal</i> (Preminger, 1963)  <i>A Hard Day's Night</i> (Lester, 1964)  <i>The Americanization of Emily</i> (Hiller, 1964)  <i>Band of Outsiders</i> (Godard, 1964)  <i>Gertrud</i> (Dreyer, 1964)  <i>I am Cuba</i> (Kalatozov, 1964)  <i>Red Desert</i> (Antonioni, 1964)  <i>The Umbrellas of Cherbourg</i> (Demy, 1964)  <i>The Train</i> (Frankenheimer, 1964)  <i>Help!</i> (Lester, 1965)  <i>Major Dundee</i> (Peckinpah, 1965)  <i>Simon of the Desert</i> (Buñuel, 1965)  <i>Seconds</i> (Frankenheimer, 1966)  <i>Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf</i> (Nichols, 1966)  <i>The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly</i> (Leone, 1966)  <i>Belle de jour</i> (Buñuel, 1967)  <i>The Red and the White</i> (Jancsó, 1967)  <i>Week End</i> (Godard, 1967)  <i>Faces</i> (Cassavettes, 1968)  <i>The Graduate</i> (Nichols, 1968)  <i>The Swimmer</i> (Perry, 1968)  <i>Que la bête meure</i> (Chabrol, 1969)</p>	<p><u>1970s</u></p> <p><i>Catch-22</i> (Nichols, 1970)  <i>MASH</i> (Altman, 1970)  <i>Zigzag</i> (Colla, 1970)  <i>Bananas</i> (Allen, 1971)  <i>The French Connection</i> (Friedkin, 1971)  <i>Day for Night</i> (Truffaut, 1973)  <i>The Long Goodbye</i> (Altman, 1973)  <i>Westworld</i> (Crichton, 1973)  <i>The Last Betrothal</i> (Lefebvre, 1973)  <i>The Conversation</i> (Coppola, 1974)  <i>Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia</i> (Peckinpah, 1974)  <i>The Godfather Part II</i> (de Palma, 1974)  <i>The Parallax View</i> (Pakula, 1974)  <i>French Connection II</i> (Frankenheimer, 1975)  <i>The Passenger</i> (Antonioni, 1975)  <i>Rollerball</i> (Jewison, 1975)  <i>The Travelling Players</i> (Angelopoulos, 1975)  <i>Bound for Glory</i> (Ashby, 1976)  <i>Coup de torchon</i> (Tavernier, 1976)  <i>Cria Cuervos</i> (Saura, 1976)  <i>Marathon Man</i> (Schlesinger, 1976)  <i>The Pink Panther Strikes Again</i> (Edwards, 1976)  <i>Rocky</i> (Avildsen, 1976)  <i>Taxi Driver</i> (Scorsese, 1976)  <i>All that Jazz</i> (Fosse, 1979)  <i>Hair</i> (Forman, 1979)</p>
<p><u>1980s</u></p> <p><i>Airplane!</i> (Abrahams, 1980)  <i>Dressed to Kill</i> (de Palma, 1980)  <i>The Shining</i> (Kubrick, 1980)  <i>Diva</i> (Beineix, 1981)  <i>E.T.</i> (Spielberg, 1982)  <i>One from the Heart</i> (Coppola, 1982)  <i>Koyaanisqatsi</i> (Reggio, 1982)  <i>Star 80</i> (Fosse, 1983)  <i>Birdy</i> (Parker, 1984)  <i>Blood Simple</i> (Coen, 1984)  <i>This is Spinal Tap</i> (Reiner, 1984)  <i>The Untouchables</i> (de Palma, 1984)  <i>Sans toit ni lois</i> (Varda, 1985)  <i>Absolute Beginners</i> (Temple, 1986)  <i>Der Himmel Über Berlin</i> (Wenders, 1986)  <i>Little Shop of Horrors</i> (Oz, 1986)  <i>Epidemic</i> (Trier, 1987)  <i>Raising Arizona</i> (Coen, 1987)  <i>Always</i> (Spielberg, 1989)  <i>When Harry Met Sally</i> (Reiner, 1989)</p>	<p><u>1990s</u></p> <p><i>Arachnophobia</i> (Marshall, 1990)  <i>Far and Away</i> (Howard, 1992)  <i>Reservoir Dogs</i> (1992, Tarantino)  <i>Husbands and Wives</i> (Allen, 1992)  <i>Manhattan Murder Mystery</i> (Allen, 1993)  <i>The Puppetmaster</i> (Hsiao-Hsien Hou, 1993)  <i>The Shawshank Redemption</i> (Darabont, 1994)  <i>The Blade</i> (Tsui Hark, 1995)  <i>Strange Days</i> (Bigelow, 1995)  <i>The Usual Suspects</i> (Fincher, 1995)  <i>Lone Star</i> (Sayles, 1996)  <i>Boogie Nights</i> (Anderson, 1997)  <i>Contact</i> (Zemeckis, 1997)  <i>Jackie Brown</i> (Tarantino, 1997)  <i>Lost Highway</i> (Lynch, 1997)  <i>Too Many Ways to Be No. 1</i> (Ka-Fai Wai, 1997)  <i>Festen/The Celebration</i> (Vinterberg, 1998)  <i>Flowers of Shanghai</i> (Hsiao-Hsien Hou, 1998)</p>	<p><u>2000s</u></p> <p><i>Code Unknown</i> (Haneke, 2000)  <i>Dykkerne</i> (Sandgren, 2000)  <i>Der Krieger und die Kaiserin</i> (Tykwer, 2000)  <i>Anja &amp; Viktor</i> (Bostrup, 2001)  <i>Black Hawk Down</i> (Scott, 2001)  <i>Lord of the Rings Trilogy</i> (Jackson, 2001, 2002, 2003)  <i>At kende sandheden</i> (Malmros, 2002)  <i>Le Fils</i> (Dardenne Bros., 2002)  <i>Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets</i> (Nolan, 2002)  <i>Mothman Prophecies</i> (Pellington, 2002)  <i>Okay</i> (Nielsen, 2002)  <i>Punch Drunk Love</i> (Anderson, 2002)  <i>The Royal Tenenbaums</i> (Anderson, 2001)  <i>Secrets</i> (Columbus, 2002)  <i>Signs</i> (Shyamalan, 2002)  <i>Dogville</i> (Trier, 2003)  <i>Matrix Revolutions</i> (Wachowski Bros., 2003)  <i>Memories of Murder</i> (Bong, 2003)  <i>Mystic River</i> (Clint Eastwood, 2003)</p>

	<i>Idioterne/The Idiots</i> (Trier, 1998) <i>American Beauty</i> (Mendes, 1999) <i>Den eneste ene</i> (Bier, 1999) <i>Fight Club</i> (Fincher, 1999) <i>Magnolia</i> (1999) <i>Rosetta</i> (Dardenne Bros., 1999) <i>The Straight Story</i> (Lynch, 1999) <i>Sydney/Hard Eight</i> (Anderson, 1999) <i>The Thomas Crown Affair</i> (McTiernan, 1999) <i>The Mission</i> (To, 1999)	<i>Elephant</i> () <i>War of the Worlds</i> (Spielberg, ) <i>Caché</i> (Haneke, 2005) <i>A History of Violence</i> (Cronenberg, 2005) <i>Poseidon</i> (Petersen, 2006)
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## Camera Movement in Narrative Cinema - Towards a Taxonomy of Functions

PhD dissertation submitted by Jakob Isak Nielsen, March 2007

Department of Information and Media Studies, Faculty of Arts, Aarhus University.

### Resumé - US

This dissertation is a work of film research but it recalls an academic tradition that originated in art history and musicology. Just like art historians have focused on composition or lighting, this dissertation takes a single stylistic parameter as its object of study. Within film studies this localized avenue of middle-level research has become increasingly viable under the aegis of a perspective known as ‘the poetics of cinema.’ Two branches of research within this perspective are *stylistics* and *historical poetics* (stylistic history). Rather than discussing the relationship of cinema to theories of culture, language and psychology, stylistics and historical poetics engage with localized problems of film form. This dissertation takes as its object of study a single stylistic device: camera movement.

The term itself is slightly misleading for what spectators see is not camera movement itself but the on-screen effects of camera movement. Briefly stated, the on-screen effect of camera movement is that the frame appears to move in relation to the motive. This can actually be produced by other means than physically moving a camera during production. Animators have long known how to animate camera movement-effects and in contemporary cinema they may be wholly or partially produced by means of CGI (Computer Generated Images).

Camera movement is an elusive device, often overlooked by spectators as well as by researchers. This is as it should be from the point of view of filmmakers. Wanting to 'put the story across' one would not want spectators to ponder how and why the frame of the image appears to move closer to or away from the represented characters. Nevertheless, this type of 'perverse' viewing is imperative if one wants to gain an understanding of cinematic expressivity for despite its elusive nature camera movement is simultaneously fundamental in shaping our experience of film, even in shaping it as a *film* experience. When the camera moves the entire visual field is manipulated and through the movement of the camera we gain access to privileged viewing points that are uniquely accessible through cinema. Clearly, camera movement had precursors amongst other visual media (e.g., the zoopraxiscope) and camera movements have of course migrated to TV and computer games but the tradition of camera movement is inextricably enmeshed in the history of cinema.

The thesis takes on three questions in relation to camera movement and is accordingly divided into three major sections. The first section unearths what characterizes the literature on camera movement. How have filmmakers, critics, historians and theorists explained, analyzed, interpreted or otherwise accounted for camera movement? The different perspectives are rewarding in manifold ways but the chapter concludes that merging cinematic poetics with another perspective, stylistically sensitive interpretive criticism, particularly the tradition of British *mise-en-scene* criticism, offers the most propitious avenue of research on camera movement.

The second section of the dissertation delineates the history of camera movement itself within narrative cinema. The section provides a general overview of structural changes, i.e. what types of movement one is likely to find at particular points in time, but the main contribution of the chapter in relation to the existing literature is to describe both salient trends and durable norms in relation to aesthetic and narrative functions. The section covers a wide historical span from 1896 to the present day.

Several organizational principles subtending the on-screen effect of camera movement are revealed in section two but they are not organized into a coherent framework. This is the task that section three meets in proposing a functional taxonomy for camera movement in narrative cinema. Two presumptions subtend the taxonomy, that camera movement *actively*

*contributes* to the way in which we understand the sound and images on the screen, and that a given camera movement may activate one or more of the proposed functions at any given moment. Six main functions are proposed and defined:

- 1) Orientation: orienting the viewer spatially.
- 2) Pacing: contributing to the cinematic rhythm of the film.
- 3) Inflection: inflecting shots in a suggestive, commentative or valiative manner.
- 4) Focalization: associating the movement of the camera with the viewpoints of characters or entities in the story world.
- 5) Reflexive: inviting spectators to engage with the artifice of camera movement.
- 6) Abstract: visualizing abstract ideas and concepts.

Major parameters of declension are described, as are sub-functions. All functions are exemplified and organized schematically. The empirical base upon which the functions were located is diverse in terms of genre, geography, time of production and popularity: from pre-Eisensteinian silent cinema to German musicals of the thirties, to Quebecois art films, to contemporary Hong Kong action movies. Nevertheless, the taxonomy does not claim to be *representative* of all films of all time. It is only meant to capture the most significant ways in which camera movement can contribute to cinematic enunciation.

In order to illustrate how the functions may mesh in individual camera movements six concrete examples are analyzed. The analyses illustrate how the taxonomy presented informs analysis and interpretation. More generally, the dissertation - and particularly these in-depth analyses - illustrates how cinematic poetics and interpretive criticism sensitive to style may gain from each other. There is no reason why stylistically informed interpretive criticism cannot be considered within a functional framework and there is no reason why one should not use a functional taxonomy as a basis on which to launch interpretations of film style. There is a limit to how much one can say about camera movement without a full understanding of the range of functions that they operate within but there is also a limit to how far functional analysis can



take us towards establishing the contribution of a particular camera movement. Hence it is important to stress that the functional taxonomy does not exhaust what one can say about camera movement but to ask about the functions of camera movement is the first basic step towards asking about how they can articulate meaning.

### **Kamerabevægelse i den fortællende film – i retning af en funktionstaksonomi**

Ph.D.-afhandling af Jakob Isak Nielsen, marts 2007

Institut for Informations- og Medievidenskab, Det Humanistiske Fakultet,  
Aarhus Universitet

#### **Resumé - DK**

Denne afhandling er entydigt et bidrag til filmforskningen, men lægger sig samtidig tæt op ad en akademisk tradition, der har rødder inden for kunsthistorie og musikvidenskab. Ligesom kunsthistorikere har koncentreret sig om for eksempel komposition eller lys, har afhandlingen ét enkelt stilistisk virkemiddel som omdrejningspunkt. Inden for filmforskning har denne gren i stigende grad vundet frem inden for det perspektiv, der kaldes 'the poetics of cinema' – 'filmens poetik.' To grene af denne 'middle-level' forskningsretning er *stilistik* og *historisk poetik* (stilhistorie). I stedet for at indramme forskningsspørgsmål i overordnede kulturelle, sproglige og psykologiske teorier, drejer *stilistik* og *historisk poetik* sig om filmens form. Denne afhandling indskrives sig i den tradition ved at tage udgangspunkt i et enkelt stilistisk virkemiddel: kamerabevægelse.

Begrebet 'kamerabevægelse' er misvisende i sig selv, for det, publikum ser på lærredet, er ikke selve kamerabevægelsen, men derimod resultatet af kamerabevægelsen. Kort fortalt består kamerabevægelse på et lærred i, at billedrammen lader til at bevæge sig i forhold til motivet. Den samme effekt kan opnås på andre måder end ved at flytte et kamera fysisk under optagelserne.

Folk, der beskæftiger sig med animation, har længe været i stand til at imitere kamerabevægelseseffekten, og inden for moderne filmproduktion er kamerabevægelse ofte skabt helt eller delvis via CGI (Computer Generated Images).

Kamerabevægelse er et flygtigt virkemiddel, der ofte bliver overset af både publikum og forskere. Fra filmskabernes synspunkt er dette helt, som det skal være. Når man skal fortælle en historie, vil man nødtigt have publikum til at sidde og fundere over, hvorfor eller hvordan billedrammen tilsyneladende bevæger sig fx tættere på eller længere fra figurerne på lærredet. Alligevel er et sådant vedholdent blik nødvendigt, hvis man vil forstå filmens udtryk. Sin flygtighed til trods er kamerabevægelse nemlig også ét af de virkemidler, der udoøver størst indflydelse på vores filmoplevelse, måske endda på vores opfattelse af denne som værende en *filmoplevelse*. Når kameraet bevæges, så manipuleres hele billedfeltet for øjnene af os, og gennem kameraets bevægelse får vi adgang til en række udvalgte synsvinkler, der udelukkende er tilgængelige gennem film. Kamerabevægelse har selvfølgelig sine forgængere (for eksempel *zoopraxiscope*), og kamerabevægelser har naturligvis migreret til andre platforme såsom TV og computerspil, men som (stilistisk) virkemiddel har det en lang og indviklet udvikling inden for filmhistorien.

Denne afhandling beskæftiger sig med tre hovedområder i forhold til kamerabevægelse og er derfor delt op i tre overordnede sektioner. Den første sektion afdækker litteraturen om kamerabevægelse. Hvordan har filmskabere, anmeldere, historikere og forskere forklaret, analyseret, fortolket eller på anden måde redegjort for kamerabevægelse? De forskellige synsvinkler er interessante i sig selv, men kapitlet konkluderer, at kombinationen af filmens poetik og den britiske tradition for stilistisk indholdsanalyse (britisk *mise-en-scene* kritik) er den mest udbytterige for vidensproduktionen om kamerabevægelse.

Afhandlingens anden sektion beskriver kamerabevægelsens historie i den fortællende film. I sektionen gives et generelt overblik over de strukturelle forandringer, dvs. de typer af bevægelse, som man sandsynligvis vil kunne opleve på forskellige tidspunkter i filmhistorien, men størstedelen af kapitlet bruges til at beskrive både fremtrædende tendenser og varige normer i forhold til æstetiske og fortællemæssige funktioner. Sektionen dækker en omfattende historisk periode fra 1896 til nutiden.

Afhandlingens tredje sektion præsenterer en funktionstaksonomi for kamerabevægelse i fortællende film. Denne kan siges at destillere og arrangere mange af de organisationsprincipper, som blev lanceret i sektion to. To forforståelser ligger til grund for taksonomien: nemlig at kamerabevægelse *bidrager aktivt* til den måde, hvorpå vi opfatter lydene og billederne på lærredet, og at en bestemt kamerabevægelse er i stand til at aktivere en eller flere af de forelagte funktioner på et givent tidspunkt. Sektion tre foreslår og definerer seks hovedfunktioner inden for kamerabevægelse:

1. Orientering: orienterer tilskueren i rumlig forstand.
2. Tidslig artikulation: bidrager til filmens tidslige rytme.
3. Infleksion: tilskriver eller forstærker beskrivende, følelsesfulde og kommenterende udsagn.
4. Fokalisering: associeres med eller medierer karakterernes synspunkter.
5. Refleksiv: inviterer tilskueren til at engagere sig i filmens kunstfærdighed og konstruktion.
6. Abstrakt: visualiserer abstrakte idéer og begreber.

Funktionerne beskrives både ud fra hovedparametrene og underfunktionerne. Alle funktioner eksemplificeres og organiseres skematisk. Funktionstaksonomiens empiriske grundlag er vidtrækkende, hvad angår genre, geografisk spredning, premieretidspunkt og publikumspopularitet: lige fra russiske stumfilm fra 1910'erne til tyske musicals fra 1930'erne, fra kanadiske kunsthøjtid til nutidige actionfilm fra Hong Kong. Taksonomien gør imidlertid ikke krav på at være *repræsentativ* for alle filmhistoriens mange titler. Den er udelukkende ment som et forsøg på at redegøre for de vigtigste måder, hvorpå kamerabevægelse bidrager til den filmiske udsigelse.

For at illustrere hvordan funktionerne overlapper og flyder ind i hinanden, bliver der givet seks konkrete eksempler på analyser af kamerabevægelse. Analyserne viser også, hvordan den fremlagte taksonomi forholder sig til funktionsanalyse og stilfortolkning. Fra en mere generel synsvinkel illustrerer afhandlingen – og især de dybdegående analyser – hvordan filmens poetik og britisk mise-en-scene kritik kan nyde godt af hinanden. Der er ingen grund til, at stilistisk sensibel, fortolkende kritik ikke kan positionere og forankre sine detaljerige betragtninger i forhold til en bredere funktionsramme og dermed i sidste ende i forhold til filmstilistiske

*traditioner*. Ligeledes er der ingen årsag til, at man ikke anvender en funktionel taksonomi som basis for at kaste sig ud i fortolkninger af filmstil. Der er en grænse for, hvor meget man kan sige om kamerabevægelser uden fuldt ud at forstå den række af de potentielle funktioner, de omfatter, men der er også grænser for, hvor langt en funktionel analyse kan nå i bestræbelsen på at udtømme kamerabevægelsers bidrag til det filmiske udtryk.

Det er derfor vigtigt at understrege, at en funktionel taksonomi ikke udtømmer al diskussion om kamerabevægelse, men at spørge til kamerabevægelsens funktioner er derimod første skridt i retning mod en forståelse af, hvordan de kan udtrykke mening.