

## Introduction: That Perpetually Obscure Object of Theory

(in *European Film Theory*. Ed. Temenuga Trifonova. New York and London: Routledge, 2008)

The idea for this volume originated in what appears to be a straightforward question: Is European film theory a random collection of theoretical approaches to film, or do these approaches betray a certain ‘European sensibility’, or a shared philosophical heritage? Although the notion of a ‘European sensibility’ will undoubtedly strike some as hopelessly vague, it keeps resurfacing in various discourses on European cinema. Ien Ang believes we can discern a specific ‘structure of feeling’ in European cinema, “the structure of feeling of the Old World, characterized by smug complacency on the one hand and by unrecognized nostalgia on the other.”<sup>1</sup> John Caughie singles out irony as the distinguishing characteristic of ‘European sensibility’: “In relation to . . . the liminality of identity, irony is the ability to say there is no absolute truth, there is no final vocabulary, there is no real identity, and yet . . . where the ‘and yet . . .’ forms the occulted desire concealed with the ironic distance.”<sup>2</sup> Finally, Antoine Compagnon emphasizes the fundamental ambivalence at the core of European consciousness: “More generally, each category deemed to be European contains or implies its own negation: like progress, or humanism, or universality. At the root of those negations, doubt, it seems to me, might be the essential European faculty: not only Descartes’ hyperbolic doubt, that is, the strength to make a tabula rasa of one’s own reason . . . but also the doubt which I would call, with Hegel, the moment of ‘unhappy consciousness’.”<sup>3</sup>

It is precisely these characteristics of European consciousness--hyperbolic skepticism, ironic distance, nostalgia, and self-reflexivity--that film scholars regularly ‘discover’ in European art cinema. In Wim Wenders’ *Der Stand der Dinge* (*The State of Things*, 1983) a German film director asks his writer why a Hollywood producer would be interested in hiring a European director; failing to provide a clear answer the writer invokes “Die europäische Sehweise” (‘the European way of seeing’), referring to an implicit tendency of European art films to display “varying levels of allegorical potential, but without committing [themselves] to any overall scheme of metaphorical reference--

which is in itself an *ironical position*.”<sup>4</sup> For Wendy Everett, too, European films are distinguished by their “*ironic gaze* [which] seeks to provoke, challenge and to disturb,”<sup>5</sup> by their “self-consciousness, playfulness, slow, reflective camera work, challenging editing, open-endedness,”<sup>6</sup> and by their fascination with time, the past, memory, history, and identity.<sup>7</sup> The construction of the self, the writing and rewriting of the self, is an essentially European idea, Everett argues, because it is predicated on the notion of personal or national history. In her account, which relies on the familiar juxtaposition of Europe’s ‘deep’ with America’s ‘shallow’ history, ‘history’, or the past in general, becomes nothing less than interchangeable with ‘European’. Drawing attention to the dominant position the autobiographical genre occupies in European cinema, Everett suggests that self-reflexivity or “an endless capacity for irony and reflection”<sup>8</sup> --the exploration of the *conditions of possibility* for any kind of identity--is essentially European. The prevalence of subject-positioning approaches in European film theory--which explore precisely the conditions of possibility for subjectivity--tends to corroborate Everett’s observations. However, Everett goes too far when she conflates *European identity* in cinema with the *identity of cinema* by drawing an analogy between cinema’s divided identity--“mimetic and fantastic; realist and escapist; challenging and entertaining; artistic endeavor and/or industrial product”<sup>9</sup>--and, on the other hand, cinematic representations of an internally split European identity. Implicitly equating ‘cinema’ with ‘European’--just as earlier she equated ‘history’ with ‘European’--by virtue of their *divided identity*, Everett contrasts both with what she assumes to be the defining feature of American cinema, its *homogeneity* or *self-sameness*, its supposedly *stable national identity* and its *universality* (hence the idea of *classical* Hollywood cinema, or the emphasis on *universally* shared cognitive skills in Anglo-American film theory). Hypostasizing the *geographical* definition of ‘Europe’ --its *inter-nationalism*--into an ‘essential’ difference between European and American cinema, she concludes that the defining characteristic of European film and theory is its *identity problem*: “‘America has no identity problem.’ . . . Europe does, and its films explore the endless complexities of that problem.”<sup>10</sup>

However flawed some of these attempts at describing a specifically ‘European’ sensibility might be, they should not be brushed aside too quickly as just another

anachronistic or Eurocentric project of uncovering an underlying ‘European essence’.

The characteristics of European cinema singled out by the critics cited above--nostalgia, skepticism, ironic distance, and self-reflexivity--could, perhaps, help us illuminate some of the premises and preoccupations of Continental film theory. Continental film theory was shaped by Europe’s ambivalent response to modernity, particularly by a sense of *nostalgia* provoked by the loss of immediacy, authenticity, freedom, or humanity. This sense of nostalgia is largely responsible for the theoretical ambivalence underlying Continental film theory. One way to account for this theoretical ambivalence--by which I mean an ambivalence about what constitutes ‘theory’ in the first place and what the function of theory might/should be--is precisely in terms of an *ironic distance* between a profound *skepticism* about the power of concepts (and thus the power of theory) to tell us anything about reality or cinema and, on the other hand, a secret *hope* that cinema can somehow bypass conceptual understanding and that theory need not be ‘theoretical’ in the scientific or common sense of that term. The theoretical ambivalence of ontological film theories, for instance, comes through in the incongruity between concepts such as ‘ambiguity’, ‘indeterminacy’, ‘endlessness’, ‘photogenic’, ‘aura’, or ‘the optical unconscious’--concepts marking the edge of conceptual understanding--and, on the other hand, an underlying belief that such ‘non-concepts’, whose purpose is to guard the essential unknowability of reality/cinema, can nevertheless reveal its ‘essence’ or ‘truth’.

Thus Bazin’s and Kracauer’s avowed respect for the constitutive indeterminacy of material reality remains at odds with their tendency not only to posit the ‘essential’, ideal qualities of material reality and of the film medium but even to single out particular film techniques or narrative strategies ‘best suited’ for revealing those essential qualities (for example, the long take and the episodic narrative).

Whether we are dealing with ontological, methodological or field theories, to borrow Francesco Casetti’s terms<sup>11</sup>, European film theories are distinguished by an inherent skepticism manifesting as theoretical ambivalence, a simultaneous attraction and resistance to theory, which tends to turn every theoretical position into its opposite and allows several opposing positions to co-exist. We can trace this ambivalence back to early French film theory, which encompasses a range of mutually contradictory standpoints. Dulac’s and Veuillermoz’s impressionism, Canudo’s search for pure cinema,

Leger's cineplastics, and Epstein's fascination with the non-linguistic, non-rational logic of the unconscious--all of which betray a common preoccupation with cinema as a *high art* capable of resisting the mechanization of life in an industrialized society by restoring personal vision and lyrical expression—developed side by side with Delluc's and Moussinac's commitment to overcoming the separation of culture from material reality, a commitment reflected in their pronounced preference for realist or naturalist narratives, natural landscapes, urban milieus, simple stories from everyday provincial life, all of which emphasized cinema's inherently *democratic potential*. A similar ambivalence lies behind the unresolved tension in Continental theory between *intuitionism* and *constructivism*<sup>12</sup>: for instance, Panofsky's *dual* emphasis on cinema's photographic/realist nature *and* on its potential to spatialize time and dynamize space, or Kracauer's notion of the *two tendencies* in cinema. We could, perhaps, attribute this theoretical ambivalence to a European sense of *contrariness*--inasmuch as European cinema has always defined itself 'face to face with Hollywood'--which finds its most obvious expression in, among other instances, French impressionism and surrealism (the idea of cinema as a double-voiced discourse of the manifest and the repressed capable of overturning the laws of logic and social conventions, a substitute for dreams and drugs, rather than a storytelling medium), Godard's 'counter-cinema', or Deleuze's theory of the 'time-image'.

While there is a strong tendency in contemporary scholarship to analyze European cinema spatially or synchronically--for instance, challenging cultural theory's fetishization of 'difference' Marxist-oriented critics have argued that "what European cinemas share is a set of common problems and needs rather than a common culture"<sup>13</sup> and, more specifically, that the experience all Europeans share is the experience of borders<sup>14</sup>--I would like to consider briefly European film theory in terms of its shared philosophical heritage, Continental philosophy. The general, geographically determined sense of the term 'Continental philosophy' is not particularly helpful here: not only does it refer indiscriminately and very broadly to all types of philosophy in Europe--including the empiricists (Locke, Berkeley, Hume), the rationalists (Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz), the German idealists, the neo-Kantians, and various other philosophers who do not fall under any of these categories (Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Marx, Bergson, and others)--but it also fails to acknowledge the fact that many European philosophers are not even

considered part of the Continental philosophical tradition (an obvious example here would be Wittgenstein). As it is used in the United States, the term ‘Continental philosophy’ refers to Husserl’s phenomenology and the post-Husserlian and Heideggerian phenomenological tradition, including hermeneutics, structuralism, and poststructuralism. This narrower definition is not entirely accurate either: first, the majority of Continental philosophers after Husserl eventually abandoned and/or substantially revised his phenomenological method and, second, many of the philosophers working in Europe since the beginning of the twentieth century were arguably never part of the Husserlian phenomenological movement (Bergson, Cassirer and others). When phenomenology first appeared on the scene at the turn of the twentieth century, its goal was to challenge the relativism of hermeneutics and historicism by demonstrating the existence of essential, universal structures of consciousness that are not produced by the socio-historical context and remain invariant with it. However, Husserl’s successors gradually moved away from his transcendentalism and cognitivism. The concept of ‘intentionality’ central to Husserl’s eidetic phenomenology came to suggest-- in the existential phenomenology of Heidegger, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty--a greater recognition of the situatedness of consciousness within the world. The goal of phenomenology gradually shifted from revealing the universal structures of consciousness to illuminating the pre-reflective relationship between the perceived world and the embodied subject. European film theories, especially those that rely on some form of subject-positioning, draw on existential phenomenology, which posits everyday experience as essentially inauthentic or mystified, insisting that one must ‘work’ to restore the authenticity of pre-reflective experience. Subject-positioning approaches also presuppose the existentialist [Heideggerian] notion of ‘thrownness’ or ‘facticity’, the idea that we find ourselves existing in a world not of our own making and indifferent to our concerns: we are not the source of our existence but find ourselves ‘thrown’, or ‘positioned’, into a world we don’t control and didn’t choose.<sup>15</sup>

The advantage of adopting the second, rather than the first, definition of ‘Continental philosophy’ is that it allows us not only to underscore the differences between two competing film theoretical paradigms--‘Continental film theory’, ‘SLAB theory’ (Saussure-Lacan-Althusser-Barthes) or simply ‘Theory’ and, on the other hand,

‘formalism’, ‘cognitivism’, or ‘Anglo-American analytic film theory’--but also to draw attention to the continuities between Continental film theory and Continental philosophy, and between analytic film theory and analytic philosophy, respectively. Putting aside the difficulty of identifying specific themes or premises common to all movements within Continental philosophy and film theory, generally speaking they are distinguished by their 1) self-reflexivity, or a preoccupation with the very idea of ‘theory’ and ‘philosophy’; 2) skepticism regarding the potential of science to reveal the pre-theoretical basis of experience, its conditions of intelligibility (this skepticism betrays the Kantian roots of Continental film theory and philosophy inasmuch as Kant argued that experience and knowledge are limited by conditions unavailable to empirical enquiry); 3) historicism, or the assumption that conditions of intelligibility are shaped by language, culture, and history; and 4) political commitment, reflected in an emphasis on the interdependence of theory and practice, which follows directly from the assumption of the contingency and thus changeability of conditions of intelligibility (in other words, the goal of theory is not merely to describe or interpret but to transform reality). Unlike the Anglo-American analytic tradition, which considers philosophy and film theory as autonomous disciplines engaged primarily in conceptual analysis, Continental philosophy and film theory are fundamentally holistic or systemic: they examine human experience as a network of interdependent issues shaped by changing social, cultural and historical contexts. Since Continental film theory assumes that extra-cinematic and/or unconscious discourses--culture, ideology, society, subconscious drives, history, and technology--play a decisive part in the way films signify, it emphasizes practice over the concern with theoretical purity or analytical rigor.

Analytic philosophy denies the existence of *specifically philosophical* truths; similarly, analytic film theory, which construes film comprehension as an instance of general cognition, tends to dismiss the question of *medium specificity* as irrelevant. Although analytic philosophers agree that the purpose of philosophy is the logical clarification of thought, they disagree whether this should involve the examination of the logical form of philosophical propositions, which remains invariant with respect to social, cultural and historical contexts (logical atomism), or it should involve a sociologically grounded study of the uses of language in particular contexts (ordinary language

philosophy). Analogously, although analytic film theorists start from the same premise--the rejection of 'Theory'--they often disagree on whether they ought to renounce constructivism altogether or supplement cognitive approaches with constructivist ones.<sup>16</sup> The cognitive challenge to Continental theory has never had a unified methodology: some cognitivists take an empirical psychological approach (Joseph Anderson's *The Reality of Illusion: An Ecological Approach to Cognitive Film Theory*, Greg M. Smith's *Film Structure and the Emotion System*) while others favor a philosophical approach (Noël Carroll's *The Philosophy of Horror*).<sup>17</sup>

The break between the analytic and the Continental philosophical traditions is usually dated back to the late nineteenth century, which saw the simultaneous emergence of Husserl's phenomenology and, at the same time, analytic philosophy, mainly in the work of Russell and Moore, who shared a concern with theories of reference and the analysis of language, a predilection for British empiricism, and an intolerance for any form of idealism. However, we can trace the distinction between Continental and analytic film theory even further back, to the beginning of the nineteenth century, specifically to the divided legacy of Kant's Critical Philosophy which synthesized the two dominant philosophies of his time, rationalism and empiricism, into a 'transcendental psychology'.<sup>18</sup> Kant rejected the Cartesian notion of representations in the mind (innate ideas), placing them instead in the external world, in time and space, which, however, he posited as forms of intuition (affiliated with the sensible, the psychological realm, as opposed to concepts of the understanding affiliated with the logical, the intelligible realm).<sup>19</sup> Thus he proposed to solve the problem of knowledge—how knowledge is possible *a priori*, independently of experience--by combining *representationalism*, which emphasized the relation of ideas to what they represent, with *constructivism*, which emphasized the subject's construction of reality at the price of splitting reality into two realms: noumenal reality, unknowable because not given in experience, and phenomenal reality, constructed by categories of the understanding as well as by sensory data. Kant's 'Copernican revolution' consisted in the distinction--which he extrapolated from mathematics and science to knowledge in general--between analytic and synthetic judgments: the former are merely tautological (merely "making explicit what is already contained in the subject") while the latter are ampliative ("the concept in the predicate

adds something to the concept in the subject”).<sup>20</sup> Analytic philosophers and film theorists have remained generally skeptical of Kant’s privileging of synthetic over analytic propositions, arguing, against Kant, that empirically unverifiable statements are absolutely meaningless.

One of the major implications of Kant’s philosophy is that since we can only know what we make, the only kind of knowledge available to us is knowledge of the categories through which we grasp the phenomenal world. In the second part of the twentieth century a veritable epidemic of constructivist philosophies and film theories ‘broke out’, taking Kant’s constructivism one step further and proclaiming that even that which we make we don’t know, because we are ‘positioned’ to make it. However, although post-Kantian Continental philosophy and film theory inherited Kant’s constructivism, they revised it from an *a priori* to an *a posteriori* construction by historically constituted subjects. Kant had claimed that the categories of the understanding, along with the forms of intuition, constitute history, culture, language and experience, failing to consider the potential of historical or social forces to transform these categories. The most important contribution of post-Kantian Continental philosophy and film theory consisted in *historicizing* Kant, expanding his constructivism beyond the disembodied, minimalist notion of the subject reduced to its pure epistemological capacity.

Kant claimed that reason constitutes the world of experience instead of merely inhabiting a pre-existing world: reason can justify its own claim to knowledge (but only a phenomenal knowledge, and only within the bounds of experience) rather than relying on tradition, dogma or habit. From a Kantian perspective, then, analytic film theory, with its appeal to common sense and its epistemological assertions that do not need to be justified simply because ‘a lot of people share them’, can sometimes appear uncritical and dogmatic, offering us only a set of *regulative ideas* and *universal rules* of film comprehension rather than explanations of their specific origin, purpose, or use. On the other hand, the ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’ underlying the philosophical heritage of Continental film theory--from Marx and Western Marxism, through philosophies of life, to hermeneutics, structuralism and poststructuralism--underscores Continental theory’s



investment in human freedom. Thus Continental film theory's inherent skepticism can be seen as a form of humanism.<sup>21</sup>

A common criticism of Continental film theory targets its tendency to conjure up "impersonal, determinist symbolic chains and networks of irrationalism."<sup>22</sup> It would be more accurate to say, however, that Continental theory has always been *doubly irrational*: although it often describes the subject as 'positioned' by a range of intersecting unconscious discourses, its ultimate objective has always been to promote precisely non-cognitive and irrationalist forms of expression as a resistance to the rationalizing forces of modernity and postmodernity. Many of the concepts openly privileged by Continental theories can be read as *aestheticized* symptoms of a range of mental illnesses: for instance, *affective flattening* (cf. 'de-dramatization' and 'dead time' in neo-realist theory, or Deleuze's emphasis on 'any-moment-whatever' and 'any-space-whatever'), *avolition* (cf. the weakening of character and narrative motivation in realist film and theory), *dissociation* (cf. the privileging of defamiliarization as a way of reestablishing a more intimate connection to reality), *fragmentation* (cf. the privileging of 'episodic' over 'dramatic' narratives), *temporal deregulation or drift* (cf. Tarkovsky's 'sculpting in time'), *spatial dislocation* (cf. Kracauer's notion of 'the solidarity of spaces' foregrounding the interconnectedness of disconnected spaces/phenomena), *paranoid fears of one's mind or memory being invaded* (cf. Benjamin's notion of the optical unconscious as a repository of collective memory pervading individual memory), *dissociative fugues* (cf. Kracauer's notion of 'distraction') and so on. Hugo Münsterberg, author of the first work of film theory, *The Photoplay: A Psychological Study*,<sup>23</sup> considered the following several features--reminiscent of the symptomatic language of dissociative identity disorder--essential to cinema: decentralization (the ability to assume alternate points of view), mobility (the ability to invert the past and the present, the real and the virtual), and derealization and disembodiment (characteristic of film reception). Epstein's revelationist aesthetic and Balázs's anthropomorphic film theory are both informed by animistic beliefs, translating into the realm of the aesthetic the symptoms of various types of delusional and anxiety disorders characterized by the inability to distinguish the living from the non-living. Benjamin's work on photography and cinema betrays a similar dependence on the appropriation of the language of madness and mental

illness. The radical potential of photography and cinema, he argued, is exemplified by those of their aspects--involuntary memory, absent-mindedness, arbitrariness, indeterminacy, distraction, derealization, shock, and the uncanny--that resist the standardization of life in the industrialized age by encouraging non-rational responses to reality. Similarly, in Kracauer's *Theory of Film* affective states commonly perceived as symptomatic of madness or mental illness--detachment from reality, ennui, melancholy, distraction, and disinterestedness/apathy--are posited as necessary to film's 'redemption of physical reality'. Deleuze, too, calls for a complete overturning of (film) logic, insisting on the constitutive indiscernibility of reality, fantasy and dream, or of past, present and future.

Continental theory's 'irrationalism' points to its roots in the philosophies of life (Schopenhauer, Freud, Nietzsche, Bergson) that emerged in the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century in response to the increasing ascendancy of scientific thought. The concept of 'life' is essential to Continental theories of film, from Epstein's 'photogenic' (cinema's ability to capture the soul of things, to make the inanimate animate) and Eisenstein's 'montage of attractions' (predicated on a dialectical view of life), through Balázs's 'physiognomic poetics', Benjamin's 'aura' (the Romantic notion of nature awake and 'returning our gaze'), Bazin's and Kracauer's redemptive film theories (film redeems the spontaneity, indeterminacy and ambiguity of life), to Tarkovsky's 'imprinted time' (the 'living duration' of film shots) and Deleuze's cinema of the 'pure optical and sound image,' in which time itself determines events (the story emerges 'spontaneously' from life) rather than events determining time (the story is 'artificially' imposed on life). The influence of philosophies of life on Continental theory is reflected in its tendency to downplay the expectation that theory should provide reliable, scientifically tested research data.

Since the 1980s analytic or cognitive film theorists have been trying to 'let some fresh air' into the stuffy ivory tower of 'Theory', with Noël Carroll objecting to Theory's "penchant for Platonizing"<sup>24</sup> and David Bordwell criticizing the social constructivism of the two versions of 'Grand Theory'--subject-positioning theory and culturalist theory--and their overdependence on psychoanalytical and literary theory models. Taking into consideration Bordwell's list of the particular "habits of mind [and] routines of

reasoning” informing ‘Theory’--top-down inquiry, argument as bricolage, free-associational reasoning deprived of the rigor of inductive, deductive and abductive reasoning, and hermeneutic inquiry scornful of empiricism and scientific research<sup>25</sup>--one can conclude that the gist of his critique is that Continental theory cannot reveal anything about its object (film) but can only reveal its own premises or rules of operation. In other words, ‘Theory’ is ‘too Kantian’: first, it fails to explain natural processes of perception for whenever these are functioning properly they are not even registered as something to be theorized; second, it reflects a particular ‘habit of thought’--most conspicuously seen in Deleuze’s *Cinema 2*<sup>26</sup>--which takes for granted the inevitable breakdown of the cognitive-perceptual apparatus and, accordingly, privileges anti-rationalist and associative, rather than inductive, reasoning. It is not surprising, writes Edward Branigan in *Narrative Comprehension and Film*, that the essential characteristic of a psychoanalytically driven film theory is *contradiction*: “The critic must boldly read against the grain, searching for the *nonliteral*, the counterintuitive, and for what is *not* said and *not* shown (repressed, forgotten, distorted or disowned).”<sup>27</sup>

What brings together these objections to ‘Theory’ is their refusal to acknowledge hermeneutics’ claim that, given the individual’s rootedness in historical tradition, there is an irreconcilable difference between the human and the natural sciences, that--as Dilthey, for instance, maintained--a special mode of understanding, *verstehen*, which tries to grasp the world from the individual’s viewpoint, rather than from an impersonal viewpoint, is essential in the human sciences. Interestingly, hermeneutics’ notion of ‘antecedent knowledge’ has been appropriated by cognitivists, who argue that we understand films, whether or not we are familiar with film theory, simply because we have already seen many of them. Of course, both Continental and analytic film theory can lay claim to the legacy of hermeneutics because they interpret its major principles in mutually exclusive ways. Hermeneutically-driven Continental theory rejects the use of analytic and inductive procedures while recognizing that such procedures are necessary in the natural sciences to compensate for the lack of a tacit antecedent understanding. Conversely, analytic theory insists on the use of analytic and inductive procedures precisely because they reveal universally shared mental functions, a form of ‘technical competence’ construed as analogous to ‘antecedent understanding’. The question is what one means by

‘understanding.’ For cognitivists the problem with Continental theory is that it fails to recognize the possibility of a very basic level of cognition, a form of understanding that is not concealed by, or distorted into, some kind of false consciousness. Continental theory, however, relies on a different notion of ‘understanding’ borrowed from Dilthey, Gadamer and Heidegger, all of whom rejected the tendency to analyze understanding in terms of mere perception or cognition, that is, in terms of universally shared and unchanging mental functions or skills, emphasizing instead the pragmatism and situatedness of understanding.

From the perspective of analytic theory, Continental theory’s skepticism--reflected in concepts such as ‘construction,’ ‘alienation,’ ‘subject-positioning’, ‘misrecognition,’ or ‘suture’--always occupies a *secondary* position with respect to the *untroubled belief* subtending analytic theory, which focuses on *primary* processes such as perception, cognition, recognition, and concentration. As early as 1984 Dudley Andrew emphasized the speculative or self-reflexive aspect of Continental theory, in which “meaning, significance, and value are never thought to be discovered, intuited, or otherwise attained naturally. Everything results from a mechanics of work: the work of ideology, the work of the psyche . . . and the work of technology.”<sup>28</sup> Andrew was writing at a moment when the gradual waning of ‘textuality’ precipitated a return to referentiality and a revival of the historical method, which claimed to compensate for the alleged political irrelevance, theoretical obtuseness and skepticism of ‘Theory’. However, as James Knapp and Jeffrey Pence have pointed out, the general attack on Theory relies on two different notions of theory, valorizing “a notion of theory as the progressive accumulation of disciplinary knowledge claims and practices (for example, a methodology based on establishing and testing hypotheses) while . . . disclaiming and devaluing a notion of theory as an ongoing speculative enterprise, marked by correction and revision, and devoted to those features of experience, aesthetic and otherwise, not susceptible to scientific isolation and analysis.”<sup>29</sup> This distinction between two concepts of ‘theory’ is by no means new. It recalls Kant’s distinction, in the *Critique of Judgment*, between determinate judgments and reflective (aesthetic) judgments, a distinction later updated by Lyotard, who differentiated ‘determinate’ or rational thought from ‘indeterminate’ or ‘reflective’ thought. Reflective thought is “a thought that proceeds

analogically and only analogically--not logically"; it is not "a selecting and tabulating of data" but, in fact, "the opposite of overweening, selective, identificatory activity."<sup>30</sup> Reflective thought proceeds by way of experimentation or invention rather than cognition, since it does not rely on pre-given criteria for judging (it makes its own criteria, as Kant argued in the *Critique of Judgment*). Although by turning to referentiality and material history Post-Theory claimed to make up for Continental theory's proclivity for abstraction and its dismissal of empirically verifiable research,<sup>31</sup> the turn from Theory to history can also be read as the "product of a neoconservative desire to return to the safety of hard facts"<sup>32</sup> under the pretense of an allegedly greater political awareness. However, merely increasing the number of historical or material facts to be studied does not automatically increase the amount of theoretical knowledge these facts can offer us, or their political usefulness.<sup>33</sup>

Cognitive film theory reads the constructivism and skepticism of Continental film theory as signs of elitism, indeed as symptoms of decadence or malaise. In *The Reality of Illusion: An Ecological Approach to Cognitive Film Theory* Joseph Anderson observes that from the perspective of European film theory "Any view that is nonreflexive or nonironic is . . . naïve." He contrasts the "inherent nihilism" and "mannerism" of semiotic film theory, which sees film "as a patient symptomatic of a *sick* society," with cognitive film theory's "*life-affirming, reality-embracing* revolution . . . that offers a refreshing alternative to the *effete* cynicism of the postmodernist era . . . [by suggesting that] . . . a film spectator might be *cued* by a film rather than *positioned* by it."<sup>34</sup> And yet the constructivism Anderson attributes to Continental theory is not entirely foreign to cognitivism either. In *Narrative Comprehension and Film* Branigan argues that film and natural language are special subsets of more general cognitive enterprises, one of which is our ability to construct a narrative schema, a notion Branigan imports from cognitive psychology. Branigan contends that when we are watching a film, and later when we try to remember it, we are not comprehending/remembering real objects but abstractions: "[P]erceivers tend to remember a story in terms of categories of information stated as propositions, interpretations, and summaries rather than remembering the way the story is actually presented or its surface features . . . . [O]ur knowledge has achieved a certain independence from initial stimuli. [. . .] We know the object when we know how it may

be seen regardless of the position from which it was actually seen. The object thus acquires an ‘ideal’ or ‘abstract’ quality.”<sup>35</sup> The real object is totally irrelevant to the act of comprehension; in fact, it remains an obstacle unless it is abstracted into a schema. In other words, in film comprehension the mind encounters only itself, its own procedures for organizing data. Thus Cognitivism ends up in the same ‘quagmire’ of skepticism from which it claimed to have ‘emancipated’ film theory--it remains very much within the Kantian tradition it sought to transcend.

Renouncing the idea of an underlying ‘essence’ of cinema, cognitivists propose a broader notion of the act of theorizing, one which would include theorizing how we process any kind of visual data (rather than just film) and which, I believe, reduces cinema to a *mere tool for studying the human mind*. Since cognitivists argue against medium specificity--for instance, Carroll claims that not all art forms have a distinct medium, preferring the term ‘moving image media’ to ‘film’--they maintain that we don’t need a ‘Theory’ of cinema to understand how cinema works, for cinematic perception does not differ substantially from normal perception. However, even as they criticize the essentialism and idealism of Continental theory cognitivists, too, put forward an ontological claim, although one about the human mind rather than about cinema or reality. According to Joseph Anderson, for example, the structure of the human mind mirrors the structure of classical Hollywood cinema: the mind operates according to classical Hollywood cinema’s narrative schemas.<sup>36</sup> Carroll’s critique of Münsterberg, who posited that specific film techniques (such as the flashback) correspond to, or actualize, certain mental functions (such as remembering), simply rewrites the same argument in more general terms: rather than limiting his argument to particular film techniques Carroll makes the ‘stronger’ (ontological) claim that cinema *as such* is the actualization or objectification of the constitutively (pre-)cinematic mind. Thus cognitivism rewrites the ontological argument of Continental theory--the medium specificity argument according to which cinema has an essence--as an ontological argument about the human mind: cognition is pre-cinematic.

\* \* \*

Like European cinema, European film theory is often discussed in terms of canonized movements and revolutionary moments. I have tried to break away from this

familiar framework by organizing the material thematically rather than chronologically. Contributors to the volume inquire into the 'Europeanness' of European film theory while drawing connections between theoretical developments in different European countries; explore the philosophical roots of, and major discursive and epistemological shifts in, European film theory; reflect on the increasing determination of European film theory by philosophy and on the very possibility of 'film-philosophy'; examine the 'culture wars' between 'Continental' and 'Analytical' film theory; investigate the continuities between cinematic concepts and nineteenth and twentieth century European art movements; challenge dominant interpretations of realism and theatricality in cinema; and illuminate the political potential of European film theory.

In the opening essay Coates follows the development of European film theory through three stages: an early twentieth century crypto-nationalist stage, a post-WW2 anti-nationalistic, dialectical stage of 'modernist realism', and a post-structuralist, internationalist stage. While Coates's survey draws attention to the way in which the discourse of nation and film theory have informed each other, Nagl focuses on the symptomatic absence of the issue of race in European film theory. He argues that although post-colonial and black British appropriations of *Screen* theory contributed to the establishment of a critical discourse on race, ultimately *Screen* theory failed to address the troping of racial difference within the history of European film theory. To redress this failure Nagl returns to Fanon, whose contribution as a theorist of black European spectatorship remains surprisingly neglected given his prominence as a critic of colonial discourse. Haskins examines the main conflict within film theory between 'Grand Theory' and 'Post Theory', claiming that this debate is not specific to film studies but can be traced back to its philosophical roots, the quarrel, evolving since the eighteenth century, over the autonomy of art and the aesthetic. While Haskins explores the philosophical roots of the dis-unity of European film theory, Elsaesser is concerned with another form of 'dis-unity', the 'dis-unity' of European identity, which he reads positively as 'double occupancy', an 'always-already' state of semantic occupation that renders obsolete the old vocabulary of cultural and post-colonial studies.

'Can films think?' asks Mullarkey in the essay opening the section *Film and Philosophy*. Arguing that film-philosophers who proclaim that films can 'think' cannot

help but reduce films to mere illustrations of philosophical arguments/ideas, he proposes to replace the two monistic paradigms dominating ‘filmosophy’--Euro-Culturalism and Anglo-Cognitivism--with a ‘messier’ approach he calls ‘meta-theoretical’. Rather than criticize ‘filmosophy’ for its reduction of film theory to a handmaid of philosophy, Burnett welcomes film scholars’ increased interest in philosophy insofar as it promises a return to the fundamental questions of ‘classical’ film theory. After showing that both Euro-Culturalism and Anglo-Cognitivism are strongly influenced by Kant’s philosophy, Burnett proposes that only an intuitionist, realist aesthetic can do justice to the way in which films engage us. Following up on Burnett’s challenge to film theory’s dependence on Kant’s constructivism, Turvey examines the groundlessness of Epstein’s skeptical revelationist aesthetic, its roots in Bergson’s theory of intuition, and the Epsteinian/Bergsonian legacy in Deleuze. Price explores the influence of another Continental philosopher on film theory, Heidegger. Positing the notion of ‘off-screen’ space as central to both European film theory and Continental philosophy since the beginning of cinema, Price traces the preoccupation with ‘frame’ and ‘off-screen space’ back to early European cinematic modernism but also to Heideggerian phenomenology, particularly to Heidegger’s writing on technology and on the importance of ‘the unthought’. Finally, Morrey examines the continuous exchange between the philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy and the filmmaker Claire Denis, acknowledging that the exchange between film and philosophy is never direct but resembles rather “a kind of dialogue of the deaf, taking place at a distance and with different stakes for each interlocutor.”

The essays in the next section explore Continental theory’s preoccupation with politics, history and ideology. Tom Conley focuses on Rancière’s observations on the politics of cinema as a product of modernity, specifically cinema’s inherent ‘contrariety’, which he traces back to modernist literature’s increasingly visual or graphic nature. A politics of cinema always begins in its aesthetics, argues Conley, supporting his claim with examples from Jennings, Marker, Godard and Lang. Kordela re-examines *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* from the perspective of ‘biopolitics’ as a corrective to Althusser’s concept of ideological interpellation. She shows how biopolitics emerged in the transition from feudal to capitalist mode of production and how it found a welcoming terrain in the genre of the fantastic and more generally in cinema, whose absolute gaze eventually



replaced God's omniscient gaze. The cinematic absolute gaze (the absolute 'out of field'), she argues, represents the secularization of the religious--epitomized in the emergence of the modern state's omniscient power--under the conditions of late capitalism. Although the Caligari text occupies a central place in MacKenzie's chapter as well, he is more interested in Kracauer's shifting notions of cinema *as* history, which MacKenzie attributes to the different historical contexts (pre- and post-exilic) in which Kracauer developed his philosophy of history. Finally, Oesmann examines the political potential of the concept of 'disposition', from Benjamin's 'optical unconscious' (disposition as a technological process), through Brecht's notion of disposition as a process of re-tooling human perception, to Kracauer's concept of cinema as a revelation of a culture's psychological dispositions.

The essays in the next section illuminate some of the significant ways in which aesthetic theory underwrites European film theory. Galt traces the anti-ornament logic that underlies a whole tradition of visual theory--from Benjamin through Kracauer, Barthes, Bazin, to contemporary cinematic realisms--back to the discourse of turn-of-the-century European critics of art and architecture, focusing on the work of the critic most closely associated with the rejection of Art Nouveau, Adolf Loos. Salazkina employs the 'baroque', referring to a style of representation rather than to a particular historical period, to investigate film theory's response to modernity. Drawing upon the argument of Mexican cultural theorist Bolivar Echeverria that "Baroque aesthetics and ideology can be read in the twentieth century as a form of cultural subversion of existing (capitalist) modernity," she demonstrates that in Eisenstein's and Benjamin's theory the baroque represents "an attempt on the part of film and cultural theorists of modernity to subvert modernity and proclaim a return to the past." Both Galt and Salazkina draw attention to the gendering of the ornament and the gendering of the Baroque in theories of modernity, including film theories. Merjian considers Canudo's "synthetic" theory of cinema against subsequent theories of cinematic specificity. Canudo's major achievement, he maintains, was that at a time when the avant-gardes were becoming increasingly 'specialized' in their view of art--Cubism, Futurism, Rayonism, Orphism, Simultaneism--Canudo envisioned cinema as "a unifying 'synthesis-temple' in which all the arts were harmonized." Doran explores another type of synthesis, the phenomenon of synaesthesia.

She distinguishes the concept of synaesthesia originating in the work of Merleau-Ponty and McLuhan, understood as a mere crossing of the senses, from what she calls ‘synaesthetic systems,’ a term she borrows from Susan Buck-Morss, for whom synaesthesia “indicates an openness to the spheres of the biological, the technical, and the mnemonic, as a series of interlocking networks.” Doran traces the history of this second notion of synaesthesia from the Romantics and the Symbolists (Herder, Schlegel, Novalis), through early film theorists (Eisenstein and Benjamin), to clinically based interpretations of synaesthesia (Massumi).

The last section opens with Doring’s essay, in which she defends Bazin against the unjust accusations of those who see in him nothing but a “naïve belief in fidelity” and positions Bazin’s pursuit of a ‘styleless style’ in-between Kleist’s ironic ‘second innocence’ and Michael Fried’s art criticism. In my own contribution to this volume I argue that Kracauer’s realist film theory was predicated on a certain aestheticization/redemption of reality/modernity: his theory redeems the negative aspects of modernity--fragmentation, distraction, groundlessness, relativism, and solitude--as positive aesthetic qualities, identifying them as ‘the basic affinities of film’. I examine some contemporary instances of the associational, episodic and indeterminate discourse privileged by Kracauer in order to elucidate recent transformations in the notion of film realism. Gelley continues Coates’s earlier reflections on the trans-nationalization of European film theory by re-visiting Neorealist film and theory and arguing, against dominant readings, that the Neorealists’ emphasis on location shooting did not reflect a need to reaffirm Italian national identity or a desire to record “the daily existence and condition of the Italian people” (Cesare Zavattini) but was rather part of a search for a “nomadic cinema” (Domenico Purificato). Finally, Schoonover’s study of archival materials of the American reception of Italian neo-realist films draws attention to the sensuous or corporeal side of neo-realism’s ethical humanism. Both Gelley and Schoonover challenge standard readings of Neorealism: Gelley reads neorealist cinema as nomadic rather than national, while Schoonover reads it as building a global ethical and political awareness.

*European Film Theory* does not seek to construct a teleological narrative, with a beginning, middle and an end. Rather, I approach my subject from the perspective of Kracauer’s critique of ‘macro history’. The historian, he argued, should approach his

subject like a wanderer exploring a landscape, continuously switching back and forth between enjoying his immersion in the whole panorama and looking closely at particular aspects of it.<sup>37</sup> I have arranged the essays in this volume so that they alternate between ‘long shots’ (surveys), ‘medium shots’ (examinations of particular concepts in European film theory), and ‘close ups’ (essays focusing on individual theorists). As is the case with all edited collections, the present account cannot be exhaustive; it can only draw attention to a few patterns in an otherwise vast theoretical space. I would like to identify briefly some of the grave omissions that would be immediately obvious to the reader--but that were, unfortunately, unavoidable given the parameters of this project--beginning with semiotic and psychoanalytical approaches.<sup>38</sup> In the current context of a pervasive skepticism toward Continental theory, re-readings of theories that are too easily dismissed as obsolete or conservative are especially needed. Rembert Hüser points out the renewed critical interest in 1970s and 1980s theories of enunciation as seen by the translation into English of several seminal texts, including Casetti’s *Inside the Gaze*<sup>39</sup>, Gaudreault’s and Jost’s “Enunciation and Narration,”<sup>40</sup> Bellour’s *The Analysis of Film*,<sup>41</sup> and Marin’s “Critical Remarks on Enunciation.”<sup>42</sup> Given this resurgence of critical interest, Hüser notes, it is surprising that Christian Metz’s last book *L’énunciation impersonnelle, ou le site du film* (1991) has not yet been translated into English, except for the introduction.<sup>43</sup> Attributing this fact to the continued resistance to what he calls the “Metz trauma” in film studies, Hüser nevertheless argues that Metz’s book has a lot more in common with contemporary theoretical developments, specifically with meta-filmic theories of the film dispositif, than with Metz’s 1970s linguistically grounded theory of film enunciation. Similarly, following up on the work of Teresa Brennan and Joan Copjec,<sup>44</sup> Martin Hall proposes to redeem psychoanalytic theory by arguing against the usual dismissal of Lacanian film theory on account of its alleged a-historicity and lack of empirical support. Hall emphasizes the particular socio-historical context in which psychoanalytic theory developed--the 1960s--in order to shift the dominant critical view of psychoanalysis as constructing an interpellated, passive spectator to one acknowledging the active form of spectatorship. He seeks to restore the place of psychoanalysis within the historical process by foregrounding the continuity between psychoanalytic methodology and the relationship of the subject to the collective in 1968,

particularly between Lacan's notion of language and the Situationists' notion of 'play.' Apart from such re-readings of formerly influential theories that seem to have fallen into oblivion following the rise of cognitive and neo-historical film theory, there have been attempts to restore an interest in 'Theory' by means of hybridization. William Van Watson suggests a promising way of blending psychoanalysis, semiotics and queer theory in his reading of Pasolini's *Heretical Empiricism* and Eisenstein's *Film Form* in an attempt to uncover a particular 'homosexual psycho-semiotic sensibility' exemplified by Pasolini's adoption of "recognizably *pre-existent signifiers* (art or literary works) overused and hollowed of their meaning," thus bordering on camp and the carnivalesque, and by Eisenstein's over-emphasis on *semiotic heterogeneity* (on the dialectic relationship between shots) which "serves to closet Eisenstein's homosexuality."

Another significant strand of European film theory that is not considered in this volume is work on cinema's distinctive sensual *and* intellectual appeal. For Martine Beugnet the recent return to the exploration of film as material object and thought process--exemplified by the publications of journals such as *Rouge profound*, *Trafic*, and *Senses of Cinema*, and by the work of Aumont, Bellour and Brenez in France, and of Shaviro, Sobchack and Marks in the Anglo-American context--provides a welcome respite from the inadequacy and insufficiency of universalizing or pseudo-scientific models. Anneke Smelik's work on intermediality in relation to affect is another instance of this renewed interest in the 'materiality' of film. By supplementing the notion of intermediality with that of affect, Smelik proposes, film theory can move beyond issues privileged by semiotic and psychoanalytic theory (narrative and representation and, more generally, the visual aspect of cinema) and explore the experiential and emotional side of the film experience.

One of the sections in this volume is devoted to the relationship between cinema and the other arts; unfortunately, it does not include considerations of cinema's relationship to music and painting. Daniel Yacavone urges us to examine the series of dialectical developments marking the history of painting in European film theory, from basic mediumistic comparisons between film and painting in early film theory, through more focused attempts to discover the 'essential' properties of each medium (Bazin's distinction between the borders/frames in cinema and painting) to Merleau-Ponty's and

Mikel Dufrenne's comparative analysis of the intrinsic reflexivity of cinema, modern painting, and perception, and the growing interest in visual representation across media (Pascal Bonitzer's concept of 'deframing' as a feature of both modernist painting and cinema) and in the influence of video and digital technology on the hybridization of painting and cinema (Godard, Greenaway, and others). As far as music is concerned, Denis Peters singles out two main paths in European film theory's explorations of film music: the musicological discourse and theories of film music as part of general film theories, both influenced by Metz's semiotics. Peters draws attention to the recent cross-fertilization between these two strands, with authors in the intermediality-debate (Ochsner, Bielefeldt) displaying musicological insights, while musicologists turn to describing the ways in which film may interact with musical semantics (Hillebrand, Szabó-Knotik, Freitag, Merten).

To Continental theorists analytic film theory often appears dogmatic because it merely describes 'how something works' rather than reflecting on 'the work behind the work'. Here we uncover something essential to the Continental concept of 'theory', namely the implicit assumption that a 'good' theory is necessarily a 'meta-theory' and, further, that 'the work of theory' is ultimately dependent on *failure*: if 'bad' theories are those that never go beyond 'mere description', where 'description' is identified with 'description of *something that works*', then 'good' theories must be those that explicate, rather than merely describing, a state of affairs, where 'explication' is identified with 'explicating how *something fails to work*'. Only on the presupposition of failure can theory de-mystify the mechanisms that make something merely 'appear to work'. To believe that theory 'works' we have to see it 'at work', which we can do only if the object of theory remains safely occluded: only the *perpetual obscurity* of the object of theory can guarantee that theory 'works' rather than merely 'describing' a state of affairs.<sup>45</sup>

## Notes

I would like to thank Melinda Szaloky, Edward Branigan and Charles Wolfe for their invaluable comments on an earlier draft of this Introduction.

- <sup>1</sup> Ien Ang, "Hegemony-in-Trouble: Nostalgia and the Ideology of the Impossible in European Cinema," in *Screening Europe: Imaging and Identity in Contemporary European Cinema*, ed. Duncan Petrie (London: BFI, 1992), 21.
- <sup>2</sup> John Caughie, "Becoming European: Art Cinema, Irony and Identity," in *Screening Europe*, 37.
- <sup>3</sup> Antoine Compagnon, "Appendix 2: Mapping the European Mind" in *Screening Europe*, 111.
- <sup>4</sup> Stan Jones, "Wenders' *Paris, Texas* and the 'European Way of Seeing,'" in *European Identity in Cinema*, ed. Wendy Everett (Exeter: Intellect, 1996), 46.
- <sup>5</sup> Wendy Everett, "Introduction," in *European Identity in Cinema*, 10.
- <sup>6</sup> Everett, "Framing the Fingerprints: A Brief Survey of European Film," *European Identity in Cinema*, 14.
- <sup>7</sup> Everett, "Time Travel and European Film," *European Identity in Cinema*, 103.
- <sup>8</sup> Everett, "Time Travel," *European Identity in Cinema*, 111.
- <sup>9</sup> Everett, "Introduction," *European Identity in Cinema*, 8.
- <sup>10</sup> Jean Baudrillard qtd. in Everett, "Introduction," *European Identity in Cinema*, 12.
- <sup>11</sup> Francesco Casetti, *Theories of Cinema: 1945-1990* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1999).
- <sup>12</sup> See Ian Aitken, *European Film Theory and Cinema* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2001).
- <sup>13</sup> Mike Wayne, *The Politics of Contemporary European Cinema: Histories, Borders, Diasporas* (Portland, OR: Intellect Books, 2002), 27.
- <sup>14</sup> Étienne Balibar, *We, the People of Europe?: Reflections on Transnational Citizenship*. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2004), 1-2.
- <sup>15</sup> As Melinda Szaloky points out, these ideas are already central to Marx, Saussure, and Freud, as Stuart Hall sums up in "Old and New Identities" in Anthony D. King (ed.), *Culture, Globalization and the World-System* (Houndmills and London: The Macmillan Press, 1991).
- <sup>16</sup> See Per Persson, *Understanding Cinema: A Psychological Theory of Moving Imagery* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003) and Warren Buckland, *The Cognitive Semiotics of Film* (Cambridge: Cambridge

UP, 2007).

<sup>17</sup> See Joseph Anderson, *The Reality of Illusion: An Ecological Approach to Cognitive Film Theory* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois UP), 1996; Greg M. Smith, *Film Structure and the Emotion System* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP), 2007; Noël Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror: Or, Paradoxes of the Heart* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990).

<sup>18</sup> See also Melinda Szaloky, "Making New Sense of Film Theory through Kant: A Novel Teaching Approach," *New Review of Film and Television Studies* Vol. 3, No. 1, May 2005, 33-58.

<sup>19</sup> See Theodor Adorno, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2002), 19. According to Melinda Szaloky, "If we can believe Adorno, Kant's idea of synthetic a priori judgments is not much different either from Descartes's notion of 'innate ideas' or from Leibniz's notion of 'verites de raison'. What may be new is Kant's rigorous distinction between an intuitive/sensible component and a conceptual/logical component of a representation placed in the external world. We organize what we consider as an 'outside' world in spatial terms (for Kant in terms of an Euclidean space) while time, the form of the inner sense, is the form that mediates and structures subjectivity, which constructs itself and the world in terms of an outside and an inside, or, in general in dialectic terms."

<sup>20</sup> See Theodor Adorno, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2002), 9-10. The question of what constitutes Kant's Copernican revolution has been much disputed. According to Melinda Szaloky, "Kant compares his own intervention to Copernicus claiming that he (i.e., Kant) seeks the laws of nature in the subject's spontaneous synthetic activity much in the same way as did Copernicus, who dared to contradict his senses and attribute the motions of the celestial objects to the spectator. Adorno, in turn, opines that Kant's Copernican revolution has been the introduction of a reflexive, self-critical, skeptically testing, probing moment into the rationalist paradigm. It is the scrutiny of the validity of assumedly timeless, universal truths/principles of reason that Kant shares with Hume and other empiricists; it is also this self-reflective mise-en-abyme of reason

that makes Kant's theory innovative, modern, even postmodern. Kant's importance for contemporary philosophy is his rigorous reflexive stance, which cannot help uncover limits of knowledge, and which transforms Plato's eternal, essential ideas into mere regulative ideas (rather than constitutive ones), ideas that help expand the speculative realm (into the practical one). Kant's is in fact both an identity and a non-identity philosophy: he puts a block to knowledge at the limit of experience, and this is what makes him the forefather of analytical philosophy as well."

<sup>21</sup> Cf. analytic theory's anti-humanistic concept of the subject as a mere processor of information: "The viewer can be thought of as a standard biological audio/visual processor. The central processing unit, the brain long with its sensory modules, is standard. The same model with only minor variations is issued to everyone" (Anderson 12).

<sup>22</sup> Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz, "Translators' Introduction: Friedrich Kittler and Media Discourse Analysis," in Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1999), xvii.

<sup>23</sup> *The Photoplay: A Psychological Study* (Dover: Dover Publications, 2004).

<sup>24</sup> Noël Carroll, *Mystifying Movies: Fads and Fallacies in Contemporary Film Theory* (New York: Columbia UP, 1988), 226-227.

<sup>25</sup> David Bordwell, "Contemporary Film Studies and the Vicissitudes of Grand Theory," in *Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies*, ed. David Bordwell and Noël Carroll (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 18-23.

<sup>26</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time Image* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989). Deleuze claims that unlike American cinema, European cinema has always been more interested in failed forms of perception and recognition (amnesia, hypnosis, hallucinations, madness, nightmares and dreams).

<sup>27</sup> Edward Branigan, *Narrative Comprehension and Film* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 124.

<sup>28</sup> Dudley Andrew, *Concepts in Film Theory* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1984), 15.



<sup>29</sup> James A. Knapp and Jeffrey Pence, "Between Thing and Theory," *Poetics Today* 24:4 (Winter 2003), 649-650.

<sup>30</sup> Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 16, 18.

<sup>31</sup> Some of the most convincing and elegantly formulated cognitivist arguments speak in defense of abstract or reflective thought. See Torben Grodal, "The Experience of Realism in Audiovisual Representation," *Realism and Reality in Film and Media*, ed. Anne Jerslev (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2002), 67-91.

<sup>32</sup> Knapp and Pence, 652.

<sup>33</sup> See Mas'ud Zavarzadeh, *Seeing Films Politically* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991). Zavarzadeh asserts that although analytic theory appears to have a global politics, since it stresses cognitive processes that remain independent of local dynamics, it remains predicated on a conservative belief in the autonomy of art. Conversely, although subject-positioning and psychoanalytic approaches are critical of the ideological nature of the cinematic apparatus, they serve a local rather than a global political agenda, seeking to empower the individual subject rather than to build up class consciousness.

<sup>34</sup> Anderson, 6-8.

<sup>35</sup> Branigan, *Narrative Comprehension and Film*, 14-15. However, compare his argument here to his earlier work, *Point of View in the Cinema: A Theory of Narration and Subjectivity in Classical Film* (Berlin: Mouton Publishers, 1984). In the Foreword Bordwell positions Branigan's theory of narration as mimetic rather than diegetic since for Branigan the "controlling features of [classical representation] are spatial and optical, not linguistic" (xii). "Mimetic theories conceive narration as consisting either literally or analogically of the presentation of a spectacle: a showing" (x). By contrast, in *Narrative Comprehension and Film* Branigan argues that visual data is received and later recalled not in terms of a spectacle--knowing the object is not actually seeing it as it is/was--but in terms of categories of information that are defined linguistically (e.g. propositions).

<sup>36</sup> Anderson, 14.

<sup>37</sup> Siegfried Kracauer, *History: The Last Things before the Last* (New York: Oxford UP, 1969), 128-129.

<sup>38</sup> The following gives the reader an idea of some of excellent proposals I received, but which unfortunately I wasn't able to include in this volume.

<sup>39</sup> Francesco Casetti, *Inside the Gaze: The Fiction Film and Its Spectator*, trans. Nell Andrew and Charles O'Brien (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1998).

<sup>40</sup> André Gaudreault and François Jost, "Enunciation and Narration," *A Companion to Film Theory*, ed. Toby Miller and Robert Stam (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999), 45-63.

<sup>41</sup> Raymond Bellour, *The Analysis of Film*, ed. Constance Penley (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2002).

<sup>42</sup> In Louis Marin, *On Representation*, trans. Catherine Porter (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2001).

<sup>43</sup> Christian Metz, "The Impersonal Enunciation, or the Site of Film (in the Margin of Recent Works on Enunciation in Cinema)," *New Literary History* 22 (1991): 747-772. Republished in *The Film Spectator: From Sign to Mind*, ed. Warren Buckland (Amsterdam: Amsterdam UP, 2003).

<sup>44</sup> Teresa Brennan, *History after Lacan (Opening Out)* (New York: Routledge, 1993) and Joan Copjec, *Read My Desire: Lacan against the Historicists* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996).

<sup>45</sup> Admittedly, the humanist skepticism of Continental theory has its obverse side as well, the point at which the concern with freedom becomes twisted into a self-promoting, paranoid crusade to 'de-mythologize' the entire realm of experience, including cinema, as a conspiracy aimed at the construction of a false consciousness. It is precisely this 'always already' mode of inquiry--always already mystified and thus demanding de-mystification--analytic theorists seek to (ironically) de-mystify once again. Do subject positioning approaches, they ask, construct the constructions they pretend to deconstruct? At what point does the *method* of Continental theory turn into the *result* of the critical investigation? Although this is a valid question, it also betrays analytic theory's tendency to present itself as somehow immune to the risk of instrumentalization--the risk of theory becoming reified into self-referential methodology automatically perpetuating its own basic premises rather than

telling us anything about its object.