



European Film Scholarship

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The European experience of Film Studies and film scholarship is a particularly diverse one, and inherently difficult to encapsulate within a circumscribed review such as this. Given so, the approach adopted here will be aimed at managing this difficulty through a partition of that experience into six major categories: 'nineteenth century realist, naturalist and classical Marxist'; 'intuitionist realist'; 'intuitionist modernist'; 'auteurist'; 'Saussurian' and 'postmodern post-structuralist/pragmatism'. Such a partition may be reductive in effect but any similar approach to such a subject would, necessarily, be forced into equivalent diminutions. It will be argued that the ancestries of the European engagement with film scholarship are to be found, not just in twentieth century schools of film theory, but also in much older European intellectual and cultural legacies, and that it is imperative to recognize the origins of these historical traditions, and their influence upon European film scholarship. Such an approach, inevitably, shapes the overall orientation of this assessment. The first five sections of this study will be concerned largely with film theory, rather than with scholarship in the broader sense, because the European engagement with theory has been

so central to the evolving course of European Film Studies. Scholarship, and, in particular, historical scholarship, will be addressed in the final section of the chapter, which explores the broad spectrum withdrawal from high theory which occurred from the mid-1980s, to more or less the present.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY REALIST, NATURALIST AND CLASSICAL MARXIST TRADITION

One of the principal sources of early traditions of film scholarship in Europe was nineteenth century realist and naturalist thought. Naturalism, in particular, exercised a considerable influence upon early film scholarship in France, Italy, Spain, Scandinavia, and elsewhere. Although naturalism had lost much of its intellectual pre-eminence by the time that the cinema came into being, that appearance revived interest in the ideas of figures such as Emile Zola. It was the modern, technological and 'scientific' character of the cinematograph, in conjunction with the inherent potential which the machine possessed for

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generating photographic accounts of reality, which led scholars back to the naturalist premises espoused by Zola in the foreword to *Thérèse Raquin* (1867). Examples of such a sanction of cinematic naturalism can be found in the writings of a number of critics active during the period, including Ricciotto Canudo, Louis Haugmard, André Antoine, Jean Epstein, André Sauvage, Hubert Revol and others (Abel, 1988). Even though 1920s French cinematic impressionist film theory, embodied in works such as Louis Delluc's book *Photogénie* (1920) and Léon Moussinac's theoretical manifesto *Naissance du cinéma* (1925), arose, to some extent, in opposition to this naturalist legacy, aspects of naturalism still coursed powerfully through cinematic impressionist discourse, and continued to influence European film theory throughout the silent period.

After 1930, this realist and naturalist tradition of film scholarship was challenged by the emergence of the sound film, an occurrence which posed complications for models of film theory which had been founded upon the primacy of the image. In response to such difficulties an array of critical debates and positions began to emerge within Europe over how to respond to a conceptual environment which had now been irretrievably transformed. French critics such as René Clair, Marcel L'Herbier, Epstein and Benjamin Fondane initially reacted with suspicion and apprehension to the emergence of the sound film, whilst others, such as Moussinac, were more positive in their response. As Europe drew closer to war again in the late 1930s, and critical debate returned to the questions of realism and national cinema which had first been aired around the ideas of Zola in the 1902–14 period, leftist critics such as Moussinac and Claude Vermorel began to argue once more for the development of a cinema which could build on the combination of popular appeal, realistic description, and depiction of large-scale social and political forces which characterized the novels of Zola. Thus, Vermorel, argued for a version of *L'Argent* (1891) which would directly refer to the Stavisky scandal, then

a matter of topical concern, and regretted the untimely death of Jean Vigo, who had been planning a version of *Germinal* (1885) (Andrew, 1995: 199).

Between 1934 and 1939, the quest to construct an effective cinema of popular national political impact, and one which drew upon the realist and naturalist legacy, became an important political objective for film scholars on the European left. In France, intellectual groupings such as the Groupe Octobre, an eclectic congregation of left-wing intellectuals founded in 1932 by the surrealist poet Jacques Prévert, became active in attempting to cultivate film theories and strategies informed by the legacy of Zola, nineteenth century realism, Marxism, and other sources. In addition to France, the same line of attack was adopted amongst film scholars in other European countries. For example, in Italy, a version of nineteenth century naturalism, known as 'verism', which, like the later novels of Zola, combined a poetic humanist sensibility with a concern for detailed empirical description of landscape and community, was to influence the development of Italian neorealism, and critics such as Cesare Zavattini drew explicitly upon this legacy in his 'Some Ideas on the Cinema: Neorealism' (1953: 64–9). Naturalism provided the foundation for the two increasingly oppositional film journals which developed in fascist Italy during the late 1930s: *Bianco e Nero*, and *Cinema*; and also influenced debate over film culture then taking place within the newly established national film school, the Centro Sperimentale. Elsewhere in Europe during the 1930s, it was Marxism, rather than naturalism, which was to influence critics such as Ivor Montagu in Britain, Joris Ivens in Holland, and Bertolt Brecht in Germany. However, as will be argued, the links between nineteenth century realism and naturalism and early twentieth century Marxist and communist thought are close and convoluted.

After 1945, naturalism ceased to be debated overmuch as a theoretical position within European film scholarship. In Italy, critics such as Guido Aristarco, and the journal

Cinema nuovo, adopted a more 'socialist realist' position, and denounced the naturalism of films such as Roberto Rossellini's *Viaggio in Italia* (Italy/France, 1953). Nevertheless, naturalism remained an important trope within Italian cinema from the 1950s until more recent times, in films such as Michelangelo Antonioni's *Il Grido* (Italy/US, 1959) and Francesco Rosi's *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli* (France/Italy, 1979). A type of theoretical naturalism is also evident in the ideas of Pier Paolo Pasolini, and particularly in his notion of 'mythic realism', which combines naturalism with archaic symbolism. However, Pasolini's notion of 'technical sacracity' was to later evolve into a model of 'semiotic realism', in which he combined elements of naturalism with others derived from post-structuralist and Brechtian theory. In France, naturalism largely ceased to be discussed at the theoretical level within film scholarship, although it could be argued that the influence of the new history movement in the 1970s led to the reintroduction of a naturalist sensibility in films such as *Lacombe Lucien* (Louis Malle, France/West Germany/Italy, 1974), and in the writings of critics and filmmakers such as Louis Malle and Bertrand Tavernier. In Spain, after 1945, naturalism provided an oppositional vehicle for film theorists opposed to the fascist dictatorship. In 1955, the Spanish film journal *Objetivo* helped to organize a First National Film Congress, at which Italian neorealism was extensively debated; and this eventually led to the appearance of Spanish neorealist films such as Juan Antonio Bardem's *Calle Mayor* (Spain/France, 1956). As in France and Italy, no general theoretical re-articulation of the naturalist legacy was to emerge in the 1950s, although naturalism is clearly evident in the work of filmmakers such as Victor Erice, Carlos Saura, José Luis Borau, and Ricardo Franco. In Scandinavia, realist cinema drew heavily on the nineteenth century naturalist and realist traditions, particularly as in the theatre of Henrik Ibsen and August Strindberg, and these influenced filmmakers such as Ingmar Bergman and Carl Theodor Dreyer. Although, once more, no theoretical re-articulation of naturalist theory emerged

within Scandinavian film culture, it is possible to argue that the naturalist spirit remains palpable in the semi-theorized notion of 'dogma' cinema that emerged in the 1990s with the 'Dogma 95' manifesto and the films of Lars von Trier. Even here, a naturalist emphasis on improvisation and avoidance of the 'artistic' is mixed with a more ironic, postmodern sensibility which sets the Dogma movement apart from the central currents of the naturalist tradition.

Although nineteenth century naturalism exercised a considerable influence upon some early schools of European film scholarship, that influence was condemned as a reactionary one by other parties, and particularly by film scholars influenced by classical Marxist-Leninist thought. The position on naturalism adopted within the Soviet Union from the mid-1920s onwards stemmed from a distinction which Friedrich Engels had initially drawn between realism and naturalism in the 1880s. Engels had argued that, whereas naturalism (and also, as we will see, modernism) merely provided a fragmentary and superficial account of social reality, 'realism', as in the work of Honoré de Balzac, afforded a more profound account, through connecting the atomized particular to the unifying general. Following Engels' distinction, this elevation of Balzacian realism over Zolaesque naturalism was adopted as official policy within the Soviet Union, and, in 1934, evolved under Alexander Zhdanov, and in conjunction with other imperatives, into the more or less obligatory doctrine of Soviet socialist realism.

It could be argued, however, that Soviet socialist realism did not embody the more critical spirit of Engels' 1888 formulation. Whereas Engels had argued that realism should not be tendentious but should aspire towards the creation of an 'impartial', 'chronicle-fashion' interpretation of the social and historical environment (1977: 270), Soviet socialist realism and its giddy offspring, revolutionary romanticism, demanded a much more affirmative and steadfast approach to the portrayal of 'correct' values than he had initially envisioned.

Nevertheless, even if Engels' position is to be preferred to that of Zhdanov, the interpretation of Zolaesque naturalism in both positions remains incongruous. It is one of the stranger quirks of modern European cultural history that a committed and principled democratic activist such as Zola should be pilloried by avowed socialists, whilst a right-wing monarchist such as Balzac is held up for the higher esteem.

The doctrine of Soviet socialist realism, a doctrine which relentlessly returned to the nineteenth century realist novels of Balzac, Leo Tolstoy and other such for legitimation, became entrenched within the Soviet Union from the mid-1920s onwards, and, after 1945, within the Soviet Bloc countries of eastern Europe. In these countries, film scholars strove diligently to develop 'dialectical materialist' approaches to film form and analysis which were based on the nineteenth century realist model. Much of this work was of variable quality, pedestrian and doctrinaire, and tended to discount the phenomenon of modernized 'western Marxism' in order to focus as entirely as feasible upon the canonical texts of Engels, V.I. Lenin, Joseph Stalin, Zhdanov and, occasionally, Karl Marx. For all its limitations, this tradition did have one pre-eminent though highly controversial adherent: the Hungarian literary and political theorist Georg Lukács.

Like Engels, Lukács adopted a categorical distinction between realism, on the one hand, and naturalism and modernism on the other; and, as with Engels, Lukács believed that the emergence of naturalism and modernism in the arts, and the attendant decline of realism, could be traced to a disheartening epochal turn of events: the defeat of the Paris Commune in 1848. Following this defeat, the incremental entrenchment of a prevailing bourgeois consciousness 'destroyed the subjective conditions which made a great realism possible' (Lukács, 1977: 282). As realism declined, and the undertaking to portray society as a whole became unsustainable against the context of accelerating class inequality, modernism and naturalism emerged as unfortunate and despairing responses to the

unfolding historical catastrophe: responses which deposited the utopian ideals of the Enlightenment ever deeper within the stone-dead sarcophagus of modernity.

Although Lukács was a literary, rather than film theorist, he did write on the cinema in the Hungarian journal *Filmkultúra* in the 1950s, and devoted a chapter of his *The Specificity of the Aesthetic* (1965) to film. In addition to this fairly limited contribution, Lukács' writings on literary theory and history were influential in both eastern and western European film scholarship from the 1930s onwards. In the east, Lukács' ideas provided the foundation for the development of an enlightened realist film aesthetic which aspired to distinguish itself from the doctrinaire orthodoxy of the official communist schools of thought. This became particularly important after 1950, when the theory and practice of Italian neorealism, which went on to inspire leftist filmmakers and theorists around the world between 1950 and 1980, was condemned as an expression of bourgeois naturalism by the commissars of the Soviet bloc.

Such repudiation effectively left Lukácsian critical realism as the only enlightened alternative to Zhdanovist socialist realism. The model went on to influence both film scholars and directors such as Andrzej Wajda and Miklós Jancsó in Poland, Sergei Bondarchuk, Andrei Konchalovsky, Andrei Tarkovsky, and Mikhail Kalatozov in Russia. It also provided the intellectual underpinning for courses of Film Studies established in Lodz (1945), Budapest (1945), Belgrade (1946), Prague (1947), Bucharest (1950), and Potsdam (1954). Of course, Lukács was not the only influence on the eastern European and Soviet forms of moderate film scholarship which appeared and disappeared periodically between 1950 and 1989. Neorealism was often slipped surreptitiously back into the equation. Films such as Antonioni's *Il Grido*, Pasolini's *Il Vangelo secondo Matteo* and Rosi's *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli* – inheritors of the seditious, naturalist lens of 1940s classics such as Rossellini's *Germania anno zero* – were simply too compelling to be excommunicated.

In general, one can characterize the film scholarship of the Soviet bloc during this period, in an admittedly simplified manner, as dividing into two tendencies. One was the dominant Zhdanovist school of socialist realism. The other embraced a series of attempts to stretch the permissible boundaries of the hegemonic formula through recourse to Lukács, neorealism, and the European art cinema of Bergman, Antonioni and others. Such attempts became more pronounced during the various de-Stalinization 'thaw' periods during the 1950s in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and the Soviet Union (and, of course, in the 'Prague Spring' period around 1968), but continued to appear from time to time throughout the 1960–89 period. After the fall of the Soviet bloc in 1989 Zhdanovist socialist realism almost entirely disappeared from eastern European film scholarship. One side effect of this welcome collapse of a doctrinaire aesthetic theory was the rapid decline of a critical film scholarship culture in eastern Europe, as previously State subsidized institutions came under the full onslaught of a triumphal, globalizing Hollywood machine.

Whilst in eastern Europe the influence of Lukács waxed and waned over the 1950–89 period, in western Europe Lukácsian critical realism provided a less intermittent, if subsidiary, source of inspiration for leftist film scholars and filmmakers. Such scholars were particularly influenced by Lukács' distinction between realism and naturalism as embodied in his essay 'Narrate or Describe' (1970): an essay which became the standard Lukács text to be delivered to students across the western European academic scene. Although some Marxist film scholars were able to accept Lukács' criticism of naturalism as set out in 'Narrate or Describe' they were considerably less inclined to accept his concomitant repudiation of modernism. Eventually, even Lukács' disciples in eastern Europe, such as Agnes Heller, Ferenc Fehér, György Marcus and Mihály Vajda, abandoned him on this issue (Heller, 1983: 130).

During the 1970–2000 period, Lukács' ideas on realism were increasingly rejected

in favour of Brechtian models of anti-realism and models of ideology and representation derived from post-structuralism, from the writings on culture by Antonio Gramsci, and from the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu. During the seventies and eighties, when anti-realist film theory dominated much of the critical agenda, this anti-Lukácsian tendency was extended to the entire nineteenth century realist/classical Marxist tradition, which was habitually regarded with misgivings by those intent on the development of a progressive, critical film practice. And yet, behind blanket denunciations, there often lurked a profound misunderstanding of the critical legacy embedded within a nineteenth century realist and naturalist tradition which had, in point of fact, emerged in opposition to bourgeois capitalist hegemony. Similarly, few in the west who denounced Lukács during the 1970s and 1980s, or who simply ignored his work, had read his writings on the cinema, or understood the extent to which he had struggled against Zhdanovism and Stalinism throughout his career.

INTUITIONIST REALISM

In addition to this nineteenth century Lukácsian, classical Marxist and realist tradition, another important identifiable tradition of European realist film scholarship emerged from an arrangement of influences, including those of nineteenth century realism and naturalism, but encompassing romanticism, existentialism, classical German philosophy and phenomenology. This tradition, which will be described here as 'intuitionist realist', comprises the work of John Grierson, Siegfried Kracauer and André Bazin, and is centrally concerned with the relationship between cinema and modernity. This intuitionist tradition is, therefore, characteristically 'epochal' in its anticipations for film theory, and sees film as offering a prospective cure for the problems inherent in the edifice of modernity. Grierson, for example, believed that film could play a crucial role within contemporary society by providing an effective medium

of communication between the state and the public, and one which would stem the collapse of the institutional, democratic public sphere – a collapse which, during the 1930s, appeared greatly probable. For Grierson, influenced by neo-Hegelian philosophy as he was, the existing institutional structures of the State were the invaluable consequence of the historical evolution of human society across the centuries, and the most important repository of the human aspiration towards that harmony and unity which Grierson believed to be embodied within the Hegelian notion of the Absolute. It was these institutions, and their commitment to the common good over private profligacy (including, in particular, *laissez faire* capitalist profligacy) that was one of the great altruistic achievements of mankind in its struggle over a base egocentrism set deep within human nature.

Under Grierson's tutelage, therefore, film was to be a medium of altruistic social engagement, placed at the service of the state in opposing that individualism which threatened the progressing advancement of society towards societal integrity, at one level, and the likeness of the Absolute at another. Such a role could never by its very extravagant and amorphous nature be sharply defined, and this, in conjunction with the level of abstraction implicit within philosophical idealism, provided Grierson's theory of film with a necessarily intuitionist, rather than rationalist character. This disposition was reinforced by Grierson's belief, inherited from American 'mass society' theory and scientific naturalism, that modern mass society had become so multifaceted that traditional models of social communication fashioned upon rationalist premises were no longer practicable, and that, as a consequence, film had no option but to instil a general and intuitive, rather than conceptual, understanding of things within the public psyche. This intuitionist perspective led Grierson to argue that film should attempt to symbolize the interdependence and evolution of social relations through the application of all the formative potential at its disposal.

Although this formulation emphasized modernist, formative editing technique, the actuality content of the documentary image remained an important factor for Grierson, as is made clear by a philosophical idealist distinction which he drew between the 'real' and the 'actual'. Writing about his own film *Drifters* (UK, 1929), for example, Grierson argued that the empirical content (the actual) of its documentary images was organized so as to express general truths (the real) which existed at a level of abstraction beyond the empirical, but which could only be portrayed through the empirical (Aitken, 2001: 166). Such a formulation makes it clear that Grierson's early theory of intuitionist cinematic realism, like the other theories of intuitionist realism to be discussed here, placed great emphasis on the empirical qualities of the medium, and the ability of those qualities to disclose more general truths concerning the nature of the human condition within modernity.

Like Grierson, Kracauer's theory of cinematic realism was centrally concerned with the relationship between film and modernity (Kracauer, 1974; 1995; 1997). Like Grierson, Kracauer was influenced by the classical German philosophical critique of the Enlightenment, and the impact of capitalism on social structures. Whereas for Grierson, though, it was G.W.F. Hegel who was the pre-eminent influence, for Kracauer it was Immanuel Kant, and, in particular, Kant's contention that, within modernity, the spheres of ethics and aesthetics had become subordinated to the dominion of technical reason. This notion of the impoverishment of the human experience within modernity was reinforced in Kracauer's thinking by the influence of Max Weber's concepts of disenchantment and instrumental rationality, and, in the 1920s, by the Frankfurt School's approach to the rise of German fascism and the instrumental, ideological impact of the culture industry. All of this led Kracauer to a particularly negative conception of the state of the human subject within modernity.

This position led Kracauer to argue that the true value of film lay in its potential to redirect

the spectator's attention to the texture of life which had been lost beneath the abstract, ideological discourses which now regulated experience (1997: 298). In developing this aspect of his thought, Kracauer was influenced by two particular concepts: Edmund Husserl's concept of the *Lebenswelt* ('Lifeworld'), or the phenomenological world of immediate experience; and Kant's idea of *Naturschöne* ('natural beauty'). Kracauer believed that film was a privileged medium, generated by the condition of modernity in order to 'redeem' the *Lebenswelt* for the modern subject. Such deliverance would take place through the adoption of an orientation associated with that of *Naturschöne*, where the eye gazes freely across the visual panoplies of the natural world (and human *Lebenswelt*) in order to formulate self-governing sense. Kracauer's theory of cinematic realism is, then, best described as a form of phenomenological, idealist realism which, like the Kantian aesthetics and Husserlian phenomenology from which it is derived, seeks a basis for knowledge and representation through close observation of the material world. Again, as with Grierson, we see the same intuitionist, materialist approach, directly linked to the disclosure of more abstract realities.

Like Kracauer and Grierson, Bazin's theory of cinematic realism was influenced by the idea that something had gone fundamentally wrong with the human condition within modernity. Bazin derived this conviction from forms of French Catholic existentialism espoused by figures such as Charles Du Bos, Albert Béguin, Emmanuel Mounier and Marcel Legaut. Legaut, for example, was a Christian activist, committed to the reintroduction of religious values and debate into the secular French educational system; and Bazin was particularly influenced by Legaut's call for a revolution in consciousness, premised on the need to build a new spiritual community suffused by moral and social values. Similarly, Mounier was associated with the personalist movement, a Christian existentialist movement opposed to what its members considered to be the

widespread 'depersonalisation' of existence within contemporary society (Gray, 1972: 2–4). Following these influences, and like both Grierson and Kracauer, Bazin argued that the modern world suffered from a loss of spirituality, and that the modern individual was oppressed by dehumanizing, instrumental systems and by ideologies. Bazin's theory of cinematic realism was based on the need to counter this dehumanization through returning greater autonomy to the spectator, and his theory of realist spectatorship is grounded in the idea that, when the spectator gazes upon the realistic film image, they are able to achieve a degree of self-realization founded on free thought and action.

None of the three theories of intuitionist realism considered here can be regarded as 'naive realist'. These theories are 'realist' in contending that film corresponds to certain aspects of reality. But, such correspondence is a homological one, and not affected by naive realist assumptions about film's relationship to perceptual reality. Nevertheless, cinema's relationship, rather than correspondence, to perceptual, empirical reality is a crucial component of all three theories. All these theories link intuitionist models of knowledge to an empirical foundation able to disclose higher, more abstract forms of knowledge. These forms of knowledge are also premised on the overriding imperative of freedom. It is argued that the dense, empirical richness of the realistic image allows film to transcend ideological indoctrination; and this, in turn makes it clear that these theories of cinematic realism emerged in response to what was perceived to be an overarching context of instrumental socialisation and loss of individual freedom within the modern situation. Intuition is preferred to reason, as the foremost means of effecting emancipation and insight in all three of the theories of cinematic realism considered here, and this, in turn, reflects their origins both in idealist philosophy and phenomenology, and, in the historical context from which they emerged.

That context, one of suspicion concerning the darker uses to which reason had been

put, is summed up in Kracauer's apocalyptic notion of the 'go-for-broke game of history' (Hansen, 1997: xii). Kracauer argues that the gathering forces of modernity are fast approaching the verge of a catastrophic impasse, in which the innermost and most negative tendencies of modernity – those of fragmentation, disenchantment and alienation, would, if left to course freely, eventually reach such a point of critical mass that some cataclysmic implosion might occur. At that point, modernity would either plunge further into abstraction, or turn backwards, towards meaning and value (Frisby, 1986: 121). As he was writing in the 1920s and 1930s, Kracauer believed this point of no-return was fast approaching its conclusion, with the growth of Nazism, and the inevitable slide into worldwide conflagration. For him, the events of the larger 1914–45 period always amounted to much more than a struggle between right-wing totalitarianism and democracy, and were, he believed, associated with an even more historically important struggle for the existential condition of humanity within a modernity which would either become comprehensively inscribed with the spirit of instrumental rationality, or, more optimistically, the liberating energy of the *Lebenswelt* (Hansen, 1997: xiii). The same approach to the historical context can be found in the ideas of Grierson and Bazin. Grierson developed his ideas in opposition to the havoc wrought by unfettered capitalism in his native Scotland, and what he took to be the impending collapse of democracy into totalitarianism or unbridled capitalism; whilst Bazin inherited a humanist insistence upon the imperative of individual freedom which arose in renunciation of the mass slaughter of the 1914–18 and 1939–45 periods. All of this makes it clear that this tradition of European film scholarship is associated with a distinctively European philosophical critique of modernity, and with particularly overwhelming historical events. As one critic has put it, this body of film theory developed in the face of the 'full blast of modernity' (Branston, 2000: 29).

INTUITIONIST MODERNISM

In addition to these schools of nineteenth century/Lukácsian, classical Marxist and intuitionist realist film scholarship, another important area to be considered here is that of intuitionist modernism. As the name suggests, intuitionist modernism shares similar influences and themes with intuitionist realism. At the heart of intuitionist modernism is the conviction, shared by intuitionist realism, that intuition, rather than reason should be the structuring principle underlying a revitalized film aesthetic. Once again, the main influences here are Kant's theory of aesthetic experience, and Husserlian phenomenology. According to Kant, during aesthetic experience the mind freely seeks patterns of meaning in the object of aesthetic contemplation, which should possess the potential to generate a profusion of meaning in the mind of the perceiving spectator. This means that the aesthetic judgement is essentially intuitive and impressionistic in character. This Kantian model of the aesthetic judgement is reinforced, within intuitionist modernism, by Husserl's emphasis upon the detailed exploration of phenomenal immediate experience. Both these influences can be found expressed within film theory in the Russian formalist tradition, and particularly in Viktor Shklovsky's notion of *ostranenie*, or to 'make strange'. The concept of *ostranenie* is motivated by the proposal that, in an instrumental modern world, art should present an ambivalent image to the spectator, and Shklovsky's idea finds its most important manifestation in Soviet montage cinema within the writings and filmmaking of Dziga Vertov and Sergei Eisenstein. Eisenstein's late aesthetic, in particular, in its appropriation of nineteenth century romantic and symbolist forms, and twentieth century modernist forms, derived from the writings of James Joyce, and others, displays this tendency. As we shall see, Soviet montage theory also displayed a directive tendency which is at odds with such an insistence upon the ambivalent image.

Outside the Soviet Union, intuitionist modernist film theory founded on German

philosophical idealism and other influences can be found within Weimar film theory. One characteristic of Weimar film theory, for example, was a belief that the systematic structures which afflicted the individual within modernity were deeply inscribed within language, and that visual experience constituted a domain of potential freedom from linguistic determination (Hake, 1993: 131). The visual was regarded as embodying a primal and underlying mode of communication which pre-dated the rise of modernity and offered the possibility of a return to a more valid form of human experience. This overarching concern with the redemptive powers of the visual influenced many Weimar theorists at the time, including Kracauer, Rudolf Arnheim and Béla Balázs; and Balázs' contention that gestural expression could amount to a 'spiritual experience' rendered visible amounted to a strikingly visual and non-cognitive aesthetic (1924: 40). In both Russia and Germany, though, theorists attempted to link this intuitionist approach to the kind of modernist formalism implicit in the idea of *ostranenie*, and in films such as *Man With a Movie Camera* (Dziga Vertov, USSR, 1929) and *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (Robert Wiene, Germany, 1920).

If an intuitionist modernist approach can be associated with elements of the two most important early film movements in European cinema, those of German expressionism and Soviet montage cinema, then it can also be associated with the third most important, that of French cinematic impressionism. Here, intuitionist modernism is influenced by three specifically French nineteenth century aesthetic traditions: those of symbolism, naturalism and impressionism. During the 1910s, France experienced the growth of the world's first genuine alternative film culture. A key figure here was Delluc, who was appointed editor of the journals *Le Film* and *Cinéma* in 1917 and 1920 respectively, and who published one of the key works of the impressionist movement, *Photogénie*, in 1920. An intellectual film culture soon began to grow in France, building on Delluc's contributions. So, for instance, in 1919 the

journal *Littérature*, edited by André Breton, Louis Aragon and Philippe Soupault, began to publish film criticism; whilst figures such as Epstein, Moussinac and Canudo contributed to this growth of French film scholarship by publishing key books, including Epstein's *Bonjour cinéma* (1921), and Moussinac's *Naissance du cinéma*. Like Weimar film theory, this school of film scholarship placed emphasis upon the evocation of subjective experience, the foregrounding of film technique, and the conveying of 'multiple and contradictory impressions' (Germaine Dulac, quoted in Williams, 1992: 101). The key concept of French cinematic impressionism, *photogénie*, can be associated with the intuitionist modernist concern with ambiguous and indeterminate representation, and the related conviction that aesthetic experience was primarily non-rational in character. This is made evident, for example, in Delluc's assertion that 'Explanations here are out of place' (quoted in Ray, 1998: 68) and in Epstein's claim that 'The cinema is essentially supernatural' (quoted in Ray, 1998: 74).

In recent times, more emphasis tends to have been placed on a study of the French surrealist and dada movements of the 1930s than on cinematic impressionism. Nevertheless, all three can be linked together, and placed alongside Weimar film theory and branches of Russian formalism, as forming an overall intuitionist modernist tradition. That tradition, as we have seen, was influenced by a number of intellectual factors and also, like later intuitionist realism, by the context of history. Intuitionist modernism was informed, in the first place, by the critique of modernity stemming from Kant, Hegel, Weber, Husserl and others. The modernist intuitionist film scholarship which emerged from France and Germany during the 1920s and 1930s was also deeply affected by the impact of the First World War, and the ways in which reason and rationality had been put to the service of the creation of engines of mass destruction. Intuitionist modernism culture turned to the irrational and intuitive as a way of escaping from the dominion of such brutish instrumental rationality.

Two principal tendencies can be identified as emerging from the influence of Husserl and Russian formalism. One was the focus on the ambivalence and impressionistic nature of the aesthetic experience, and it is this which developed into the tradition of intuitionist modernism, in Russian, German and French film scholarship, and is embodied in concepts such as *ostranenie*, *photogénie* and Kracauer's idea of 'distraction'. It was the other tendency, largely derived from Husserl and emphasizing the search for deep structures of meaning and determination, that was to have the greater influence upon a linguistically-based, or 'language'-oriented, school of film theory which emerged during the 1920s. Instead of the indeterminacy and autonomy of *Naturschöne*, this school of theory sought to establish the determinate, and determining, underlying units and principles of the film medium. This early formalist tradition of film theory is summed up in Eisenstein's essay 'The Montage of Attractions' ([1923] 1968); and in a movement such as constructivism, with its emphasis on the art work as a rationally assembled artefact. Constructivism was also the product of a revolutionary consciousness predicated upon the need to totally re-create art in the image of a new Soviet era which would abandon pre-existing bourgeois norms. This approach is summed up in Grigori Kozintsev, Leonid Trauberg, Sergei Yutkevich and Georgi Kryzhitsky's article 'Eccentrism' ([1922] 1988), with its rejection of figurative art. Consequently, the engaged productivist tendency within constructivism embraced the scientific approach fully, and repudiated supposedly bourgeois aesthetic concepts such as genius, imagination, 'art' or vision: concepts central to the intuitionist modernist approach.

Despite the early eminence of constructivism, pre-revolutionary forms of aesthetic theory such as cubism and futurism remained evident within the new society of the 1920s, giving Russian formalism a diverse configuration. So, for example, whilst constructivist artists such as Vladimir Tatlin, Alexander Rodchenko and El Lissitzky sought to develop a rationalized, directive approach,

others, such as Naum Gabo and Kasimir Malevich, sought to develop constructivist techniques for more aesthetic and symbolic ends. The formalist and constructivist legacy which was handed on to Soviet film theory and scholarship during the 1920s consisted therefore of an incongruous fusion. On the one hand there was an essentially reductive hunt to establish the deep structures, aesthetic specificity, and rationalized configurations of the medium in order to determine 'objectively' predictable forms of representation and spectatorial interpretation. On the other hand there still remained a tendency towards the defamiliarization of representation in order to create more ambivalent portrayals of reality. This dialectic is particularly present in the career of Eisenstein, which began with a 'constructivist' model of film form but ended with the adoption of an approach steeped in symbolist expressionism: an approach represented in his essay 'Synchronisation of Senses' in his *The Film Sense* ([1943] 1968). A similar dialectic between rationalism and intuitionism can be found in the ideas of a German 'formative' film theorist such as Arnheim. Arnheim fully shared the Russian and Soviet formalist desire to establish the subject-specificity of the film medium, and went to great lengths to elaborate on how the fundamental aesthetic concepts of film should lead to a form of film practice in which the 'special attributes of the medium should be clearly and cleanly laid bare' to the spectator (1933: 44–5). Arnheim, however, betrayed the influence of the intuitionist element of the formalist tradition in arguing that film should attempt to 'capture something universally significant in the particular' (1967: vi).

If the film theory of Arnheim and Eisenstein indicates the presence of a tension between the two strands of the formalist tradition referred to above, it also illustrates a dilemma which formalist film theory was forced to face over the question of realism. Whilst stressing the point that film should foreground the properties of its medium, Arnheim wished to stop short of a radical formalist approach which would lead to a pronounced anti-realism. Thus, he insisted that, whilst

possessing a formative dimension, film must maintain a balance between representation and a display of the means of representation (1933: 46). Arnheim's approach here reflected a wider accommodation between modernism and realism which took place in both Germany and the Soviet Union during the 1930s. The concept of *ostranenie* elaborated by Shklovsky, Boris Tomasevsky and Osip Brik during the 1920s, was increasingly opposed by formalist theorists such as Jan Mukurovsky during the 1930s, because, such theorists argued, it encouraged excessive formalism. One outcome of this dispute was the emergence of a more realist film aesthetic in the Soviet Union during the 1930s – also, of course, influenced by the official doctrine of Soviet socialist realism. At the same time, in Germany, the period of *neue sachlichkeit* (new realism/objectivity) ushered in a new accommodation between modernism and realism.

During the 1930s, European formalist film theorists and filmmakers felt impelled to reconcile four different imperatives. One was a rationalized, purposive, even objectivist inclination, influenced both by a desire to render film scholarship more 'scientific', and by a felt requirement to provide the medium of film with a more pronounced social and political utility. A second imperative was a converse desire to lay emphasis on the use of indeterminate representation in order to counter the force of instrumental rationality, manipulation, and the deadening hand of a utility that had become ubiquitous. The third imperative was a modernist penchant to foreground the means of aesthetic representation. And the fourth imperative was, as argued, an aspiration to accommodate the demands of realism. Despite the obvious importance of formalist and modernist concerns, European film theorists remained committed to the realistic or documentary base of the film medium. So, for example, although Soviet, Weimar and French film scholars were clearly preoccupied with the way that the empirical trace of external reality could be transformed by the techniques of the medium, that trace remained a vital one for theorists and scholars

as diverse as Eisenstein, Delluc, Vertov and Balázs.

There are a number of reasons why early European film scholarship retained an unbroken interest in the question of realism. It was widely held that the aesthetic specificity of the medium was based in visual realism. The influence of Kant and Husserl led to a focus on the importance of the empirical, which then became translated into a support for documentary realism. Suspicions concerning the instrumental role of rationality and language led to a desire to engage with visual realism. The influence of the nineteenth century realist and naturalist tradition, as well as Marxism, fuelled the continuing engagement with realism. The subversive potential of film in bringing into the sphere of representation that which had previously been excluded for political reasons was a powerful influence on Russian formalism, Weimar film theory, the British documentary film movement, French realist and impressionist film theory, and the Italian neorealist movement. And finally, during the inter-war period, a general realist aesthetic emerged across Europe, in response to the deteriorating international situation, and this led filmmakers such as Jean Renoir in France, Grierson in Britain, and G.W. Pabst in Germany to move from avant-garde to realist positions.

AUTEURISM

After 1930, European cinematic modernism in both its intuitionist and rationalist manifestations went into decline. As this occurred, intuitionist realism, and the ideas of Grierson, Bazin and Kracauer, became increasingly influential. Alongside intuitionist realism, another tendency, that of auteurism, became gradually more evident, particularly during the 1945–75 period. The auteurist tendency was based on entirely different notions of the aesthetic distinctiveness of film to those taken up within intuitionist modernism and realism. Whilst intuitionist modernism sought to locate the aesthetic specificity of film in formal aesthetic categories, and intuitionist

realism attempted to locate such specificity in film's ability to portray 'reality', the auteurist tradition drew on romantic conceptions of art to affirm that the chief (as opposed to specific) aesthetic value associated with the medium lay in the creative role played by the film artist. Two key shifts of orientation are evident here: (a) from a focus on the art work and the representation of reality to the world-view and vision of the artist-filmmaker; and (b) from an emphasis on aesthetic specificity to an approach which focuses on the autonomous, manifold perspectives apparent in the range of such world-views and visions. Whilst auteurism retained the concern for underlying structures of meaning apparent in the formalist tradition, therefore, it also implied a degree of value pluralism which can be distinguished from intuitionist modernism, and looks forward to later post-structuralist and postmodern positions. Auteurism, in addition, implies a commitment to the interpretative role of the critic that distinguishes this approach from the more rigorous, or theoretical foundational orientations assumed within intuitionist modernism and realism.

The idea of film as an original work of art created by a film-artist, who uses the film as a vehicle through which both to express their own vision and coterminously to portray truths which exist in the world, has its source in cultural ideologies deeply entrenched within Western society since at least the romantic period. Those cultural ideologies emerged largely in relation to forms of art that were the product of individual artistry, and this romantic position on authorship does not apply particularly well to art which is collaboratively produced, or which is fashioned within the legislative confines of a school, studio, or craft workplace. This would, in turn, suggest that attempts to apply the romantic conception of authorship to a collaborative, workplace-oriented medium such as film would likewise experience such difficulties.

Even so, during the 1940s and 1950s such attempts took place, and quickly came to dominate European film scholarship. This was the stance adopted by Roger Leenhardt

and Bazin writing in the journal *Revue du cinéma* between 1946 and 1949. The same position was reiterated in Alexandre Astruc's influential 1948 essay, 'The birth of a new avant-garde: la camera stylo', in which Astruc argues that 'The filmmaker-author writes with his camera as a writer writes with his pen' (quoted in Bordwell, 1994: 493). In 1951 the first issue of *Cahiers du Cinéma* was devoted to an auteurist study of the films of Rossellini and Robert Bresson, whilst, in 1954, François Truffaut's *Cahiers du Cinéma* essay, 'Une certaine tendance du cinéma Français', further encapsulated the auteurist position. Thereafter, writers and critics such as Jacques Rivette, Eric Rohmer, Truffaut, Fereydoun Hoveyda, Luc Mollet and Claude Chabrol continued to advance what the British critic Richard Roud sceptically referred to as the 'French line' (1960: 167–71): a 'line' perhaps summed up in Rivette's enthusiastic endorsement of 'The Genius of Howard Hawks' in terms of 'a beauty which demonstrates existence by breathing and movement and walking. That which is, is' ([1953] 1985: 131). In Britain, critics such as Robin Wood, Ian Cameron and Victor Perkins carried out highly detailed authorship studies of filmmakers such as Marcel Ophuls, Howard Hawks and Alfred Hitchcock in the journal *Movie*. Wood's analysis of Ophuls' *Letter From an Unknown Woman* (US, 1948), which concludes with the assertion that Ophuls is 'one of the cinema's great romantics', is a particularly successful example of this approach (1976: 131). The approach adopted by critics writing in *Movie*, who tended to conceive of the film director as a kind of facilitating catalyst, analogous to the conductor of an orchestra, can nonetheless be distinguished from the French position, which emphasized the primary importance of the director as the source of all significant meaning in the film.

Although this romantic conception of authorship found its clearest articulation in the '*la politique des auteurs*' of *Cahiers du Cinéma* it could be argued that this position did not succeed in becoming established as a major paradigm within European

film scholarship. Clearly, a considerable amount of European film scholarship has focused on authorship studies, particularly since the emergence of an identifiable European 'art cinema'. Much of the work of *Movie* falls into this category, but the British journals *Sequence* and *Sight and Sound* also played an important role in publishing auteurist studies of European filmmakers such as Bergman, Federico Fellini and Antonioni. Such scholarship should be distinguished from the auteur 'theory' of the *Cahiers* critics, which espouses a particularly extreme conception of auteurism in the cinema. That conception must, in the end, be rejected as philosophically untenable, as the significant structures of meaning in a film cannot all be attributed to the coherent vision of the film director.

Having said this, a distinction has to be made between the auteur theory and the auteur method, which consists of examining a corpus of films for an underlying grouping of coherent themes, and which has led to some highly sophisticated film analysis. Such analysis has often been directed at Hollywood, rather than European cinema, as in Wood's *Howard Hawks* (1968) and Bazin's *Orson Welles* (1978), although Wood's *Claude Chabrol* (1970), Raymond Durgnat's *Luis Buñuel* (1967), Geoffrey Nowell-Smith's *Visconti* (1967) and Bazin's *Jean Renoir* (1973) are studies of major European filmmakers; whilst Bazin's *What is Cinema? Vol.1* (1967) and *What is Cinema? Vol.2* (1972) contains complex auteurist studies of filmmakers such as Bresson, Rossellini, Vittorio De Sica, Dreyer and others. Even here though, problems persist, as it is not always clear why any given corpus of films should be automatically related to a director, as opposed to scriptwriter, or even genre. Another major benefit of the auteur approach lay in the extent to which it became applied to popular, as well as art house cinema, leading to a focus of critical attention on films previously regarded as unworthy of such attention. Finally, perhaps the most significant role played by the auteur theory in the development of European film scholarship, although one which the original

French advocates of auteurism would, as we will see, come to regard with a considerable sense of *dégoût*, was in providing a gateway into film scholarship for the fifth major category of European film scholarship to be discussed here: the Saussurian paradigm.

THE SAUSSURIAN PARADIGM

The Saussurian paradigm, which, for the purposes of this chapter, is regarded as encompassing semiotics, structuralism and post-structuralism, can be traced back initially to developments in the disciplines of linguistics, philosophy and symbolic logic during the 1880s (Johnson-Laird, 1989: 45). Within linguistics the key change, as far as later film theorists were concerned, was from a historical and philological approach to the study of language, to one more concerned with the structural relations which existed within contemporary language systems. One of the most influential works within this developing field was the *Cours de linguistique générale* ([1916] 1922; 1959), which was posthumously compiled from the notes of the Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure. Although the *Cours* would go on to provide a model for the development of structural linguistics in Europe over the 1916–40 period, it is important to appreciate that Saussure was by no means the only European structural linguist of note during this period, and others, such as Roman Jakobson, Vladimir Propp, Nikolay Trubetsky, Mukurovsky, and the important Prague, Geneva and Saint Petersburg schools, also made substantial contributions. Nor was Saussurian 'semiology' the only such model to emerge during the 1920s. The 'semiotic' theories of Charles Sanders Peirce, who was more or less contemporary with Saussure, would be another important influence on writers such as Peter Wollen. Nevertheless, it was the work of Saussure which was to have the predominant influence upon the development of European film scholarship during the period of what came to be called 'screen theory'.

Initially, the seemingly irresistible sway of Saussurian thought centred on Saussure's distinction between *langue* and *parole* – a distinction that informed the key premise that film scholars would derive from Saussure. This was that generative 'deep' structures ultimately determined the content of cultural artefacts such as films, and that the chief objective of 'structuralist' analysis was to reveal those structures and show how they shaped the text. Like its formalist predecessors of the 1910–30 period, structuralist analysis, when applied to Film Studies, was often endowed with the virtues of rigour and rationally applied *modus operandi*, and sometimes led to the production of detailed accounts of the structures of meaning thought to be present in films. Jim Kitses' *Horizons West* (1969) and Raymond Bellour's *L'Analyse du Film* (1979) are cases in point here. As will be argued later, however, structuralist methodology was also pervaded by some doubtful characteristics.

Structuralist analysis first entered Film Studies as a revision of '*la politique des auteurs*', and under the sobriquet of 'auteur-structuralism': a position elaborated in the work of writers such as Wollen, Nowell-Smith, Jean-Pierre Oudart, Stephen Heath, Ben Brewster, Kitses, Alan Lovell and others. Here, structuralist ideas derived from Roland Barthes and Claude Lévi-Strauss were applied in order to effect a crucial reconsideration of the conception of authorship stemming from '*la politique des auteurs*'. That amendment consisted of an abandonment of the idea that the underlying structures within a film should be considered as a manifestation of the vision of the film-author. Instead, those structures were to be considered as, in the main, manifestations of more overarching social and cultural ideologies. Thus, in his *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*, Wollen argued that the central thematic oppositions within John Ford's *The Searchers* (US, 1956) were derived from cultural antinomies between 'garden' and 'wilderness' long established within American cultural history (1969: 102). This revision effectively undermined the auteurist position which had been endorsed by Truffaut, Rivette, Rohmer, Hoveyda, Moullet,

Astruc and others during the 1950s; and we move from '*la politique des auteurs*' to the idea of the 'death of the author' developed by Barthes during the 1960s (1977: 208–13). Ironically, though, Bazin himself may have unwittingly begun this process of radical disengagement from auteurism as early as 1957, with his qualification of *la politique* as a problematic method which consisted of selecting only 'the personal factor in artistic creation as a factor of reference' (1981: 45).

As we have seen, Bazin's position on authorship, based as it was on a conception of existential realism, certainly differed from the steadfast auteurism of a Rivette or Hoveyda. It must also be clearly distinguished from the positions held by Barthesian/Saussurian influenced writers such as Wollen, Oudart, Christian Metz, Jean-Louis Comolli, Jean Narboni, and Heath, the latter of whom, writing in *Screen*, in 1973, argued that 'The author is constituted only in language and a language is by definition social, beyond any particular individuality' (Heath, 1981: 215). Here, though, we see one of the fundamental problems of the Saussurian paradigm as it came to be applied within Film Studies: the inherent difficulties which the paradigm displays when confronting questions of individual agency. This was not acknowledged as a difficulty by structuralist film theorists (as the quotation from Heath implies) who tended to regard such questions as the residue of a discredited 'humanist' discourse that was to be consigned to history. This is the position adopted, for example, in Rosalind Coward and John Ellis' *Language and Materialism* (1977).

Despite the value of its rigorous and systematic approach, which brought real improvements to a discourse of Film Studies which, within the auteurist tradition at least, was sometimes based upon subjective judgement, structuralism, both in general and as applied within film scholarship, was also characterized by a number of methodological problems. In prioritizing the description of deep structures over an exploration of the particularities of surface content structuralist analysis was often excessively reductivist.

Structuralist analysis was often premised upon a deterministic conception of structure, where the deep structures involved were thought to shape all possibilities of expression at the level of content. Structural analysis also tended to bracket out consideration of contextual factors, because it was ill-equipped to deal with such factors. Despite being empirical in methodical inclination, structuralism tended to subordinate the empirical to a priori semi-theorized models, drawn from theorists such as Lévi-Strauss and Barthes, that were not in themselves sufficiently held up to critical assessment. Many auxiliary troubles stemmed from this.

Although structuralism initially emerged in Europe, and achieved something of a high point in terms of Film Studies in the highly scrupulous and painstaking character of Metz's *Essais sur la signification au cinéma* (1974), the empirical, objectivist orientation of structuralism, when combined with its employment of a relatively limited range of abstract theoretical categories, tended, at that time (and for whatever reason) to appeal more to north American rather than European theorists. Consequently, many more applications of structuralist methodology to particular films were to appear in America than Europe, in the work of writers such as Will Wright, Patricia Erens and John Fell. In both Europe and America however, the inherent problems of structuralism led to its decline during the 1970s. This decline was also precipitated by the fact that some of the main advocates of the movement turned their back on structuralism during this period. In his *Structural Anthropology: Volume Two* (1973), Lévi-Strauss forthrightly criticized the formalist essentialism in Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folk Tale* (1977), and, by implication, its structuralism per se. Under the influence of Jacques Lacan, Barthes and Jacques Derrida, Lévi-Strauss then went on to endorse the consequence of what was to become that central tenet of post-structuralism: polysemy (Aitken, 2001: 104–5). Following Lévi-Strauss, Metz too denounced his own attempt to develop a general structuralist model of film form as

a mistake, and moved over to a 'post-structuralist' phase in his *Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (1983). In addition to these individual critical repudiations, one of the crucial reasons for the decline of structuralism was the finding, by Metz, André Martinet, Ellis, Bellour and others, that 'film language' did not really possess a distinct *langue* in the sense that linguistic language did. The essentialism which had initially inspired structuralism proved to be its undoing when the basis of that presumed essentialism turned out to be a delusion.

Despite these problems, structuralism had at least one overriding quality, already referred to: its systematic stance and related reliance upon often highly refined linguistic categories. At its best, the structuralist method could be employed as a highly detailed form of measure, against which film texts could be understood in terms of their nuanced departures from that measure. The more problematic structuralist approaches from the 1960s and 1970s evolved into the more rewarding French school of 'post-semiotics' of the late eighties and nineties, in the work of writers such as Jacques Aumont, Michel Marie, André Gaudreault, François Jost, Francis Vanoye, Marc Vernet and Michel Chion. Perhaps the most important work here, because it attempts a reappraisal of a major figure within the Saussurian tradition, is Marie and Vernet's *Christian Metz et la théorie du cinéma* (1990). Within much of this work precise analyses of both image and narrative led to subtle as well as highly detailed analysis of film texts. Even here though, the central problems of structuralism still remained, most notably a tendency towards a scrutiny of the internal dynamics of the text which conferred a problematic degree of autonomy on the medium, and continued to bracket out context, as in Gaudreault and Jost's *Le Récit cinématographique* (1990). Structuralism, even of the post-semiotic variety, is a type of formalism, and, although formalism may sometimes be an indispensable component of textual analysis (though that is also debatable), its inability to deal well with context created problems for this body of work.

Structuralism evolved into post-structuralism in the late 1960s under the influence of French theorists such as Barthes, Lévi-Strauss, Lacan, Louis Althusser, Derrida and Michel Foucault. Although post-structuralism, as a movement, was far less coherent than structuralism had been, it emerged across a range of disciplines as part of a perceived need to oppose both dominant institutional and ideological structures of power and authority, and foundationalist, realist or humanist conceptions of the self, reason, intentionality and knowledge. Structuralism did not by any means evolve seamlessly into post-structuralism, and nor did post-structuralists move en masse from essentialism into a philosophical position founded upon anti-essentialist premises. A further distinction must be drawn here between a post-structuralist position which is largely indistinguishable from so-called 'postmodernism', and a form of 'modernist' post-structuralism which still encapsulated what is often referred to as 'screen theory'. The former position, derived from the ideas of Derrida and the later Barthes, was largely taken up within the American deconstruction movement during the 1970s and 1980s, and emphasized the need to subvert authoritarian and normative values through focusing on the utopian polysemic potential of communication. The second position combined this same imperative to subvert dominant ideology with a project to formulate and advance alternative ideological tropes that sought to elaborate an explanation of the world. Another more pivotal philosophical distinction can be traced between these two positions. In the latter case, a modernist project based upon a synthesis of defamiliarization and analytical renovation is evident; whilst, in the former case, a 'postmodern' position, based upon defamiliarization and the repudiation of such renovations, takes precedence. The first of these positions remained foundationalist to a degree, in positing the possibility of a convergence between theory and reality, albeit one in which dominant 'naturalized' convergences were rejected; whilst the second is fundamentally relativist, and

radically anti-foundationalist in its rejection of the value of, or possibility of, seeking any such convergence.

As with structuralism, both of these positions were founded upon forms of determinism premised upon the possibility, or in this case the dearth of possibility, for effectual agency. These forms of determinism were derived from Saussurian thought and were based on a conviction that the modern subject was shaped by systemic, institutionalized and language-based structures. For modernist post-structuralists such as Althusser the subject was inescapably 'overdetermined' by such structures. For postmodern post-structuralists, the subject was not so much seen as a potential agent at all in this sense. Instead, the postmodern subject was regarded as a complicit participant in a process of discursive engagement taking place within a reflexive, intertextual system. Agency here comes to be defined not in terms of autonomous will leading to accomplishment, as it is in most established philosophical definitions of the notion, but in terms of an only partly-mindful involvement in a dialectic of meaning consumption and production. A clear evolution can be traced, therefore, from structuralism (foundationalist, essentialist and determinist) to screen theory post-structuralism (partly-foundationalist, partly-relativist and determinist) to postmodern post-structuralism (anti-foundationalist, anti-essentialist, relativist, and based on a depleted, and rather unconventional notion of agency). This was a portentous course for Film Studies to take, one which commenced with determinist linguistic realism, but finished up with a form of laissez faire utopian linguistic relativism. As will be argued below, Film Studies did not have to take this anomalous philosophical route between a determinist rock and a relativist hard place.

The first development from structuralism, that of post-structuralist screen theory, can, to some extent, be regarded as a Saussurian inspired variant of 'western Marxism': a term which came to designate the various schools of analysis which emerged

in western Europe from the 1920s onwards, and which sought to revise a classical Marxism which had become disfigured by an unbending Stalinist and communist tenet. Western Marxism encompassed the work of a range of scholars of the highest calibre, including that of Lukács, Brecht, Bourdieu, Lucien Goldmann, François Lefebvre, Jean-Paul Sartre, Raymond Williams, Gramsci, and members of the Frankfurt School. The model of Western Marxist thought which was to influence European film scholarship the most – that associated with the ideas of Althusser and Lacan – was probably the most determinist to emerge from this body of work. European post-structuralist film scholarship adopted this deterministic variant of western Marxism because it was already committed to Saussurian thought, and, during the 1970s, Althusserian and Lacanian inspired ideas influenced French journals such as *Positif*, *Tel Quel*, *Cinétique*, *CinéAction*, and *Cahiers du Cinéma*; English journals such as *Framework* and *Screen*; and writers such as Heath, Colin MacCabe, Comolli, Oudart, Jacques-Alain Miller, Daniel Dayan, and Narboni. The various attempts made by these journals and individuals during the 1970s to establish an alternative, post-structuralist counter-culture within film theory all eventually foundered on the rock of problematic conceptualization and on an inadequate model of agency.

Western Marxist thought was premised upon a belief in the need to refocus attention upon the role of the ideological superstructure rather than economic base of society in reproducing dominant relations of power within capitalism. This change of orientation from a more classical Marxist position was influenced by a need to both understand why socialism had failed to achieve hegemony in the developed countries of western Europe – even though the overwrought condition of the economic base in those countries suggested (to Marxists) that such hegemony ought to occur – as well as a desire to theorize a more positive role for agency and progressive intellectual venture in the face of the mounting instrumentalization of intellectual enquiry within the Soviet bloc. Although the

Althusserian/Lacanian school was influenced by the first of these imperatives, it tended to theorize the role of ideology in such a way that notions of active, effectual agency were conceived of mainly as the residue of a false and disingenuous bourgeois humanist discourse which must be repudiated. So, just as Althusser argued that the subject was ‘positioned’, and so ‘misrecognized’ what it took to be its own ‘free’ self, Althusserian (and Lacanian) inspired film scholars such as Jean-Louis Baudry, Comolli, Metz and Narboni argued, in papers such as ‘Cinéma, idéologie, critique’ (Comolli and Narboni, 1969), that dominant cinema too participated in a process of subject-positioning in relation to the interests of the dominant order. Yet, had post-structuralist film theory taken a different course during this crucial period, say in order to embrace some more salient blend of the ideas of a Williams, Gramsci or Bourdieu, rather than of Althusser and Lacan, things may have worked out quite differently for the development of the discipline.

It was in the pages of the journal *Screen*, in particular, that a systematic attempt was made, by critics such as Heath, MacCabe, Ellis, Laura Mulvey and others to develop an overarching theory of modernist post-structuralist cinematic representation, based on the influence of Althusser, Saussure and Lacan, and on the ‘encounter of Marxism and psychoanalysis on the terrain of semiotics’ (Easthope, 1991: 35). What has become known as ‘screen theory’ was constituted from an amalgam of influences, including those of French structuralism and post-structuralism, Western Marxism, Brecht, early formalism, Soviet montage cinema, feminism and other influences. Screen theory was undoubtedly motivated by high ideals. The objective was to utilize film and film theory in an effort to challenge the dominant capitalist or patriarchal order, and establish a ‘counter cinema’ within an intellectual ‘counter-culture’. Although the committed idealism of screen theory cannot be faulted, the conceptual foundations upon which it relied can.

The problems of screen theory have been well documented elsewhere, but can be

summarized for present purposes as follows: (a) The screen theory tradition contained an implicit commitment to determinism, and preoccupation with the determining influence of 'deep', or 'innate', or 'self-regulating' internal structures. (b) This orientation led to depleted conceptions of agency. (c) These lesser conceptions of agency, whilst problematic in themselves, also negated the overall objectives of the screen theory project, because such an account of agency implied that the attempt to develop a counter-culture must be predestined to fail. (d) The idea that realism, in the shape of the 'classic realist text' hypothesized by Colin MacCabe (MacCabe, 1974), was intrinsically politically reactionary at the level of form, led to a counter-productive rejection of an aesthetic form consumed by spectators the world over. The advocacy of anti-realist filmmaking thus ensured that an effective oppositional cinema would never become commonplace. (e) Screen theory often employed unhistoricized accounts of subjectivity, determination, representation and agency. (f) Whilst screen theory (in structuralist mode) was often able to describe representational relationships in great detail – because it was based on a relational theory of signification – it was often unable to explain what such representations meant in a more conceptual and wide-ranging sense.

Despite such objections, important work was carried out within the parameters of screen theory. The critique of romantic conceptions of authorship was a major step forward, as was work on feminist and gender theory by Mulvey, Claire Johnston, Elizabeth Cowie and others. Mulvey's paper 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' (1975) has been particularly influential. Other achievements included the critical reassessment of Brecht, political modernism and Soviet montage theory in works such as the special *Screen* edition on Brecht which appeared in 1974, MacCabe's *Godard: Images, Sounds, Politics* (1980), Martin Walsh's *The Brechtian Aspect of Radical Cinema* (1981) and Sylvia Harvey's *May '68 and Film Culture* (1980). The screen

theory concern with ideology and subjectivity also led to the appearance of influential work by Heath, MacCabe and others. Heath's 'Narrative Space' (1976) was a significant intervention in this respect. Finally, work on narrative by Heath, Bellour and others looks forward to later work on film narratology by David Bordwell, Edward Branigan and others. From the 1980s onwards, *Screen* abandoned the attempt to establish a unified theory of film, based on psychoanalytic, Marxist and semiotic/structuralist theory, and, instead, pioneered a number of influential debates in areas such as postmodernism, gay and lesbian spectatorship, and postcolonial/post-national/alternative cinemas.

As previously argued, the modernist post-structuralist screen theory position can be distinguished from a more 'postmodern' post-structuralist philosophical orientation within European film scholarship. That latter orientation drew on the ideas of Foucault and Derrida, as well as theorists more evidently categorized as 'postmodern' such as Jean-François Lyotard and Jean Baudrillard. Although there are differences between, say, Derrida and Lyotard, such dissimilarities are not as great as the similarities that bind them together. In many respects, the term 'post-structuralism' actually seems more helpful in representing a school of thought concerned with a radical position on the relativity and plurality of meaning, than does the term 'postmodern', given that the 'modern' encompasses deconstructive tendencies, and the sorts of philosophical positions on relativity which are putatively the preserve of the postmodern. Modernist post-structuralism marks one stage along the road towards relativism, whilst post-structuralism proper marks not just one further point along that route, but something approaching a full-blown relativist point of reference. Frankly, although it might be more helpful to refer to a distinction between 'political modernism' and 'post-structuralism', to abandon the term postmodern in favour of post-structuralist would probably lead to confusion, given the current state of understanding of what is meant by that term. In what follows,

therefore, and in order to maintain the earlier distinction from modernist post-structuralism, the term 'postmodern post-structuralism' will be substituted for both post-structuralism and postmodernism.

POSTMODERN POST-STRUCTURALISM/PRAGMATISM

The problems engendered by screen theory led to the emergence of the latest period of European film theory and scholarship, which stretches from the 1980s to the present. Although the various movements and schools of thought which make up this period are quite disparate, many of them are related, to varying degrees, in their shared refutation of the high-theoretical, totalizing ambitions of screen theory and modernist post-structuralism (or high political-modernism), and, by implication, in their subsequent commitment to a more circumscribed stance towards the theorization of film in relation to particular aesthetic, social, cultural, and political questions. It is because of this loosely shared affiliation, and for the sake of expediency, that this period in film scholarship will be referred to here as that of 'postmodern post-structuralism/pragmatism'.

One school of European film scholarship which developed during the 1980s carried on the psychoanalytic tradition inherited from Lacan and Julia Kristeva. It is particularly difficult to distinguish clearly between post-structuralist modernist and post-structuralist postmodern psychoanalytic modalities here, and more appropriate to delineate a continuity which encompasses the work of thinkers such as Derrida, Kristeva, Lacan, Baudrillard and Lyotard; and film scholars such as Mulvey, Jacqueline Rose, Baudry, Metz, Oudart, Heath, Cowie and Juliet Mitchell. This work relies on an associated range of psychoanalytic concepts, including those of the 'imaginary/symbolic/real', 'phallogocentrism', 'identification', 'the gaze', 'masochism', the 'mirror stage', and 'scopophilia'; as well as on less specifically psychoanalytic notions,

such as those of 'discourse', 'intertextuality', 'deconstruction', 'pleasure', 'subjectivity', 'patriarchy', and the centrality of power relations. In fact, there is not much to choose, in the end, between a post-structuralist screen theory reading of Lacan from the mid-1970s, and Lyotard's notions of the *Dispositif* and 'libidinal', or Baudrillard's writing on seduction, masculinity and femininity in *Seduction* (1990). Such lack of distinction apart, it should be pointed out that this area of scholarship has been particularly influential within the feminist theory of French writers such as Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray and others. Cixous, for example, advances a 'counter-writing' strategy of feminist writing – *écriture féminine*, derived from Lacan and Derrida – whilst the same approach is evident in Irigaray's notion of *parler femme* (Fuery, 2000: 47). Although both these writers were largely concerned with literature rather than film, their ideas have been developed within European Film Studies by some of the film scholars previously referred to, and in critical studies such as *Contemporary Film Theory* (Easthope, 1993), *New Developments in Film Theory* (Fuery, 2000) and *Film Theory: An Introduction* (Lapsley and Westlake, 2006).

Outside of psychoanalysis, postmodern post-structuralism also tends to reject 'meta-discourse', essentialism and 'grand narratives', in order to emphasize the pluralism and relativity of discourse, the value of creativity and intertextuality, and the more definable practical 'micro' purposes (including, in some cases, political purposes) to which theory should be put. Definitions of postmodern film vary, but, in general, such definitions tend to emphasize the prioritization of spectacle over narrative, the intertextuality of reference, the effacement of the difference between past and present, the use of pastiche, visual and visceral excess, parody, the fluidity of identity, the fictionality of cause and effect, and the establishment of a sense of the perpetual present. Different views prevail concerning the significance of such films. Critics such as Alan Williams take the view that 'postmodern' films such as *Les Amants du Pont-Neuf* (Léos Carax, France, 1991) both

reveal the 'postmodern condition' in terms of a 'profound nihilism' and celebrate pluralism and difference (1992: 401). On the other hand, other critics take the view that such films merely reinforce the commodification of culture which is unremittingly taking place within 'late capitalism'. Fredric Jameson argues for the latter in the case of the films of Brian de Palma, but attempts to steer a more discriminating line elsewhere in arguing that, whilst some postmodern films (and postmodern aspects of other films) do reinforce the commodification of culture within late capitalism, a film such as *Diva* (Jean-Jacques Beineix, France, 1982) employs postmodern stylistics in order to critique aspects of the postmodern condition (1992: 62).

Many writers on postmodernism and film, including Linda Hutcheon, Jameson, Laura Kipnis and others, tend to focus on Hollywood films because of postmodernist theory's general orientation towards popular culture, although they often centre on atypical Hollywood films, such as David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (US, 1986). Some scholars, including Robert Stam, Ella Shohat and Hal Foster turn towards forms of critical postmodern cinema evident in Third World cinema. Others such as Phil Powrie and Susan Hayward engage with postmodern European cinema, and follow Jameson's endorsement of *Diva*, by similarly sanctioning the postmodern style employed within the *cinéma du look* of Beineix, Luc Besson and Carax. Jim Collins argues for the effective critical postmodernism of a film such as Hans-Jürgen Syberberg's *Parsifal* (France/West Germany, 1984), whilst Kobena Mercer argues that the work of black British filmmakers in the 1980s, as in a work such as *Handsworth Songs* (John Akomfrah/Black Audio Film Collective, UK, 1986), constitutes a kind of postmodern practice of collage-like filmmaking, which reworks and deconstructs existing and dominant representations of black Britain (1988: 11). Within a perspective of feminist theory, Annette Kuhn has argued that a collage-like postmodern approach to filmmaking may be particularly appropriate for a female spectator who may be simultaneously experiencing

a number of different and shifting identities (1994: 202).

Within postmodern film theory in general, both European and other, a division can be found between those who adhere more to the position that a postmodern film culture should eschew analysis (grand narratives) altogether, and those who argue that some kind of theoretical foundationalism must be retained, in the interests of realizing political or other objectives. Philosophically, at the centre of the postmodern approach we find the contention that the aspiration to procurement of insight through analytic critique is to be given up in favour of a contrary aspiration to engender a free space of semantic manufacture and consumption. Perhaps it does not particularly matter, in the end, that these two approaches appear to be philosophically incompatible, so long as some provisional, 'practical' incorporation of the two is able to intervene to effect within specific areas of social/cultural contest, as 'cultural studies' based scholars such as Stuart Hall have argued (see below). For such critics it is more important that theory is able to effect change than be endowed with internal lucidity. On the other hand, even if such conceptual incongruity does manage to deliver some dividends on the ground as a consequence of activist commitment, it might eventually lead to the refutation of the postmodern post-structuralist edifice within Film Studies. In addition, the adoption of a postmodern position based on extreme relativism is inevitably problematic. An approach, for example, based on a study of the film 'text' as vehicle of contradiction and aporia, such as that endorsed by the French scholar Marie-Claire Ropars-Wuilleumier in her *Le Texte divisé* (1981), is clearly of value in avoiding naive interpretations of films – and, also, possibly, in averting the regressive positioning of the spectator (a prime objective of Ropars-Wuilleumier's method). At the level of epistemology, it has to be questioned whether an approach premised upon the need to avoid explanation per se is actually sustainable, and not ultimately counterproductive. Within a feminist perspective, this is the question raised by scholars

such as Linda Nicholson and Nancy Fraser in their anthology *Feminism/Postmodernism* (1988: 34).

As with post-structuralism in both its modern and postmodern phases, the notion that society was composed of dominant and subordinate power and interest groups, and competing ideological discourses, influenced a school of English-language popular cultural studies. Cultural studies drew on a wide range of intellectual frameworks, including various strands of Western Marxism, sociological theory, psychoanalysis, the Frankfurt School, empirical methodology, communications theory, reception studies, policy studies, feminism, gender theory, classical Marxism, the post-structuralist theory of Lacan, Althusser and Foucault, theories of colonialism, post-colonialism and postmodernism. Despite such an array of theoretical positions, this school can be collectively distinguished by two principal features: first, a rejection of the determinism implicit within much Saussurian thought; and, second, a related sanction of popular cultural forms as valuable and authentic modes of social expression. Such endorsement has a particularly lengthy lineage within British cultural studies, and includes work carried out on working-class history and culture by E.P. Thompson, Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams during the 1950s and 1960s. Central to this body of work, in studies such as *The Uses of Literacy* (Hoggart, 1957), *Culture and Society, 1780–1950* (Williams, 1958), and *The Making of the English Working Class* (Thompson, 1968), was a desire to explore the means by which a culture of moral resistance could survive within working-class life, against the background of a debilitating and stifling capitalist hegemony.

The work of Thompson, Hoggart and Williams generally conceived of popular cultural forms as valid expressions of such resistance. However, during the period in which Althusserian-based screen theory was dominant, this conception of popular culture tended to be replaced by one in which such forms were seen as overdetermined by the dominant institutions of society. In reaction to this, later work within British cultural

studies, by Hall, Graeme Turner, Martin Barker, Tony Bennett, Dick Hebdige, Judith Williamson and others, explored previously uncharted areas of popular culture, including popular cinema, in an attempt to illuminate the complex relationships which existed between popular culture, a climate of resistance, and the audience.

Study of the audience from a cultural studies perspective became particularly influential during the 1980s. Much of the emphasis here tended to be on television rather than film, though, amongst others, studies were carried out by Janet Woollacott on the James Bond films, and by Philip Corrigan on the development of the British film audience. Bennett, Woollacott, Tony Mercer and Susan Boyd-Bowman also co-edited the influential *Popular Television and Film* in 1981. In some cases, the focus on the idea of popular culture as a form of subcultural resistance within this body of work led to an undue valorization of texts which might not necessarily always be as 'authentic' or oppositional as proponents of the cultural studies approach imagined them to be. This point was made by Barker and Anne Beezer in *Reading Into Cultural Studies* (1992). Disproportionate attention paid to texts made it more likely that such texts would become estranged from their various contexts, and particularly from their historical contexts; a point made by Raymond Williams in his *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists* (1989), when he called upon cultural studies to relate such texts more to both the social formations and aesthetic history from which they had emerged. The wide range of theoretical approaches brought to bear within cultural studies meant that, although the discipline displayed a pluralist, postmodern sensibility, it possessed few cohesive intellectual parameters, and was, as Raymond Williams himself put it, something of a 'baggy monster' (quoted in Barker and Beezer, 1992: 9). Some cultural studies practitioners did not necessarily see this as a bad thing.

Another response to the exigencies of grand theory and the problems of screen theory, and one which emerged more or less

completely outside the Saussurian tradition, was the rise of empirically-based film historiography from the late 1970s onwards. Initially, such work emerged out of the history departments of universities and concentrated on the propaganda, newsreel and fiction film as a form of documentation of historical events. Work in this category includes *Politics, Propaganda and Film, 1918–1945* (Pronay and Spring, 1982) and *Feature Films as History* (Short, 1981). Although such work had the advantage of bringing academic historiographical method to bear upon the study of film, it usually failed to engage sufficiently well with existing and prior schools of film analysis, or with the aesthetic qualities of the medium. One very positive outcome of this development, however, was the formation of the *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, which went on to publish high quality historical research into film throughout the 1980s and up until the present.

Outside of traditional university history departments, another body of historical work on film, influenced by the earlier tradition of cultural studies, attempted to base a new popular film historiography upon premises derived from Thompson and Williams, and, also, from western Marxist theoreticians such as Gramsci, Eric Hobsbawm, Lukács, Bourdieu, Walter Benjamin, the Frankfurt School and others. The work of Stuart Hood, Vincent Porter, Kuhn, Sue Harper, Michael Chanan, and others falls into this area, whose spirit is, to some extent, encapsulated in James Curran and Vincent Porter's edited anthology *British Cinema History* (1983). This theoretical turn proved difficult to sustain, given the problems of elaborating a unified theoretical model of film history based on Western Marxist and cultural studies approaches. One exception here is, perhaps, feminist-inspired scholarship, in the work of Harper, Christine Gledhill, Christine Geraghty, Cowie and others. Eventually, scholarship in this area became more directly engaged in primary research into filmmakers, film genres, production, distribution and exhibition practices, and institutional issues;

under the conviction that an extensive terrain of materials urgently required attention. Although such work did not normally employ particularly rigorous theoretical models and was as a consequence sometimes criticized by proponents of the Saussurian paradigm, it was informed by various theoretical positions, including those drawn from feminism and Marxism; and did result in some of the most rigorous and productive scholarship to emerge within European Film Studies. In Britain, Charles Barr, Harper, Andrew Higson, Sarah Street, Tony Aldgate, Nicholas Pronay, Jeffrey Richards, Robert Murphy, John Hill and others carried out intensive studies of British film history; whilst Ian Aitken, Alan Burton, Harvey, Brian Winston and others wrote on the British documentary film. A journal – the *Journal of Popular British Cinema* (now the *Journal of British Cinema and Television*) – was established, whilst the *Encyclopedia of the Documentary Film* (Aitken, 2006) contained extensive sections on British and European documentary filmmaking, and *The Encyclopedia of British Film* (McFarlane, 2003) covered the area of British cinema in a comprehensive manner.

During the 1980s and 1990s, concepts such as national identity, national cinema, cultural identity, postcolonialism, regionalism, hybridity and globalization became increasingly important within European film scholarship, and a range of publications appeared dealing with such issues as they affected Europe as a whole. Examples here would be Duncan Petrie's *Screening Europe* (1992), Nowell-Smith and Stephen Ricci's *Hollywood and Europe: Economics, Culture and National Identity* (1998), and *National Identity and European Cinema* (Drummond et al., 1993). During the 1980s, the acceleration of globalization, privatization of public broadcasting, and development of a European-wide media policy supported by the European Union, led to an increase in scholarship which examined policy issues in relation to film. Work falling into this category included Richard Collins' *From Satellite to Single Market* (1998) and *Media and Identity in Contemporary Europe* (2002); and

Albert Moran's *Film Policy* (1996). Attention also tended to be paid here to the European 'co-production' as a creature of a European, as opposed to national, film market, as in Anne Jackel's *European Film Industries* (2003) and Mette Hjort and Scott MacKenzie's *Cinema and Nation* (2000).

In addition to dealing with Europe as a whole, much work appearing during this period dealt more directly with issues of particular national cinemas, and it is possible to argue that this eventually became established as one of the most important bodies of historical film scholarship to be produced during the 1990s and beyond. Writers on British cinema have already been referred to, but in addition to these, writers such as Ginette Vincendeau, Serge Daney, Aumont, Jill Forbes, Martin O'Shaughnessey, Antoine De Baerque, Guy Austin, Carrie Tarr, Phil Powrie, Hayward, Michèle Lagny, Pierre Sorlin, Marie and others explored various aspects of French cinema. Sorlin's *The Film in History* (1980) and *European Cinemas, European Societies* (1991), Lagny's *Senso* (1990) and Marie's *La Nouvelle Vague* (2001) can all be cited as good examples of such scholarship. The same phenomena was evident in relation to the Italian cinema, where Roy Armes, Georgio Bertellini, Pierre Leprohon, Mira Liehm, Gianni Volpi, James Hay, Sorlin and others produced important work. An example here would be, once again, Sorlin and his *Italian National Cinema* (1996). Outside of France and Italy, writers such as Dina Iordinoва, Yuri Tsivian, Anna Lawton, Graham Petrie, Lynne Attwood, David Gillespie, Paul Coates, Richard Taylor, Anikó Imre, and David Goulding wrote on Russian and central/eastern European cinemas. Imre's edited anthology, *East European Cinemas* (2005), is a good example of such scholarship, though Richard Taylor's extensive research into and translation of Eisenstein and the Soviet film scholarship of the 1920s and 1930s, including his and Ian Christie's edited collection *The Film Factory: Russian and Soviet Cinema in Documents 1896–1939* (1988) deserves special mention here. Peter von Bagh's work on Finnish cinema, and

Tytti Soila's *Nordic National Cinemas* (1998) and *The Cinema of Scandinavia* (2005), dealt with issues of film and national identity in northern Europe; whilst writers such as Anton Kaes, Sabina Hake, Julian Knight, David Clarke, Gertrud Koch, Erwin Leiser, Terri Ginsberg, Patrice Petro, Eric Rentschler, Marc Silberman, Miriam Bratu Hansen, Richard Taylor, Eric Rentschler, Julian Petley, Thomas Elsaesser and others wrote on the German cinema (see, for example, Ginsberg and Thompson, 1996). Rob Stone, Barry Jordan, Alberto Mira and Peter William Evans' work on Spanish and Portuguese national cinema deserves mention here, as does Maria Stassinopoulou on Greek cinema, Ruth Barton (2004) on Irish cinema, Robert Von Dassanowsky (2005) on Austrian cinema, and Paul Coates (2005) on Polish cinema. Many other examples could be given. Such work adds up to a particularly significant body of European film scholarship, supported by the emergence of new journals, such as *Studies in European Cinema*, which first appeared in 2003.

The school of popular cinema historiography referred to above could be labelled 'pragmatist' with a small 'p' in recognition of its turn from high theory to more empirical, observable and realizable forms of analysis. However, during the 1990s, a school of scholarship emerged, largely in America, which might be labelled 'Pragmatist' with a capital 'P'. Like postmodernism and historicist approaches, American Pragmatist-influenced film theory eschewed a concern for abstract theory, and turned, instead, to more restricted enquiries into empirical or intermediate categories of concept and material. It was impelled to do so, in part, by the conviction that such concepts and material would provide more useful, classifiable and testable results. However, whether consciously or unconsciously, this pragmatist practice tended to secrete a bracketing of high theory under the veil of an opposition to screen theory, and, in particular, the unifying imperative underlying screen theory. So, for example, Bordwell argues against the need for a 'Big Theory of Everything', by which

he means screen theory, or any contemporary facsimile of screen theory (Bordwell and Carroll, 1996: 29–30). The problem is that what Bordwell calls ‘middle-level’ theorizing (Bordwell and Carroll, 1996: 29), and what Noël Carroll refers to as ‘piecemeal generalisation’ (Carroll, 1996: 332), does not just stand as an opposition to screen theory, or even to ‘big’ comprehensive theories, but also, as argued, as a general opposition to the predominant use of chiefly abstract theoretical categories within film research.

One consequence of this is an avoidance of the high ‘culturalist’ issues which fall too far outside the technical discursive territory of what Bordwell calls the ‘middle-level research programme’ (Bordwell and Carroll, 1996: 29). Another is an avoidance of engagement with the political. Although there is no necessary contradiction between a pragmatist approach and political engagement, in practice, the general orientation of the pragmatist approach is to bypass the political. This pragmatist school of Film Studies developed in the United States was influenced by North American pragmatist philosophy, from William James to Richard Rorty, and is closely linked to the development of film scholarship based upon principles derived from cognitivist methodology and Anglo-American analytical philosophy. A pragmatist orientation towards theory fits less easily with the history of European film theory and scholarship, which has always been based on high theory, and on the engagement with the kinds of ‘culturalist’ categories which pragmatist film theorists would prefer to distance themselves from.

Some attempts have been made to introduce both analytical philosophy and cognitivist methodology into European scholarship, as (in the latter case) in Murray Smith’s *Engaging Characters: Fiction, Emotion and the Cinema* (1995) and Torben Grodal’s *Moving Pictures* (1997). As with Smith and Grodal’s work, the value of applying cognitivist methods to the study of film lies in the degree of detail and close empirical analysis which can be generated. Another important intervention into the field of film

scholarship stemming from the analytical tradition is that offered by Stanley Cavell, and, in particular, by *The World Viewed: Reflections on the Ontology of Film* (1979). Whilst writing mainly on the American cinema, Cavell has written on some European films and filmmakers, including Jean-Luc Godard, Bergman and Rohmer. When discussing Godard’s *Je vous salue, Marie* (France/Switzerland/UK, 1984), for example, Cavell invokes Ludwig Wittgenstein in order to explore notions of the ‘soul’, ‘miracle’, and the Christian idea of the relationship between soul and body, as he believes them to be portrayed in Godard’s film (2005: 179–80). Although Cavell’s work continues to spawn ongoing critical interpretations, most of this work, as in William Rothman’s *Cavell on Film* (2005), tends to be carried out in North America, rather than Europe. In addition to Cavell, scholars such as Carroll and Cynthia A. Freedland, write on Film Studies from within the perspective of analytical philosophy. Finally, Terry Lovell’s *Pictures of Reality* (1980) and Aitken’s *Realist Film Theory and Cinema* (2006) attempt a critique of conventionalist, relativist, pragmatist and cognitivist positions from within a theoretical framework of ‘philosophical realism’: a branch of analytical philosophy associated with philosophers such as Roy Bhaskar, Roger Trigg, Rom Harré and others, and encapsulated in Trigg’s *Reality at Risk: A Defense of Realism in Philosophy and the Sciences* (1989).

In addition to the Anglo-American analytical tradition, another relatively recent, though in this case ‘continental’ philosophical influence on European film scholarship, has been that of Gilles Deleuze, and particularly his *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* (1986) and *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (1989). In these two books, Deleuze attempts to develop an understanding of the aesthetic specificity of cinematic form based on conceptions of temporal experience which he derives from the philosophy of Henri Bergson. Bergson considered space and time to be aspects of ‘*durée*’, or ‘duration’. The universe (duration) is conceived of as a flow of matter-movement, which condenses into space, time

and discrete objects. *Durée* is, therefore, a continuously changing manifold flow of succession, which constitutes an evolving totality (Bogue, 2003: 3). This notion of duration as fluctuating totality forms the basis of Deleuze's understanding of the cinema, within which he conceives of the film 'frame' as a slice of duration, 'montage' as a linked combination of such slices, and the 'shot' as the material basis of both frame and montage. The cinematic image is, therefore, a framed image-in-movement: what Deleuze refers to as the 'movement-image', because the image captures the movement occurring within a slice of *durée*. Deleuze argues that the 'movement-image' characterizes the cinema from its origins to the 1940s, after which it evolves into the 'time-image', which provides the aesthetic basis for later, more modern/modernist cinema. Deleuze's account of the progression from movement-image to time-image appears to suggest that such progression is both inevitable and benign, and, although Deleuze has claimed that he is not arguing that 'the modern cinema of the time-image is more "valuable" than the classical cinema of the movement-image', the thrust of his argument leads in that direction (Deleuze, 1986: x).

Deleuze argues that the film image is a material entity in itself before it is an image of something, and that, because of this, the expressive potential of the image should be allowed to transcend any representational imperative imposed upon it. At the same time, Deleuze also contends that, in the case of the 'movement-image', the primary expressive and substantial character of the film image is beset by such an imperative. Furthermore, that imperative is necessarily caught up within dominant, ideological representational systems of logic, language, and rationality, because such macro-systems possess the power to determine the structure and function of all representational systems operating within and beneath them. The cinema of the movement-image is therefore problematic for a number of reasons. Above all, it subordinates expression to representation, and such representation necessarily serves to

reproduce dominant ideologies. In addition, the movement-image is only able to encase a segment of duration, and is, as a consequence, unable to portray the extensive nature of *durée* directly: although the image is able to indicate the presence of the manifold as it spreads beyond the confines of the image, it is unable to portray that presence directly. Finally, the movement-image is unable to portray the movement of duration itself, because each shot constitutes only a fragment of duration. Despite the overall thrust of his argument, Deleuze does not abandon the belief that the movement-image remains of value, because of its ability to represent duration, albeit indirectly, and because it still holds onto some of its latent, expressive character.

For Deleuze, two principal factors explain the shift from the movement-image to the time-image around 1940. The first was the experience of the carnage and atrocities of the Second World War: an experience subsequently directed into a critique of the forms of naturalized rationalism and ideologically-driven logic which had provided legitimation for such carnage and atrocities. This critique found expression within the cinema in terms of a desire to free the medium from the overriding sway of its representational and normative functions: functions which worked to make manifest an 'effect of truth' that had now been brought into profound question (Deleuze, 1989: 142). In place of the naturalizing function of the movement-image, the time-image now emphasized the expressive and material character of the film image. In addition, the cinema of the time-image sought to establish 'unnatural' links between things, as part of a deconstructive 'modern' phase of the cinema, in which film mobilized the 'powers of the false' in repudiation of prevailing assumptions (Deleuze, 1989: 126). The second cause of the shift to the time-image lay in the inability of the movement-image to portray *durée* directly, as an open, evolving whole. Such incapacity made it imperative that a new means of portraying *durée* more directly be found. It was in the use of long-take deep-focus photography by Orson Welles, suggests Deleuze, that, perhaps

for the first time in the cinema, the time-image came to correspond more directly to the actual character of duration as continuously changing totality.

Although preoccupied, at one level, with film's ability to represent space and time as he believes they exist within duration, it is clear that, at another level, Deleuzian film theory is driven by a contrary stipulation that film should not be regarded primarily as a representational medium. Such a stipulation has larger implications, which stretch well beyond the prospective significance of Deleuze's own theoretical system. His insistence that the deconstructive and 'expressive' aspects of the film medium must take precedence over any representational function ultimately derives from his more general understanding of the philosophical concept as an expressive 'force', rather than as something which is particularly commensurable, or representational; and this, in turn, places Deleuze's thought firmly within a greater body of postmodernist thought, one which has become increasingly influential within European film theory and scholarship since the 1980s. That postmodernist tradition possesses many attributes, including a predisposition for the deconstruction of naturalized ideology, the mobilization of an array of complex concepts drawn from a variety of disciplines, the ability to engage with the political, and a celebration of the values of polysemy and difference. It also draws upon important intellectual sources within European intellectual history, including figures such as Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger, and theoretical schemas such as those of psychoanalysis, linguistics and philosophy.

Although a great deal of highly productive European film scholarship continues to be carried out within this postmodernist tradition, it would be unfortunate if it were to become hegemonic at the expense of the other traditions of scholarship addressed within this chapter. The academy of European film scholarship needs to remain open and accessible. It should resist the temptation to close in on itself as it tended to during the period of screen theory, and as it could again. In addition to

supporting postmodernist research, European film scholarship will flourish best if it adopts a reflective, and, in cases where it is warranted, revisionist stance, in order to engage with the heritage of European film, and European Film Studies, as they have developed from the beginning of the twentieth century to the present. This, in turn, will require the continued deployment of historiographical and related methodologies as part of a larger study of European film history. European film scholarship will also benefit from a continued engagement with both pre-twentieth century traditions of European thought, and the other traditions covered in this chapter, namely, those of nineteenth century realism/classical Marxism, intuitionist realism and modernism, auteurism, Saussurian, and postmodern post-structuralism/pragmatism.

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