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# Film kot transformativni agens v umetnosti in njegovi odmevi<sup>1</sup>

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## Uvod

Odkar film obstaja kot kulturni in industrijski pojav (ali, po Adornu, pojav »kulturne industrije«), so ta pojem označevali številni zgodovinski in sodobni označevalci. Ti v kombinaciji z valom živahnih gibanj različnih agensov ustvarjajo prostor za družbeno in kulturno mnogoterost. Najtehtnejšo refleksijo tega doslej je podal Gilles Deleuze (ob njem pa še Guattari) s svojo dialektiko neustavljivega gibanja po krožnih poteh interakcije med gibljivimi slikami in percepcijo. Stičišče med humanistično teorijo in filmom je postalo vidno šele naknadno. Film je bil v svojem začetnem obdobju domnevno razumljen predvsem kot zabavna atrakcija za širšo publiko, kar je bila posledica tehnološke novosti. Ni tako bistveno, ali je ta domneva preverljiva ali ne, zelo očitno pa je, da je do konceptualnega oblikovanja kakršnegakoli okvira za dosledno razumevanje filma minilo nekaj časa. To se je naposled zgodilo v letih 1915 in 1916, kot določita Elsaesser in Hagener,<sup>2</sup> ki sta v omenjeni leti postavila rojstvo teorije filma. Za prva avtorja na področju filmske teorije naj bi veljala pesnik Vachel Lindsay in seveda Hugo Münsterberg. Njuni knjigi o »gibljivih

1 Članek je nastal iz prispevka z naslovom »Cinema and Alterations of the Transdisciplinarity in Humanities«, predstavljenega na Mednarodnem kongresu estetike 2022, ki pa je v Belo Horizonteju (Brazilija) zaradi pandemije covid-19 potekal med 24. in 28. julijem 2023.

2 Elsaesser, Thomas in Hagener, Malte. 2015: *Film Theory. An Introduction Through the Senses*, New York: Routledge, str. 1.

slikah« in »fotodrami« sta še vedno paradigmi glavne razlike, ki se je v filmski teoriji in kritiki vtisnila v mnoge pristope k filmu v širšem pomenu in k posameznim filmskim delom. Med njunima pristopoma ni bilo nasprotij ali neujemanj; pravzaprav sta drug drugega potrjevala. Objava njunih esejev je sovpadla s krstno predstavitvijo filma D. W. Griffitha *Rojstvo naroda* (The Birth of a Nation, 1915). V Lindsayjevem pisanju lahko najdemo zametke bodoče sociologije filma, kot tudi prikaz vpliva politike, ki je nujno zahteval odziv kritika. V svojih analizah posameznih filmov v knjigi *The Art of the Moving Pictures*, ki je bila objavljena leta 1915, je prepoznal velik prispevek D. W. Griffitha. Toda v primeru filma *Rojstvo naroda* je jasno opozoril na njegov očitni rasizem, obenem pa izrazil navdušenje nad množičnimi prizori: »Rojstvo naroda je film množice v trojnem smislu. V filmu, kot tudi v občinstvu, spremeni množico v drhal, ki bodisi podpira bodisi zavrača strupeno sovraštvo častitega Thomasa Dixona do črncev.«<sup>3</sup> Družbena, kulturna in politična kontekstualizacija novega medija je torej v njegovem pisanju očitna. Politika filma je tu definirana glede na njen učinek na občinstvo. Glede na to, da ponavljajoče se filmske projekcije omogočajo dostop do širšega občinstva, kot si ga je bilo mogoče prej predstavljati v katerikoli zvrsti umetnosti, film torej občinstvo spreminja v nepogrešljivo družbeno tvorbo množične kulture. Münsterberg pa je v svoji utemeljitvi teorije filma usmeril pogled navznoter. Ukvarjal se je s percepcijo filma in ga opredelil s psihološkega vidika. V njegovem pisanju je film oziroma tako imenovana *fotodrama* agens, ki upravlja psihološke procese občinstva. Lindsayjeve »množice« so pri Münsterbergu definirane glede na lastnosti posameznikov: »[G]ibljive slike ne pritegnejo samo domišljije, temveč prenesejo sporočilo tudi intelektu.«<sup>4</sup>

### **Ustvarjalec in gledalec**

Že v samem začetku teorije filma se je estetika soočila z izzivom svojega formalnega okvira. Veliko jasneje kot v primeru predhodnih šestih umetnosti se je pokazalo, da tedanja estetika ne zadošča niti za definicijo in analizo filma kot medija niti za interpretacijo njegovih družbenih in kognitivnih učinkov. Münsterberg je v svoji tematizaciji naslovnika gibljivih podob dejansko govoril o povratnem pogledu podob. »Analiziramo mentalne procese, ki jih ta specifična oblika *umetniškega* delovanja vzbudi v nas.«<sup>5</sup> Skladno s tem poudarja kontekst, ki se kanalizira skozi percepcijo posameznika:

Te poglede moramo pospremiti z množtvom idej. Za nas morajo imeti pomen, obogatiti jih mora naša domišljija, obuditi morajo ostaline poprejšnjih izkušenj, razburkati morajo

naša občutja in emocije, zaigrati na našo dojemljivost, poroditi ideje in misli, v naših mislih morajo biti povezani z nepretrgano nitjo drame in našo pozornost morajo nenehno usmerjati k pomembnemu in bistvenemu elementu dogajanja.<sup>6</sup>

Lindsayjevo in Münsterbergovo razmišljanje je bilo zametek za oblikovanje paradigme za novo vedo v humanistiki; ne samo za ozko definirano filmsko teorijo in spremljajočo kritiko, temveč za nekaj, kar moramo prepoznati kot široko interdisciplinarno in transdisciplinarno področje. Njuni besedili se bereta kot odziv na *dogodek* pojava filma v polju kulture, ki je prišel iz »nepričakovanega« vira in ga je utelešala tehnologija industrijske družbe v času enega od vrhuncev njenega napredka, splošno znanega kot *fin de siècle*. Besedili obeh sta nakazovali novo resničnost, ali če smo natančnejši: naznanjali sta spremembo predstav o resničnosti, ki jo je sprožilo vstavljanje filma v združeni prostor umetnosti, množične kulture, psihologije množic in postničejskega polja umetnosti.

Kako se v ta novi kontekst, ki je nastal pod vplivom filma, vpisujeta Nietzschejeva kritika estetike Immanuela Kanta in njegov posledični obrat odnosa med gledalcem in ustvarjalcem? »Kant [je], tako kot vsi filozofi, namesto da bi uvidel estetski problem iz izkušnje umetnika (ustvarjalca), razmišljal o umetnosti in lepoti zgolj s stališča 'gledalca'.«<sup>7</sup> Ta obrat zahteva, da estetika upošteva perspektivo gledalca, ki je do konca 19. stoletja dobil pogled filmske kamere. Ta Nietzschejeva intervencija nikakor ni bila »nedolžna«, saj je presojala o skrajno pomembnem premeščanju virov za ustvarjanje predstav o resničnosti znotraj umetnosti. Zato tukaj ne poudarjam toliko Nietzschejevega genija – tj. njegove intuicije in uvida –, saj je pomen njegovih navedenih razmislekov predvsem v njihovem odnosu do kompleksne in živahne družbene realnosti. S svojimi kritičnimi pogledi na Kantov koncept pogleda gledalca brez interesa je povezal umetnost in estetiko s poljem – grobo rečeno – politike.<sup>8</sup> Njegovo intelektualno dejanje je sovpadalo s pojavom množic ne samo v industrijskem gospodarstvu, temveč tudi v kulturi, strukturiranih po neopredeljivem načelu mnogoterosti, v katerem se ne more obdržati zgolj »ena resničnost«. »Nietzschejevo filozofijo bi tako sestavljala nekakšna sofistika, katere namen je zabrisati sledi resnice in v glavah tistih, ki se namenijo slediti njenim potem, razvezati vse povezave z resničnostjo.«<sup>9</sup> V tridesetih letih 20. stoletja je te posledice jasno nakazal Walter Benjamin v svojem temeljnem eseju »Umetnina v času, ko jo je mogoče tehnično reproducirati«. Benjaminove ugotovitve glede odločilne spremembe percepcije, izhajajoče iz transformacije sposobnosti

6 *Ibid.*, str. 72.

7 Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1988: *Onstran dobrega in zlega. Genealogija morale*. Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, str. 289.

8 Prim.: Agamben, Giorgio. 1999: *The Man without Content*. Stanford, Kalifornija: Stanford University Press, str. 2. V duhu Nietzschejevega diskurza Agamben to povezovanje umetnosti in politike označi za odsev umetnosti v »zlato kroglj volje do moči«.

9 Rosset, Clément. 1983: *La force majeure*. Pariz: Éditions de minuit, str. 59.

3 Lindsay, Vachel. 2000: *The Art of the Moving Pictures*. New York: Modern Library.

4 Münsterberg, Hugo. 1916: *The Photoplay. A psychological study*. New York in London: Appleton, str. 21.

5 *Ibid.*, str. 45. Poudarek avtorja.

vida, ki jo izkusi množično občinstvo, povzemajo vpliv filma. »Usmeritev realnosti k množicam in množic k njej je dogajanje z neomejenimi posledicami, tako za mišljenje kot za vizualno opažanje.«<sup>10</sup>

### Svet simulakra

Številni cinefilci in teoretiki, od Ricciotta Canuda in Rudolfa Arnheima do Béle Balázsa in Georgesa Sadoula, so vložili izjemen trud v razlago filma in njegovega »jezika« in so nedvomno veliko prispevali k utemeljitvi filmske teorije. Toda večinoma so zgrešili bistvo, kar je postalo jasno po natančnem branju navdihujoče Benjaminove intervencije.<sup>11</sup> Vztrajali so pri ponazarjanju in celo dokazovanju, da je film umetniška oblika. Problematično pri njihovem prizadevanju je bilo to, da so poskušali film umestiti v »tradicionalne« estetske kategorije. Obenem so umetniško legitimnost filma zagovarjali tudi nekateri prvi filmski ustvarjalci, kot so Jean Epstein, Germaine Dulac in celo Sergei Eisenstein, ki so vključevali teoretsko misel v svoje filmsko ustvarjanje ali nasprotno. Pri tem so spregledali, da film ne potrebuje takega zagovornišтва, saj so izstopajoča sodobna umetniška dela že tako ali tako odražala mnogotere vplive sprememb kot posledice preobrazbe vlog ustvarjalca in gledalca v kontekstu industrijskega razvoja in buržoazne kulture. Iz tega osnovnega obrata sta izhajali občutno drugačni funkcija in narava umetnosti, s katerima se je stežka sprijaznila celo estetika kot veda. Samoprepoznanje umetnosti v »zlati krogli volje do moči« je številne umetnike odvrnilo od ustvarjanja vtisa *sublimnega* ali s tem povezanih kategorij, o katerih so presojali Baumgarten, Winkelmann in Kant – ne glede na to, kako različni so že bili njihovi pogledi! Družbene in tehnološke spremembe so pozneje sprožile gibanje, ki ga je s svojo edinstveno sposobnostjo uvida predvidel Nietzsche. Pri tem gibanju ni šlo za redefinicijo pojmov lepote, okusa in forme, temveč za njihovo nadomeščanje in preseganje na način, da se umetnost prepozna s kategorijami, kot so resnica, osvoboditev čutov in življenje. A kot so pokazala larpurlartistična gibanja, sta se umetnost in estetika zapletli v boj za avtonomijo umetnosti. Na čelu teh trendov so bili seveda avantgardni umetniki. »Umetnost je postala primer nečesa, kar je zmožno razkriti lažno podobo dejanskega.«<sup>12</sup> Poudarek na neodvisnosti umetnosti znotraj koncepta »teologije umetnosti« – kot je Benjamin označil larpurlartizem – je seveda v splošnem paradoksalno dosegel

10 Benjamin, Walter. 1998: »Umetnina v času, ko jo je mogoče tehnično reproducirati«. V: *Izbrani spisi*. Ljubljana: SH Zavod za založniško dejavnost, str. 153.

11 Benjaminovo delo in konkretno njegov esej o umetnosti v času, ko jo je mogoče reproducirati, napisan v zgodnjih tridesetih letih, sta postala predmet širše razprave šele po letu 1955, ko je založba Suhrkamp Verlag objavila njegove *Schriften* z Adornovim uvodom. Ta zbirka besedil je bila angleško govoreči javnosti predstavljena precej pozneje, leta 1968, ko so pri Harcourt, Brace & World izdali *Illuminations* z uvodom Hanne Arendt.

12 Anaya, Jorge L. 1999: *Estetica de la incertidumbre. El arte despues del fin del arte*. Buenos Aires: Fundacion Federico Jorge Klemm, str. 13.

nasprotni izid, saj so pozivi k avtonomiji umetnosti kot taki vključevali odnos z državo, cerkvijo in družbenimi institucijami, torej s politiko. Zaradi tega paradoksa je umetnost v svojih mnogoterih pojavnih oblikah vstopila v polje nenehnega preizpraševanja resničnosti, s tem pa sodelovala v najrazličnejših gibanjih, ki so jo hotela prikrojiti. Nekaj časa je trajalo, da je film pokazal svoj lastni umetniški potencial, nato pa je kmalu postalo jasno, da zmore postavljati pod vprašaj in širiti meje umetniških žanrov, zvrsti in tehnik ter ustvarjati nove možnosti in perspektive umetniške inovativnosti in komunikacije. To pomeni, da je sposoben interakcije z drugimi umetnostmi, kot so literatura, glasba, slikarstvo, fotografija, gledališče in ples, pri čemer bogati njihove oblike izraza in reprezentacije ter povečuje njihovo raznolikost. Film je sedma umetnost »v nekem povsem posebnem smislu. Ne dodaja se šestim drugim na isti ravnini, kot je njihova, vključuje jih, je ena-več ob šestih drugih. Nanje, izhajajoč iz njih, deluje z gibanjem, ki ga odtegne njim samim.«<sup>13</sup> Ta Badioujeva trditev izpostavlja zavedanje o nekakšni krožni interakciji med filmom in »preostalo« umetnostjo ter njenimi različnimi oblikami. Po eni strani se je moralo »drugih šest umetnosti« spopasti s filmsko umetnostjo kot novo vsiljivko v njihovem vzpostavljenem družbenem prostoru, po drugi strani pa film ni kazal nikakršnih zadržkov pred prilaščanjem vsega, kar je v umetniški tradiciji in sodobnosti ustrezalo njegovim namenom.

Pokazatelj precej naglo napredujočega prepletanja filma in drugih umetnosti so sčasoma postajali čedalje vidnejši. Poleg tega je bil to čas številnih premen, umetniških in tehnoloških prebojev ter že minulega družbenega in političnega vrenja. Film je postopno formiral različne resničnosti, saj je znotraj vzorcev percepcije, ki so se izoblikovali v množični kulturi, omogočil širjenje novih simbolnih konfiguracij. Te resničnosti obsegajo različne filmske vsebine, spojene z družbenimi jezikovnimi kodi, čutnimi nagnjenji in načini vedenja iz vsakdanjega življenja. Vse te sestavine so povezane z različnimi avdiovizualnimi fantazmičnimi stvaritvami, obenem pa z njimi v nasprotju. Film je bil agens, ki je Deleuzu omogočil trditev: »*Moderni svet je svet simulakrov*.«<sup>14</sup> Deleuzova definicija simulakra, ki je »rizomsko« vzklila iz Platonove filozofije, nakazuje, da odkritega prepoznavanja resničnosti ni več mogoče zaobiti z določanjem razlike med »resničnostjo« in nečim očitnim ali reprezentiranim. Tako imenovana »varljivost« podob, ki prevzamejo naše čute, v tej ureditvi postane odveč. Svet simulakra je torej naša resničnost brez dvojnice v idejni sferi. Še dodatno to združitve virtualnega in resničnega v zmes zaznane resničnosti pojasnjuje pojem *neposrednosti*. Jacques Rancière<sup>15</sup> je pojem neposrednosti uporabil, ko je hotel pokazati, kako film znotraj svojih zmožnosti organizira »*delitev čutnega*«.

13 Badiou, Alain. 2004: *Mali priročnik o inestetiki*. Ljubljana: Društvo Apokalipsa, str. 113.

14 Deleuze, Gilles. 2011: *Razlika in ponavljanje*. Ljubljana: Založba ZRC SAZU, str. 25.

15 Gl.: Rancière, Jacques. 2015: *Aisthesis: prizori iz estetskega režima umetnosti*. Ljubljana: Maska, 11. poglavje.

V svojih razmislekih poda idejo pomena ukinjanja razdalje pri gledanju filmov, ki se pozneje uveljavi kot pojem *neposrednosti*. Po tej analizi umetnost zahteva *neposrednost*, namreč umetnost, ki jo Rancière imenuje »*umetnost projiciranih gibljivih senc*«. Razlikovanje med virtualnim, imaginarnim in resničnim se je torej izoblikovalo že z analognim filmom, kot tudi v naslednji prekinitvi jasne delitve med njima. Ti kategoriji se seveda tedaj nista uporabljali v enakem pomenu kot danes in morda teoretično nista bili povsem razumljeni. V vsakem primeru pa je delovanje percepcije v »svetu simulakra« postalo pogojeno s formo – ki jo je mogoče opisati v smislu estetike – zaradi prihoda filma, ki so mu pozneje sledili drugi avdiovizualni mediji. Posledice tega so očitne, posnetki ali gibljive zvočne podobe določajo percepcijo resničnosti, ki je spojena z iluzijo. »*Totalna raba medijev namesto totalne pismenosti: zvočne filmske in videokamere kot množična zabava ubijajo resnični dogodek.*«<sup>16</sup>

### Rojstvo kulturne analize

Velik del polemik glede opredeljevanja filma kot umetnosti je bil povezan s tem, da je kinematografija postopno postala velika, tržno usmerjena industrija. Raba gibljivih slik v politični in ideološki propagandi v dobi televizije in v oglaševanju je po drugi strani vzbujala »akademske« dvome o tem, da je mogoče film kot umetnost jemati resno. A predvsem po koncu modernizma ter prehodu umetniške prakse v postmoderno »fazo« so vse zvrsti umetnosti seveda podlegle gibanju (tržnih) vrednosti. Čeprav trg z umetniškimi izdelki deluje pod pogoji posebnega »predkapitalističnega« načina delovanja, kot ga je opredelil Bourdieu, umetniška dela delujejo kot blago.

Pojav umetniškega dela kot blaga in nastop posebne kategorije proizvajalcev simbolnih dobrin, namenjenih za trg, sta do neke mere pripravila teren za čisto teorijo umetnosti, torej umetnosti kot umetnosti. To se je zgodilo z ločitvijo umetnosti kot blaga od umetnosti kot čiste tvorbe pomena, ustvarjene z izključno simbolnim namenom za izključno simbolno prilaščanje, torej za ugodje brez interesa, ki ga ni mogoče zvesti na preprosto materialno posedovanje.<sup>17</sup>

Iz »čiste teorije umetnosti« je skozi akcije avantgardnih gibanj kljub njihovim notranjim polemikam izšlo zavedanje, da umetnosti ni mogoče razlagati samo v ozkih estetskih okvirih, zato je postala predmet kompleksnih interdisciplinarnih kulturnoloških teorij. Pregled zametkov teh teorij bi pokazal, da je njihov razvoj potekal vzporedno s progresivnimi družbenimi gibanji, ki so dosegla vrhunec v revoluciji

16 Kittler, Friedrich A. 1999: *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, str. 133.

17 Bourdieu, Pierre. 1993: *The Field of Cultural Production. Essays on Art and Literature*. London: Polity Press, str. 114.

leta 1968. Ko je postalo jasno, da javnih dogodkov v obliki *prikazovanja* ni mogoče izvzemati iz razmerij moči in oblasti, so Foucaultove študije postale okvir za pojasnjevanje sprememb na področju muzejskih praks. Proces vključevanja umetnosti v novo strukturo družbenih institucij je potekal v smeri, katere začetki so segali v 19. stoletje, ko so začeli muzeji širši publiki omogočati dostop do umetniških izdelkov. Na kratko: deljenje produktov umetniške prakse z javnim pogledom prek specializiranih ustanov in trga simboličnih dobrin v dobi modernizma je vzbudilo potrebo po razmahu pojasnjevalnih konceptualnih »orodij«.

Film, ki je vstopil v družbeni prostor, ko je bil ta prostor zanj že pripravljen, je to dogajanje pospešil, saj je bil oblika hibridne umetnosti, namenjene množični potrošnji. Razlaganje filma kot umetnosti se je moralo neizbežno sprijazniti z dejstvom, da njegov umetniški vpliv korenini v cilju, da se ga pokaže čim večjemu občinstvu, ki so ga konservativni »elitistični« varuhi »sublimne« umetnosti obenem imeli za neizobraženo, nesposobno ipd. Skrbniki kanona so zato zagovarjali razlikovanje med različnimi vedami humanistike, ki so za svoj predmet obravnave vzele umetnost. Pri tem pa so se zapletali v ideološke boje, po zaslugi katerih so znotraj humanistike vzniknila nekatera področja interdisciplinarnosti.<sup>18</sup> V takih sporih so epistemološki in etični argumenti pogosto spodkopali estetske koncepte in norme. *Kulturne študije* (oziroma *kulturna analiza*) – najvidnejše med temi področji, ki je nastalo na presečišču številnih tokov – so se čedalje bolj ukvarjale z umetniško prakso, ki je izhajala iz uporabe tehnološko osnovanih medijev. Mieke Bal s priznane Amsterdamske šole za kulturno analizo (ASCA) je zato zapisala: »*Kulturne študije so se razvile iz polemik zoper arbitrarnost meja med vedami, zoper pogosto izključevalne predpostavke glede estetike, na katerih pretežno temelji delo humanistov, ter zoper delitve, najprej na estetiko in etiko, nato na umetnost in družbena vprašanja, ki so bila potisnjena na področje družbenih ved.*«<sup>19</sup> Kar je Thomas Elsaesser leta 1999 nekoliko oklevaje nakazal z besedami »*Utegnem se pridružiti mnenju, da brez upoštevanja filma ne bomo nikdar razumeli našega stoletja*«,<sup>20</sup> je postalo splošno mnenje, ki presega zgolj akademsko skupnost. V svojem poglavju citirane knjige je Elsaesser »preroško« napovedal vpliv »*vala novih slikovnih naprav*«. Nove tehnologije

18 Obdobje dvajsetih in tridesetih let 20. stoletja, ki je bilo tudi vrhunec avantgarde v skoraj vseh oblikah, je bilo v tem pogledu izjemno produktivno. Predvsem v Nemčiji so ostre razprave o nekaterih Lukáčsevih propozicijah, ki so se dotikale težav z ustvarjanjem umetnosti v socialistični družbi, polemike med radikalnejšimi ekspresionisti in novo stvarnostjo (*Neue Sachlichkeit*) ipd. začrtale vrsto dilem, ki so bile jasneje formulirane v poznejši modernistični dobi.

19 Bal, Mieke. 1999: »Introduction«. V: Bal, Mieke (ur.) *The Practice of Cultural Analysis. Exposing Interdisciplinary Interpretation*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, , str. 6.

20 Elsaesser, Thomas. 1999: »'Le cinéma d'après Lumière': Rereading the 'Origins' of the Filmic image«. V: Bal, Mieke (ur.) *The Practice of Cultural Analysis Exposing Interdisciplinary Interpretation*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, , str. 61.

/.../ se nikoli ne pojavijo s preprostim procesom dodajanja /.../. Nasprotno, tehnologija v celoti preoblikuje okolje, na katero taka praksa lahko vpliva. Spremeni področje, še bolj pa predstavo, ki jo gojimo o tem področju, pri čemer jasno izpostavlja povezave, ki so vselej obstajale, vendar se nikdar niso zdele pomembne, s tem pa obenem redefinira zgodovine, za katere si lahko zamišljamo, da so te spremembe povzročile.<sup>21</sup>

Hibridna narava, na kateri temelji film v razmerju do drugih umetnosti, seveda zahteva interdisciplinarnost in hlepi po njej. Poleg tega je potencialnost mnogoterih načinov rabe filmske kamere pri upodabljanju resničnosti ter njeni manipulaciji, interpretaciji in modifikaciji že v času tako imenovanega analognega filma prinašala širok spekter ustvarjalnih možnosti. Te možnosti se v prostoru semiotičnih širitev v odnosih med besedili in vizualnimi formami le še množijo. Umetna inteligenca prevzema delo filma in televizije s tem, da gradi na percepciji, ki sta jo film in televizija »zasnovala« in ki jo še naprej sooblikujejo mediji, ki jo upravljajo v digitalni dobi.

#### **Odpiranje vrat posvečenih prostorov z eksperimentalnim filmom**

Tako imenovani eksperimentalni film je v svojem času odražal različne konceptualne ustroje umetniških lastnosti filma. Deleuze v odlomku petega poglavja svoje knjige *Podoba-gibanje*, v katerem precej asociativno govori o eksperimentalnem filmu v povezavi z Dzigo Vertovom, opozori na povratno zanko percepcije in tendenco eksperimentalnega filma v odnosu do Bergsonovega pojma čiste percepcije. Svoj pristop k pojavi eksperimentalnega filma definira z izpeljanim konceptom »zavesti-kamere«, ki »se dviga do določila, ki ni več formalno ali materialno, temveč genetsko in diferencialno. Od realne definicije percepcije smo prešli h genetski definiciji.«<sup>22</sup>

Vzporedno z Deleuzovim prispevkom je Dudley Andrew v svoji knjigi o konceptih v filmski teoriji nakazal podobne smeri filmsko pogojene refleksije procesa percepcije, v katerem je bistvenega pomena gledanje. Iz pravilnega branja Andrewa izhaja, da film v procesu ustvarjanja gibljivih podob dejansko »posnema proces vida«. Gre za »premoščanje vrzeli med neprekinjenim tokom optičnih dražljajev ter organiziranimi polji in oblikami, ki jim pravimo filmske podobe.«<sup>23</sup> Pri tem bi bilo, vsekakor ne samo po Andrewu, nemogoče govoriti o procesu gledanja, če ne opredelimo njegovih prvin in povratnih shem, ki opredeljujejo perceptivnost in inteligibilnost vsakega filma, naj bo še tako povprečen. Film je tista oblika vizualne reprezentacije, ki jo pretirano določa tehnologija, obenem pa je zamisljiva samo v kombinaciji s tem, kar

21 *Ibid.*, str. 64.

22 Deleuze, Gilles. 1991: *Podoba-gibanje*. Ljubljana: ŠKUC, Znanstveni inštitut Filozofske fakultete, str. 118.

23 Andrew, Dudley J. 1984: *Concepts in film theory*. Oxford, London itd.: Oxford University Press, str. 35.

opredelimo psihološko in sociološko. Toda estetski učinek in vtis, ki ju posredujejo eksperimentalni filmi, sta bila izjemno pomembna. Andrew v povezavi s filmi J. J. Murphyja, Paula Sharitsa, Michaela Snowa, Brucea Connerja in Kennetha Angerja njihove najrazličnejše načine poigravanja s statičnimi in gibljivimi podobami definira kot predmete, ki »si zaslužijo kulturno branje«. Omenjeni filmski ustvarjalci, ki so bili opaženi že v petdesetih letih 20. stoletja, skupaj z nekaterimi še zgodnejšimi radikalnimi avtorji filmskih eksperimentov, kot je bila denimo Maya Deren, nedvomno vstopajo v posvečeni prostor umetniške prakse. Z branjem, kakršno predlaga Andrew, bi lahko delo radikalnih umetnikov šestdesetih in sedemdesetih let, kot so Andy Warhol, Peter Weibel in Valie Export, interpretirali kot odgovor s polja umetnosti. V vsakem primeru pa je impulz, ki je izhajal iz eksperimentalnih filmov, pretežno ustvarjenih brez misli na širšo publiko, preoblikoval umetniško produkcijo in prikazovanje umetnosti ter redefiniral poslanstvo umetnikov in njihova umetniška prizadevanja. Nadaljnji razmah vizualnega eksperimentiranja v obliki videoumetnosti, ki ga je omogočila tedaj nova tehnologija snemanja na magnetni trak ter prikazovanja posnetkov na zaslonih s katodno cevjo, je, kot vemo, prinesel spremembo, ki je odločilno in korenito preobrazila prostore galerij in muzejev, zapisanih sodobni umetnosti. Proces brisanja meja med filmom in videoperformansom je vsekakor na novo opredelil in izpostavil vlogo umetnika – ne samo kot ustvarjalca, temveč tudi kot družbenega agensa. S pojavom digitalnih sredstev produkcije, prikazovanja in distribucije umetnosti ta vloga postane še kompleksnejša ter eksternalizira globoke dileme o umetnikovi udeležbi v komunikacijskih kanalih in bojih za družbeno moč.

#### **Zaključek**

Film kot umetnost in obenem množična kultura je tako v 20. stoletju razdejal področje umetnosti in posledično estetike – potem pa domnevno umrl! Kot nezamisljiv agens se je pojavil ob rojstvu tehnološke dobe ter na skoraj najboljši možen način odprl družbeni in kulturni prostor za že pred tem začeto uresničitev Nietzschejeve domneve o emancipaciji umetnikov od kantovskega »pogleda brez interesa«. Pronicljiv filozof pa je že pred nastopom digitalne dobe, v začetku osemdesetih let, predvidel prihajajoči vpliv novih iznajdb. Gilles Deleuze je preroško napovedal: »Elektronska slika, se pravi televizijska ali video slika, porajajoča se numerična podoba naj bi bodisi transformirala film bodisi ga nadomestila, nakazala njegovo smrt.«<sup>24</sup> Po Deleuzovi bergsonovski spojitvi kategorij časa in pojmov gibanja<sup>25</sup> so teorije vizualnih umetnosti ob tehnološkem preseganju epistemološkega praga prešle od

24 Deleuze, Gilles. 2020: *Podoba-čas*. Ljubljana: Studia humanitatis, str. 372.

25 Prim. Bálint Kovács, András. 2000: »The Film History of Thought«. V: Flaxman, Gregory (ur.). *The Brain Is the Screen. Deleuze and the Philosophy of Cinema*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, str. 153–170.

podobe-časa k množici izumov z novimi besednimi skovankami in koncepti, katerih skupni naslov je digitalna slika, denimo postslika, RGB, mehka slika ipd. Obsežne teoretične produkcije na tem nepojmljivo aktivnem področju, ki rojeva številne okvirne hipoteze in podmene, ni prav preprosto povzeti. Zato naj navedem samo en primer tovrstnega razmišljanja Ingrid Hoelzl in Rémi Marieja, po besedah katerih je mogoče »podobo« glede na nedavne digitalne iznajdbe opredeliti drugače, namreč kot »operacijo in proces, namesto kot reprezentacijo«. Avtorja na podlagi novega tipa podobe, ki ga poimenujeta »mehka slika«, prideta do razumevanja podobe »kot odnosa med podatki in algoritmi, ki sodelujejo v operaciji zbiranja, obdelave, prikazovanja in izmenjevanja podatkov«. Nazadnje pa od tega tehničnega opisa preideta k definiciji, ki je bližje humanistiki in nas »odpelje prek meja humanističnega in antropocentričnega koncepta podobe ter odpira posthumanistični pogled na podobo. Privede nas do točke, kjer je človeški vid zgolj eden od številnih mogočih sistemov čutne zaznave in kjer moramo preizprašati pomen podob (in vizualizacije) v povezavi z nevizualnimi sistemi čutne zaznave.«<sup>26</sup> Teorija (gibljevih) slik se torej prepleta s problemi, ki v zadnjem času resno zaposlujejo najrazličnejše filozofije. Seveda se razume, da ti pojavi močno vplivajo tudi na preobrazbo polja estetike.

Hitro in čedalje pogosteje prehajamo od estetike k ontologiji in nazaj k epistemologiji. Filmske in medijske študije zato čaka nova »eksplozija« konceptualizacije tehnoloških novosti, ki jemljejo širšo publiko za poskusne zajčke v tem obsežnem eksperimentu preoblikovanja pojma resničnosti, vključno z vsemi oblikami umetniške dekonstrukcije resnice, iluzije in utvare. Ideja preobrazbe percepcije, ki jo je Benjamin nakazal pred skoraj devetdesetimi leti, se zdaj širi v neslutene prostore. Pojem »smrt filma« s tem dobiva nov pomen. Ta dvoumni izraz, ki izvira iz delitve na analogno in digitalno kinematografijo, označuje več kot zgolj prehojeno pot filma od celulojda do mikroprocesorjev, pomeni namreč tudi prerazporeditev kulturnih in družbenih institucij. Preseganje filma nakazuje novo strukturo, v kateri se svet filma končuje, saj je čedalje bolj odrinjen v filmske arhive in muzeje. Metaforično lahko govorimo o celotni zgodovini celulojdnega filma kot o truplu, ki se v umetniških kinih in kinotekah oživlja za zainteresirane goreče cinefile. Toda arhivirani artefakti ostajajo vir novega umetniškega navdiha, tako kot so bili slike in kipi iz prejšnjih obdobjev vedno vir za sodobne vizualne umetnike in umetnostne zgodovinarje.

Za konec velja dodati, da moramo zaradi pomanjkanja ustreznih konceptov in poimenovanj uporabljati skovanke iz obstoječih izrazov, podobno kot je Münsterberg film oziroma kinematografijo poimenoval z izrazom »fotodrama«. Med številnimi »postpojmi« je tudi tako imenovani »postfilm«, ki filmu zagotavlja posmrtno življenje. Že sama beseda »kinematografija« ali v angleščini »cinema« v našem novem institucionalnem redu filmske distribucije implicira samo eno od oblik prikazovanja

starih in novih filmov. Edisonova nedodelana in komercialno kratkovidna ideja, da bi prikazovanje filmov omejili na enega samega potrošnika naenkrat, je v digitalni dobi postala izvedljiva s širokim naborom platform za pretočno predvajanje, po katerih filmi pridejo na domače naprave in pametne telefone, ki teh filmov, strogo tehnično gledano, ne prikazujejo v nič manjši kakovosti kot kinematografi. Toda številni so prepričani, da kinematografskega predvajanja filma zaradi čarobne izkušnje sedenja v temi pred velikim platnom ni mogoče nadomestiti. Eden takih gledalcev je bil tudi Gilles Deleuze, ki je imel številne »filmske klasike« za dokaz presečišča filozofije in filma. V dobi »podobe-časa« so bili po njegovem mnenju Welles, Ozu, Bresson, Renois in drugi avtorji predhodniki poznejših intelektualnih filmskih refleksij družbenih preobrazb. Seveda so močan vpliv na tako imenovani umetniški film ohranili tudi pozneje. Predvsem v filmih Yasujira Ozuja in italijanskem neorealizmu glavna atributa gibljivih slik po Deleuzu nista več prostor in gibanje, temveč imata prednost topologija in čas.<sup>27</sup> Filmi, ki jih danes prepoznavamo kot del sloga *počasnega filma*, glede na to torej temeljijo na praktični rabi Ozujevih, Bressonovih itd. postopkov snemanja. Ker klasične filme omenjenih avtorjev zaznamujejo dolgi kadri, presenetljivi bližnji plani in popolna odsotnost sunkovite montaže, tudi najrazličnejši sodobni avtorji, kot so Abbas Kiarostami, Bela Tarr, Paul Schrader, Nuri Bilge Ceylan, Claire Denis, Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Hong Sang-soo in še vse več drugih, delno ali v celoti, nekateri v vseh svojih filmih, drugi samo v nekaterih, veljajo za predstavnike sloga *počasnega filma*. Filmi teh avtorjev privabljajo v kino gledalce, ki uživajo v meditativnem in poetičnem izrazu njihovih večinoma zahtevnejših del. Tako okolje skrivoma vzbuja občutja in čustva, ki jih gledalec veliko bolje izkusi ob kinematografski projekciji kot pred kakršnimkoli zaslonom, ki projicira podobe v naše oči in ušesa v domačem okolju.

*Počasni film* za zdaj skrbi za nadaljevanje umetniškega filma, ki se v večjih manifestacijah sodobne umetnosti, kot sta Beneški bienale ali kasselska Documenta, pogosto prepleta z videoperformansi. Drugi, neprimerljivo obsežnejši segment vizualne produkcije pa predstavljajo atraktivni blockbusterji in raznovrstni žanrski izdelki. Predvsem blockbusterjem je močno v prid digitalna »filmska fotografija« z uporabo prepričljivih posebnih učinkov. Obenem pa zaradi številnih vplivnih akterjev na polju novih medijev ni mogoče prezreti pojava skoraj hiperprodukcije<sup>28</sup> televizijskih serij. Ker ti vizualni medijski produkti vključujejo tudi dokumentarna dela, ki presegajo vseprisotnost »običajnih« novic, lahko samo ugibamo, koliko taki izdelki vplivajo na množično percepcijo resničnosti. Ti pojavi za filmske študije kot del interdisciplinarnih humanistike seveda predstavljajo stimulacijo in izziv na različnih ravneh teoretične refleksije.

27 Prim. Deleuze. 2020: *Podoba-čas*, str. 174–175.

28 Po dostopnih podatkih samo v ZDA ustvarijo okoli petsto (!) igranih serij (tako imenovanih *scripted series*) na leto.

26 Hoelzl, Ingrid in Marie, Rémi. 2017: »From softimage to postimage«. *Leonardo*, l. 50 (2017), št. 1, str. 72–73.

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# Cinema as a Transformative Agency Within Art and its Reflections<sup>1</sup>

*Darko Štrajn*

## **Introduction**

Throughout the existence of cinema as a phenomenon in culture and industry ('cultural industry' in Adorno's terms), the notion of it contained many historical and contemporary signifiers. They shape a space for social and cultural multiplicity in conjunction with a flow of buoyant movements of various agencies. So far, Gilles Deleuze (and Guattari) most consequentially reflected upon this by articulating the dialectics of relentless movement through the circuits of interactions between moving images and perception. A specific juncture between theory in the humanities and film became visible in a sequential retrospective. In its initial stages, cinema was presumably perceived mainly as an amusing attraction for the wider public, which resulted from a technological invention. It is not so crucial whether this presumption is verifiable or not, but it is rather evident that it took some time for a consistent framework for a consistent understanding of cinema to be conceptually formulated. According to Elsaesser and Hagener,<sup>2</sup> this happened in 1915 and 1916.

1 This article was developed from the paper "Cinema and Alterations of the Transdisciplinarity in Humanities", presented at the *International Congress of Aesthetics, 2022*, which, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, actually took place in Belo Horizonte (Brazil) between 24 and 28 July 2023.

2 Elsaesser, Thomas and Hagener, Malte 2015: *Film Theory. An Introduction Through the Senses*. New York: Routledge, p. 1.

They pinpointed these years as the time of the birth of film theory. The poet Vachel Lindsay and, of course, Hugo Münsterberg should be considered the first authors of film theory. Their books on “moving pictures” and on “photoplay” still represent the paradigms of the main difference, which was inscribed into an array of approaches to cinema and particular films in film theory and criticism. Their approaches did not oppose or even contradict each other; they actually corroborated each other. The publication of the mentioned essays coincided with the debut of D. W. Griffith’s *The Birth of a Nation* (1915). In Vachel’s writing, we can discover the beginnings of the future sociology of film as well as the displaying of the impact of politics, which inevitably necessitated a critic’s response. In his analyses of individual films in *The Art of the Moving Pictures*, which was first published in 1915, he recognized the great contribution of D. W. Griffith. However, in the case of *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), he clearly called attention to the obvious racism in it while expressing his fascination with the mass scenes: “The Birth of a Nation is a Crowd Picture in a triple sense. On the films, as in the audience, it turns the crowd into a mob that is either for or against the Reverend Thomas Dixon’s poisonous hatred of the negro.”<sup>3</sup> Hence, a social, cultural and political contextualization of the new medium is evident in his writing. The politics of film is defined here in its effects on the audience. Cinema, therefore, turns audiences into an indispensable social formation of mass culture, since the repetitions of film shows enable access to wider audiences than had been imaginable any time before in any form of art. Münsterberg’s inauguration of film theory, however, turned the gaze inward. He dealt with film perception and defined it in terms of psychology. In his writing, film or the so-called *photoplay* is the agency. It runs the psychological processes of the audience. Vachel’s “crowds” are defined in Münsterberg’s vision through the attributes of individuals: “/.../ moving images appeal not only to the imagination, but they bring their messages also to the intellect.”<sup>4</sup>

### **Creator and spectator**

At the beginning of film theory, aesthetics was already confronted with the challenge in its formal framework. Much more than in the cases of the previous six arts, the aesthetics of the time was not sufficient for the definition and analysis of cinema as a medium or for the interpretation of its social and cognitive effects. In his focus on the recipient of moving images, Münsterberg actually thematised the look that images return. “We analyse the mental processes which this specific form of artistic endeavour produces in us.”<sup>5</sup> Congruently, he emphasizes the context, which is channelled through individual perception:

3 Lindsay, Vachel. 2000: *The Art of the Moving Pictures*. New York: Modern Library.

4 Münsterberg, Hugo. 1916: *The Photoplay. A Psychological Study*. New York & London: Appleton, p. 21.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 45. *Emphasized by the author.*

We must accompany those sights with a wealth of ideas. They must have meaning for us, they must be enriched by our own imagination, they must awaken the remnants of previous experiences, they must stir up our feelings and emotions, they must play on our suggestibility, they must start ideas and thoughts, they must be linked in our mind with the continuous chain of the play, and they must draw our attention constantly to the important and essential element of the action.<sup>6</sup>

Vachel’s and Münsterberg’s thinking was an opening for a construction of a paradigm for a new discipline in the humanities; not only for a narrowly defined film theory and the concurring criticism, but – what we cannot but recognise – also for a wide interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary field in the humanities. Their texts can be read as reactions to the *event* of the inception of cinema in the sphere of culture, launched from an “unexpected” source, represented by the technology of industrial society at the time of one of the pinnacles of its progression commonly known as *fin de siècle*. Both texts indicated a new reality, or to put it more exactly: they suggested a change in the notions of reality, induced by the inserting of cinema in the combined space of art, mass culture, mass psychology and the post-Nietzschean realm of art.

How is Nietzsche’s criticism of Immanuel Kant’s aesthetics and his ensuing turn of the relationship between the spectator and the creator inscribed into the new context created by the impact of cinema? “Kant, like all philosophers, just considered art and beauty from the position of ‘spectator’, instead of viewing the aesthetic problem through the experiences of the artist (the creator).”<sup>7</sup> This turn demands that aesthetics take into account the perspective of the spectator, who by the end of the 19th century was provided with the viewpoint of the film camera. Nietzsche’s intervention was by no means “innocent”, considering that it assessed the most important displacements of the resources for generating the notions of reality within art. That is why I am not pointing so much to Nietzsche’s genius, that is, his intuition and insight, since the significance of his remarks is primarily related to a complex and effervescent social reality. Through his critical remarks on Kant’s concept of a spectator’s disinterested gaze, Nietzsche linked art and aesthetics to, if we put it bluntly, the realm of politics.<sup>8</sup> His intellectual act coincided with the emergence of masses not only in the industrial economy, but also in culture, structured by an indefinable principle of multiplicity, within which “one reality” cannot persevere. “Nietzsche’s philosophy would thus consist of a kind of sophistry intended to blur the tracks of truth and to make lose, in the minds of those who undertake to follow its paths, all trace of contact

6 *Ibid.*, p. 72.

7 Nietzsche, Friedrich. 2006: *On the Genealogy of Morality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 74

8 Cf. Agamben, Giorgio. 1999: *The Man without Content*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, p. 2. In the spirit of Nietzsche’s discourse, Agamben denotes this linking of art and politics as a reflection of art in the “golden ball of the will to power”.

with reality.”<sup>9</sup> Walter Benjamin clearly indicated these consequences in the 1930s in his seminal essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. Benjamin’s findings about the decisive change of perception that results from the transformation of the faculty of vision experienced by mass audiences epitomise the impact of cinema. “*The adjustment of reality to the masses and of the masses to reality is a process of unlimited scope, as much for thinking as for perception.*”<sup>10</sup>

### **The world of simulacrum**

Many cinephiles and theoreticians from Ricciotto Canudo and Rudolf Arnheim to Béla Balázs and Georges Sadoul made a tremendous effort to explain cinema and its “language”. They undoubtedly contributed a lot to the foundations of film theory. However, they mostly missed the point, which became evident later, after the proper reading of Benjamin’s inspirational intervention.<sup>11</sup> They insisted on demonstrating and even proving that cinema was a form of art. What was problematic in their endeavour was their undertaking to capture cinema into “traditional” aesthetic categories. At the same time, certain early filmmakers, such as Jean Epstein, Germaine Dulac and even Sergei Eisenstein, who added theoretical thinking to their filmmaking or the other way around, advocated the artistic legitimacy of cinema. Yet, they overlooked that cinema did not need such advocacy since the outstanding works of the art of modernity already reflected the multiple impacts of changes due to the alteration of the roles of creators and spectators in the context of industrial development and bourgeois culture. From this basic turn followed a substantially new function and character of art, which even aesthetics as a discipline had difficulties coming to terms with. The self-recognition of art in the “golden ball of the will to power” drove many artists away from creating effects such as the *sublime* and other impressions linked to the categories that had been appraised by Baumgarten, Winkelmann and Kant – no matter how different their views happened to be! Social and technological changes later instigated the movement that Nietzsche anticipated in his singular insight. This movement was not about redefining the notions of beauty, taste and form. It was rather about replacing and transcending them by identifying art through such categories as truth, sensual liberation and life. Still, as *l’art pour l’art* movements demonstrated, art and aesthetics happened to be entangled in a struggle for the autonomy of art. Avant-garde artists of course led these trends. “*Art became an instance capable*

*of revealing the false appearance of the factual.*”<sup>12</sup> Of course, the emphasis on the independence of art within the concept of the “theology of art” – as Benjamin labelled *l’art pour l’art* – by and large paradoxically achieved the opposite outcome as the calls for the autonomy of art *per se* incorporated a rapport with the State, the church and social institutions, that is, politics. Because of this paradoxicalness, art in its manifold manifestations entered a field of a constant interrogation of reality, thereby participating in diverse movements seeking to modify it. It took some time for cinema to show its own artistic potential, but it soon became obvious that cinema can challenge and expand the boundaries of artistic genres, styles and techniques, creating new possibilities and perspectives for artistic invention and communication. This means that it is able to interact with other arts, such as literature, music, painting, photography, theatre and dance, enriching and diversifying their modes of expression and representation. “*Cinema is the seventh art in a very particular sense. It does not add itself to the other six, while remaining on the same level as them. Rather, it implies them – cinema is the ‘plus-one’ of the arts. It operates on the other arts, using them as its starting point, in a movement that subtracts them from themselves.*”<sup>13</sup> Badiou’s claim brings forward an awareness of a kind of a circular interaction between cinema and the “rest” of art and its different forms. On the one hand, the “other six arts” had to deal with cinematic art as a new intruder into their established social space, but, at the same time, cinema showed no restraint in appropriating whatever from artistic tradition and contemporaneity suited to its aims.

The indicators of the quite quickly advancing interlacing of cinema and other arts became increasingly visible through time. In addition, this time is the history of many transmutations, artistic and technological breakthroughs and the forgone past of social and political turmoil. Cinema gradually framed diverse realities by enabling the propagating of new symbolic configurations within the patterns of perception that formed within mass culture. These realities include multiple contents from films amalgamated with the social language codes, sensual dispositions and modes of behaviours in daily life. All these components are related to and antagonised at the same time by various audio-visual phantasmatic creations. Cinema was the agency that enabled Deleuze to say: “*The modern world is one of simulacra.*”<sup>14</sup> Deleuze’s definition of the simulacrum, which was “rhizomatically” germinated in Plato’s philosophy, implies that the avowed recognition of reality can no longer be bypassed by determining the difference between “reality” and something apparent or represented. The so-called “deceptiveness” of images that overwhelm our senses in this arrangement becomes redundant. The world of simulacrum is therefore our

9 Rosset, Clément. 1983: *La force majeure*. Paris: Éditions de minuit, p. 59.

10 Benjamin, Walter. 1969: “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”. In: *Illuminations*. New York: Schocken Books, pp. 217–251, p. 223.

11 Benjamin’s work and specifically his essay on the work of art in the age of reproduction, written in the early 1930s, happened to be widely discussed only after 1955 when Suhrkamp Verlag published Benjamin’s *Schriften* with Adorno’s introduction. This collection of texts became known to the English reading public quite a bit later, in 1968, when Harcourt, Brace published *Illuminations* with the *Introduction* by Hannah Arendt.

12 Anaya, Jorge L. 1999: *Estetica de la incertidumbre. El arte despues del fin del arte*. Buenos Aires: Fundacion Federico Jorge Klemm, p. 13.

13 Badiou, Alain. 2013: *Cinema*. Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 89.

14 Deleuze, Gilles. 1997: *Difference and Repetition*. London: Continuum, p. XIX.

reality without its double in the sphere of ideas. What further explains the fusion of the virtual and the real into a compound of perceived reality is the notion of *immediacy*. Jacques Rancière<sup>15</sup> applied the notion of *immediacy* when he tried to point out how, within its capacities, cinema organises a “distribution of the sensible”. In his reflections, he conveys the importance of the reduction of distance in film viewing, which in turn becomes intelligible through the notion of *immediacy*. In this analysis, art demands *immediacy*, that is, the art that Rancière calls “the art of projected moving shadows”. Therefore, the distinction of the virtual, the imaginary and the real was already generated in analogue cinema and in the ensuing suspension of a clear division between the two. At the time, these categories were not used in the same sense as they are nowadays and maybe they were not theoretically fully grasped. In any case, the functioning of perception in the “world of simulacrum” became conditioned by forms – which are describable in terms of aesthetics – due to the intervention of cinema, which was subsequently joined by other audio-visual media. Finally, the consequences are obvious, recordings or moving sound images determine the perception of reality, which is fused with illusion. “*Total use of media instead of total literacy: sound film and video cameras as mass entertainment liquidate the real event.*”<sup>16</sup>

### **The dawn of cultural analysis**

A great part of the controversies about defining cinema as art were linked to the fact that cinema gradually became a big market-oriented industry. On the other hand, the uses of moving images in political and ideological propaganda in the age of television as well as in advertising fuelled “academic” doubts about taking cinema seriously as art. However, especially after the end of modernity and the transition of artistic practice to its post-modern “phase”, each art succumbed to the circulation of (market) values. Although the market of art objects is marked by the terms of a specific “pre-capitalist” mode, as Bourdieu defined it, artworks function as commodities.

The emergence of the work of art as a commodity, and the appearance of a distinct category of producers of symbolic goods specifically destined for the market, to some extent prepared the ground for a pure theory of art, that is, of art as art. It did so by dissociating art-as-commodity from art-as-pure-signification, produced according to a purely symbolic intent for purely symbolic appropriation, that is, for disinterested delectation, irreducible to simple material possession.<sup>17</sup>

15 See: Rancière, Jacques. 2013: *Aisthesis*. London: Verso, str. 191–206.

16 Kittler, Friedrich A. 1999: *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, p. 133.

17 Bourdieu, Pierre. 1993: *The Field of Cultural Production. Essays on Art and Literature*. London: Polity Press, p. 114.

What followed from the “pure theory of art” through the actions of avant-garde movements despite their inner controversies was a realisation that art cannot be explained only in narrow aesthetic terms and so it became a matter of the complex interdisciplinary theories of culture. An overview of the onset of these theories would show that their development ran parallel to the progressive social movements, which culminated in the 1968 revolution. Once it became clear that public events in the form of *exhibitions* could not be subtracted from the relations of power and authority, Foucault’s studies became a framework for explaining transformations in the field of museum practices. The process of the inclusion of art into a new structure of social institutions ran on the trajectory that started in the 19th century when museums enabled access to art objects to a wider public. To put it briefly: the distribution of the products of artistic practice to the public gaze through specialised institutions and the market of symbolic goods in the age of modernism generated a need for the enlargement of explanatory conceptual “tools”.

Cinema, which entered the social space when this space was already primed for it, accelerated these developments as it was a form of hybrid art aimed at mass consumers. Explaining cinema as an art unavoidably had to come to terms with the fact that its artistic impact was embedded in its aim to be shown to large audiences, which were at the same time considered to be un-educated, incompetent, etc. by the conservative “elitist” guardians of “sublime” art. Therefore, the custodians of the canon advocated distinctions among different disciplines in the humanities that studied art as their cherished object. However, they found themselves caught in ideological struggles, through which certain fields of interdisciplinarity were established in the humanities.<sup>18</sup> Through such disputes, epistemological and ethical arguments often undermined aesthetic concepts and norms. *Cultural studies* (also called *cultural analysis*) – the most remarkable among these fields, generated by flows of multiple interactions – increasingly reflected the artistic practice based on the uses of technologically based media. Hence, Mieke Bal from the distinguished Amsterdam School of Cultural Analysis (ASCA) stated: “*Cultural studies has evolved out of a polemic against the arbitrariness of disciplinary boundaries, the often exclusionary assumptions involved in the aesthetics on which much work by humanists is based, and the separations, first between aesthetics and ethics and then between art and social issues, which were relegated to the social sciences.*”<sup>19</sup> What Thomas Elsaesser somewhat hesitantly suggested in 1999

18 The period of the 1920s and 1930s, which was also the time of the peak of the avant-guard in almost all varieties, was highly productive in this sense. Especially in Germany, harsh discussions about some of Lukács’ propositions touched on the problems of conceiving art in a socialist society, controversies between more radical expressionists and New Sobriety (*Neue Sachlichkeit*) etc. pencilled a type of dilemmas that were uttered even in more clear-cut formulations in the subsequent modernist epoch.

19 Bal, Mieke. 1999: “Introduction”. In: Bal, Mieke ed. *The Practice of Cultural Analysis. Exposing Interdisciplinary Interpretation*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 1–15, p. 6.

by saying “I may be committed to the view that without taking the cinema into account, we shall never understand our century”<sup>20</sup> has become a matter of consensus, which goes beyond the academic community. In his chapter in the cited book, Elsaesser “prophetically” announced the impact of a “surge of new imaging devices”. New technology

/.../ never simply occurs by way of an additive process /.../. Instead, it reconfigures in its entirety the environment upon which such a practice may have an impact. It changes the field, and even more so the idea that we have of that field, making apparent connections which had always been there but never seemed to matter, and thereby also redefining the histories that can be imagined as having brought about these very changes.<sup>21</sup>

Of course, the nature of hybridity that founds cinema in relation to other arts demands and craves interdisciplinarity. In addition, the potentiality of the multiple uses of a film camera in view of depicting reality and manipulating, interpreting and modifying it already in the period of the so-called analogue film provided a wide range of creative possibilities. These possibilities, without further ado, are multiplying in the space of semiotic expansions in the relations of texts and visual forms. Artificial intelligence takes over the work of cinema and television by building on the perception that they were “formatting” and that keeps being moulded by the media that operate it in the digital age.

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***Experimental film’s opening of the doors of sacred spaces***

In its time, the so-called experimental cinema reflected different conceptual constructions of the artistic attributes of cinema. The section in the fifth chapter of Deleuze’s *The Movement-Image* where he writes about experimental film quite associatively in connection with Dziga Vertov points out the feedback loop of perception and the tendency of experimental film in relation to Bergson’s notion of pure perception. He defines his approach to the phenomenon of experimental cinema through his derived concept of “camera-consciousness”, which “raises itself to a determination which is no longer formal or material, but genetic and differential. We have moved from a real to a genetic definition of perception”.<sup>22</sup>

Parallel to Deleuze’s contribution, Dudley J. Andrew indicated, in his book on concepts in film theory, similar directions of film-enabled reflection on the perceptual process, in which seeing is of vital importance. If we read Andrew correctly, film actually “replicates the process of vision” in the processes of producing moving

20 Elsaesser, Thomas. 1999: “Le cinéma d’après Lumière’: Rereading the ‘Origins’ of the Filmic image”. In: Bal, Mieke ed. *The Practice of Cultural Analysis Exposing Interdisciplinary Interpretation*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 60–75, p. 61.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 64.

22 Deleuze, Gilles. 1986: *Cinema 1. The Movement-Image*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 85.

images. It is about “bridging the gap between a steady stream of optical stimuli and the organized fields and forms we call film images.”<sup>23</sup> Here, certainly not only according to Andrew, it would be impossible to talk about the process of seeing if we did not define its components and reflexive schemes that define the perceptibility and intelligibility of any film, no matter how mediocre. Film is that form of visual representation that is overdetermined by technology, but at the same time it is only imaginable together with what we define in terms of psychology and sociology. However, the aesthetic effect and impression conveyed by experimental films was of utmost importance. Referring to films of J. J. Murphy, Paul Sharits, Michael Snow, Bruce Conner and Kenneth Anger, Andrew defines their various playful dealings with stable and moving images as objects that “deserve a cultural reading”. The mentioned filmmakers, who were noticeable already in the 1950s along with some even earlier radical authors of film experiments, such as Maya Deren, undoubtedly enter the sacred space of artistic practice. In the scope of the reading suggested by Andrew, the work of radical artists in the 1960s and 1970s, such as Andy Warhol, Peter Weibel and Valie Export, could be interpreted as a response from the artistic field. In any case, the impulse emanating from experimental films prevalently shot without the wider public in the creators’ minds transformed the artistic production and exhibitions and re-defined the calling of artists and their artistic pursuits. As we know, the further expansion of visual experimenting in the form of video art, which was made possible by the new technology of recording on magnetic tapes and the exhibition of recordings on CRT displays, introduced a change that decisively revolutionised the spaces of galleries and museums committed to contemporary art. The process of blurring the lines between film and video performances definitively redefined and emphasised the role of the artist – not only as a creator, but also as a societal agency. With the onset of the digital means of production, exhibition and distribution of art, this role becomes even more complex, externalising the deep dilemmas about the participation of artists in the circuits of communication and social power struggles.

***Conclusion***

Hence, cinema as art and at the same time mass culture wreaked havoc in the field of arts and consequently in aesthetics in the 20th century – and afterwards supposedly died! Born at the outset of the era of technology as a non-negligible agency, it almost ideally opened the social and cultural space for an already on-going enactment of Nietzsche’s suggestion concerning the emancipation of artists from the Kantian “uninterested gaze”. Even before the onset of the digital epoch, an insightful philosopher saw a looming impact of new inventions in the early 1980s. Gilles Deleuze prophetically announced: “*The electronic image, that is, the tele and video image, the*

23 Andrew, Dudley J. 1984: *Concepts in Film Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 35.

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numerical image coming into being, either had to transform cinema or to replace it, to mark its death.”<sup>24</sup> After Deleuze’s Bergsonian fusion of the *categories of time and notions of movement*,<sup>25</sup> the theories of visual arts proceed from time-image towards a host of inventions of new verbal coinages and concepts under the heading of digital image like post-image, RGB image, soft image etc., based on the technological transgressing of an epistemological threshold. Ample theoretical work in this outrageously active field, which brings forward many tentative hypothesis and propositions, cannot easily be summarized. Therefore, I shall take just one example of this line of thinking by Hoelzl and Rémi, who announced that, due to the recent digital inventions, “image” could be defined differently, that is, as “*operation and a process rather than a representation*”. The authors proceed from their naming of a new type of image, called “soft image”, to the understanding of image “*as the relation of data and of algorithms that are engaged in an operation of data gathering, processing, rendering and exchange.*” Finally, they switch from this technical description to a definition closer to the humanities, which “*takes us beyond the limits of the humanist and anthropocentric concept of the image and opens a posthumanist point of view on the image. It takes us to a point where human vision is only one among many possible sentient systems and where we need to reconsider what images (and imaging) mean with regard to nonvisual sentient systems.*”<sup>26</sup> The theory of (moving) images, therefore, intermingles with problems that have recently seriously occupied a range of different philosophies. Of course, it is understood that these occurrences strongly affect the transformations of aesthetics too.

Rapidly and increasingly we move back and forth from aesthetics to ontology and back again to epistemology. Therefore, film and media studies stand before their new “explosion” to conceptualise the technological novelties, which take the wider public for guinea pigs in the huge experiment of redesigning the notion of reality including all forms of the artistic deconstruction of truth, illusion and delusion. The idea of the transformation of perception, which Benjamin suggested almost ninety years ago, travels now to un-imagined territories. As a result, the notion of the “death of cinema” acquires a new meaning. This ambiguous term, which is founded on the division between analogue and digital cinema, exceeds just the transition of cinema from celluloid to microprocessors as it marks a rearrangement of cultural and social institutions. The transcending of cinema designates a new structure within which the world of cinema is ending by being relegated to film archives and museums. In a metaphorical sense, one can talk about the whole history of celluloid cinema as a

24 Deleuze, Gilles. 1989: *Cinema 2. The Time-Image*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press., p. 265.

25 Cf. Bálint Kovács, András. 2000: “The Film History of Thought”. In: Flaxman, Gregory ed. *The Brain Is the Screen. Deleuze and the Philosophy of Cinema*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 153–170.

26 Hoelzl, Ingrid and Marie, Rémi. 2017: “From softimage to postimage”. *Leonardo*, vol. 50, n° 1, pp. 72–73.

dead corpse brought back to life for the interested ardent cinephiles in art cinemas and cinemathèques. However, the archived artefacts remain a source of new artistic inspirations, similarly as pictures and sculptures from pre-modern periods have always been resources for visual artists and art historians of contemporaneity.

Finally, due to the lack of proper concepts and naming, we must use assemblies of existing terms, similarly to Münsterberg, who used the expression “photoplay” for film or cinema. Among many “post-somethings”, we have the so-called “post-cinema”, which is securing an afterlife of film. The very word “cinema” in our new institutional order of film distribution connotes only one of the modes of showing old and new films. Edison’s unrefined and short-sighted commercial idea to restrict the showing of motion pictures to only one individual consumer at a time became feasible in the digital age with a huge supply of streaming platforms, which deliver movies to home devices and smart phones that, strictly technically speaking, display films in no lesser quality than cinema theatres. However, many believe that the theatrical cinema shows cannot be replaced due to the cherished magical experience of the audience sitting in the dark in front of a big screen. One of such film viewers was also Gilles Deleuze, who treated many “classical films” as evidence of the junction between philosophy and film. He claimed that, in the period of “time-image”, Welles, Ozu, Bresson, Resnais and others preceded the subsequent intellectual cinematic reflections of social transformations. Of course, they remained a strong influence on the so-called art cinema. In Deleuze’s view, the main attributes of moving pictures in Yasujiro Ozu’s films and in Italian neorealism ceased to be space and movement due to the priority of topology and time.<sup>27</sup> In view of this, films that are today considered to be made in the style of *slow cinema* are based on a practical use of Ozu’s, Bresson’s, etc. shooting procedures. As classical films by the mentioned filmmakers used long shots, surprising close-ups and *no* shocking montage, diverse contemporary filmmakers such as Abbas Kiarostami, Bela Tarr, Paul Schrader, Nuri Bilge Ceylan, Claire Denis, Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Hong Sang-soo and a growing number of others partially or totally, some in all their films, some in only a few of them, represent the style of *slow cinema*. Films by these filmmakers invite the audiences, who enjoy the meditative and poetic expression of their mostly cerebral films, to cinema theatres. Such environment furtively engages sensations and feelings, which can be experienced much better in a cinema theatre than in front of whichever screen that projects imagery into our eyes and ears in our homes.

For the time being, *slow cinema* takes care of the continuation of art cinema, which often interlaces with video performances at certain bigger contemporary art events such as the *Venice Biennale* or *Kassel Documenta*. The other incomparably vast segment of visual production consists of amazing blockbusters and genre products of all sorts. Especially blockbusters benefit a lot from digital “cinema” by their

27 Cf. Deleuze 1989, p. 125.

overwhelming use of special effects. Moreover, due to many powerful actors around new media, the phenomenon of an almost hyper-production<sup>28</sup> of TV series cannot be ignored. As these visual media products also include documentaries that exceed the ubiquity of “normal” news, one can only speculate how much mass perception of reality is influenced by these products. Of course, cinema studies as a part of interdisciplinary humanities are stimulated and challenged by these phenomena on multiple levels of theoretical reflections.

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<sup>28</sup> Available data show that in the USA alone the production of the so-called scripted series amounts to around five hundred per year (!).