

Revisiting Christian Metz's "Apparatus Theory" – A Dialogue

Martin Lefebvre and Annie van den Oever

French film theorist and critic Christian Metz (1931-1993) is well-known for his "apparatus" theory, which he developed in the 1970s. His works, in English translation, had a major impact on international film theory: *Language and Cinema* (1971), *Film Language: A Semiotics of Cinema* (1974), and *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and the Cinema* (1977).

Martin Lefebvre is the only researcher to have accessed the entire Metz archive of the Bibliothèque du film (BiFi). He is a Québécois film scholar, editor of *Recherches sémiotiques/Semiotic Inquiry* (RS/SI) as well as Professor and Concordia University Research Chair in Film Studies (Montréal, Canada). As Director of the Advanced Research Team on the History and Epistemology of Moving Image Studies (ARTHEMIS), he is interested in the theoretical and epistemological changes in the field of film and moving image studies over the decades, hence his interest in Metz, who played a crucial role in making film and cinema studies part of the academic curriculum at universities in Paris in the 1970s and 1980s. As he was aware that BiFi housed a Metz archive that had been bequeathed by his son, Michael Metz, after his father's passing in 1993, Lefebvre was given permission to get a glimpse of the archival material in 2008-2009 while he was working on the history of the Filmology movement for a special issue of *Cinémas: Journal of Film Studies* he was editing with François Albera.¹ He knew Filmology had been important for Metz and wanted to see if any traces of it could be found in the Metz archive. Though the archive is difficult to access since it is not yet catalogued due to staff shortages at BiFi, and impossible to photocopy for legal reasons, nonetheless, Lefebvre realized it was a substantial archive and decided to seek legal authorizations and some research funds from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada thus enabling him to consult the entire archive (close to 45 boxes of materials). Since 2012 Lefebvre has been doing research in the Metz archive as part of his work on the history and the epistemology of film and moving image studies. In an upcoming essay for *October*, co-authored with Dominique Chateau,² Lefebvre used Metz's personal notes (e.g., quotations from his study of Mikel Dufrenne's *Phénoménologie de l'expérience esthétique*

tique) to re-evaluate the role phenomenology played in Metz's conception of cinema and in his theoretical work. Furthermore, the archive contains unpublished manuscripts, which Lefebvre intends to edit and make available for public use. One of those, a conference paper from 1971 on the relation between semiology and aesthetics ("Existe-t-il une approche sémiologique de l'esthétique?") will be published in issue no. 70 of 1895.³ Lastly, some of Metz's seminars will be edited, annotated, and published in the coming years.

In the context of this book on cinema and media technologies and while reassessing the research done on it, a dialogue with Martin Lefebvre on Metz and "apparatus" theory was initiated by me for three reasons: first, apparatus theory marked Metz's (and the field of film studies') pivotal shift from a linguistically oriented study of film to theorizing the technologies of the cinema and their impact on viewers; second, the archive allows a new assessment of the context from which apparatus theory emerged with the help of materials that were not open to research so far; and third, Metz's theory needs to be revisited and reassessed in terms of the new interest in film and media technologies today, to determine if and how Metz's premises, concepts, and findings could (or perhaps should) be made productive in current research. In other words, there are historical, theoretical, and epistemological arguments to want to revisit Metz's work of the 1970s. As to the format of this dialogue: it will start with some introductory questions regarding the archive and Martin Lefebvre's first impressions of Metz's personal notes. Secondly, Metz's relation to Baudry will be explored as he played a crucial role in the (intellectual and political) context in which the first notes on the apparatus were written. Thirdly, crucial insights from Metz (in part diverting from Baudry's, who seems to have been more ideologically oriented) will be assessed in more detail. Lastly, Metz's relevance for the field today will be discussed.

— Annie van den Oever

The Metz Archive

AvdO: If you allow me, here are some introductory questions regarding Metz's archive before we reassess Metz's "apparatus theory." What made you want to revisit and rethink Christian Metz's work?

ML: Metz's name, as you know, is synonymous today with the rise of modern, truly academic film theory. Metz, of course, was a die-hard structuralist and in the current climate where scholars are starting to historicize film studies and film theory, I thought it important to look at Metz with a fresh pair of eyes. Indeed, there has not been much historical work done so far on the structuralist moment in film studies. In a sense, therefore, this is a form of disciplinary inward-looking. However, I also realized, as soon as I opened the first box in the

archive, that this inward-looking was more personal than I thought. You see I initially came to film studies through Metz and semiology and though my work moved on to the philosophical *semeiotic* of C.S. Peirce (I'm still a card-carrying semiotician!), working on Metz, on his archive, was also a way for me to reflect on my own connection with what I do as a film scholar and teacher of film studies and on what got me interested in film studies (and not just in films) in the first place.

AvdO: And what are your first overall impressions of his archive?

ML: As we speak, I have not completed reading all the materials I have gathered from the Metz archive. In fact, I've only had a few months to peruse the materials. I can tell you, for instance, that there are hundreds of "film reviews," which are often 1 to 2 page summaries of films Metz had seen. He was indeed an avid moviegoer, seeing several films a week, and all sorts of films: American blockbusters, classical Hollywood and French films, European art cinema, Asian films, etc. In an age before IMDb and the web and before DVDs, these notes obviously served the role of *aides-mémoire*. And yet, one also finds interesting – if short – aesthetic judgments in them.

AvdO: There was a conference on Metz in Zurich in June 2013.⁴ Did you present some of Metz's personal notes and "reviews" there?

ML: Indeed, I did – as part of a larger work on Metz and aesthetics – though it's too early to say at this point if one can establish a "Metzian canon" or, better yet, a "Metzian aesthetic" from the notes he kept on the films he saw. Nonetheless. I did notice he was especially attentive to the "worldly" aspect of narrative films, the settings – for instance, the Vienna of Ophüls's films. Moreover, the archive also contains some of Metz's scholarly reading notes. Very copious notes on Sigmund Freud, on Rudolf Arnheim, on Jean Mitry, and several other authors he read. Again, these were principally *aides-mémoire*: the notes tend to follow an author's argument very closely. However, there are occasional critical asides and reflections, e.g., the notes on Mikel Dufrenne's *Phénoménologie de l'expérience esthétique* are especially interesting. Some of the asides in these notes ended up almost verbatim in his first published essay, "Le cinéma: langue ou langage."⁵ These and other documents also helped me re-evaluate the role phenomenology played in his conception of cinema and its role in his theorizing. One also finds there the galleys for *Le Signifiant imaginaire* and for his unpublished manuscript *L'esprit et ses mots. Essai sur le Witz* which is a sort of dialogue with Freud's work on Witz [the joke] but doesn't concern cinema.

AvdO: Does the archive reflect Metz's position in film studies in Paris back then?

ML: Absolutely. The archive is in itself important as a document of the French film studies scene. Because Metz kept every thesis report he ever wrote, it is fascinating to see how at one point the entire milieu of French film studies (and sometimes beyond) gravitated around him. An almost entire generation of scholars was either supervised by him or had him sit as a jury member for their doctoral defense. Same thing when I look at the list of people who either attended or gave presentations at his seminar (Michel Marie, Roger Odin, Michel Colin, Alain Bergala, Raymond Bellour, Dominique Chateau and François Jost, Jean-Paul Simon, Jacques Aumont, Dana Polan, Francesco Casetti, and so many others).⁶ For several years he was literally at the center of the field and therefore had a large role in shaping it.

AvdO: In fact, “film theory” as such seems a term disseminated from the 1970s onwards.

ML: The term, of course, originated with Canudo, though Eisenstein used it sparingly. As for Metz, he uses it in the 1960s.

AvdO: As an inspiring theorist who liked dialogue and debate, Metz seems to have been at the center of film studies, which, at the time, was internationally still a young and quickly growing field of studies. His presence was felt in our country too, where he had close friendships with Eric de Kuyper and Emile Poppe, whom he knew from their doctoral studies in Paris; they wrote their doctoral dissertation with Greimas and Metz was part of their jury. After this, De Kuyper and Poppe initiated film and performance studies in our country in the late 1970s. They received Metz regularly at the (now Radboud) University of Nijmegen and devoted a seminar to him and the apparatus theory in 1980.⁷ His first visit should in fact have been one he would have made together with Stephen Heath, but Metz had to cancel and was replaced by his assistant Michel Colin. Did he take personal notes of those visits, the debates he took part in, these seminars, the theses he read?

ML: De Kuyper attended Metz’s seminar and in *L’Énonciation impersonnelle* Metz mentions his film *A STRANGE LOVE AFFAIR* (co-directed with Paul Verstaten in 1984). However, there are no traces, no summaries of debates in Nijmegen or elsewhere in the archive. I can tell you, nonetheless, that his first visit to Nijmegen was in October 1986, where he gave three talks: “Jokes, after Freud. Some Remarks, Some Examples”; “Photography and Fetish”; and “Questions and Answers about Film Semiology.”

Conceptualizing a Theory of the “Apparatus”: Baudry and Metz

AvdO: Considering the shift in Metz’s work in the 1970s, my impression is that, coming from a background in phenomenology and structuralist linguistics and after having explored the study of film in terms of a language, a grammar, and a time-based art driven by narration (in “La grande syntagmatique du film narratif” and other works),⁸ Metz went on to analyze the best ways in which the considerable impact of film images on the viewer’s imagination could be understood. From his publications in *Communications* in the 1970s, one gets the impression that Jean-Louis Baudry may have played an important role in Metz’s shift from studying film in terms of a grammar to conceptualizing the cinema experience in terms of an apparatus, a *dispositif*. Now my question is two-fold. First of all, what was the impact Baudry had on Metz’s theorizing of the cinema in terms of an “apparatus”? Was he in fact a starting point and an inspiration to Metz? Second, was the direction of Metz’s thinking in the end not crucially different from Baudry’s, in that Metz was far less discourse-oriented, less political, less ideologically oriented than Baudry (and many of their Parisian intellectual contemporaries, for that matter), if only because Metz’s primary concern was not the analyses of the power relations inscribed in the cinema apparatus but rather the unveiling of the mechanisms and processes working on the cinema viewer’s imagination?

ML: Before I answer your question, I think it’s important to mention that although Metz was trained as a linguist, he was not formally trained as a philosopher and therefore his interest in phenomenology was not *technical*, say, unlike Husserl and his followers. Also, the move from linguistics to psychoanalysis as a model to think about cinema was not a *break* for Metz. Sure, it opened up new objects and new perspectives, but Metz saw them as complementary with his previous “filmo-linguistic” work. Common to both is a concern for language and the symbolic. And in France at the time, both could be joined under the umbrella of structuralism.

Now, the issue of Metz’s relation to Baudry is a complicated one. Baudry was not a “professional” scholar but a novelist who earned his living as a dentist. Of course, he was also a member of the Tel Quel group between 1962 and 1975, along with Julia Kristeva, Philippe Sollers, Marcelin Pleyne, and Jacques Derrida. In reading *The Imaginary Signifier* next to Baudry’s essays, I’ve always had the impression that Metz’s overall argument was more subtle than Baudry’s. Of course, Metz, who knew Baudry well (theirs was a relatively small intellectual circle), speaks highly of him (in *The Imaginary Signifier* he mentions Baudry’s “remarkable analyses” and adds that he sets up the problem of Freud’s optical metaphors “very well”);⁹ and it’s obvious that he saw an ally in him (Baudry ended up ded-

icating his book, *L'Effet cinéma*, to Metz in a collection, *Ça cinéma*, edited by an ex-student of Metz's, Joël Farges).¹⁰ Yet, at the same time, there are only five very brief allusions to Baudry in *The Imaginary Signifier* and, more importantly perhaps, they hardly have anything to do with the problem of ideology or power relations *per se*. Baudry, let us recall, worked on two fronts at once, combining, like Althusser, Freudo-Lacanian psychoanalysis and Marxist ideology critique. And it is chiefly around the issue of ideology that, it seems to me, Metz was more careful than Baudry.

In the heated post-'68 context, it was Marcelin Pleyne, who, if I recall correctly, first launched an attack on the *apparatus* (*l'appareil*) – understood here chiefly as the camera – that *determines* cinema. In an interview conducted in the third issue of the very political journal *Cinéthique*, Pleyne explained that before any discussion regarding the political content of a film, or questioning their militancy, filmmakers (and critics) should question the ideology produced by the camera itself: “the cinematographic apparatus is a properly ideological apparatus, it is an apparatus that disseminates bourgeois ideology before disseminating anything else. Before it produces a film, the technical construction of the camera produces bourgeois ideology.”¹¹ The culprit, it seems, is the “perspectival code directly inherited [and] constructed on the model of the Quattrocento's scientific perspective.”¹² The camera, is “scrupulously constructed to ‘rectify’ any perspectival anomaly, to reproduce in its authority the code of specular vision as it is defined by Renaissance humanism.”¹³ A year and four issues later, *Cinéthique* published Baudry's first essay on cinema: “Effets idéologiques produits par l'appareil de base” [Ideological Effects Produced by the Basic Apparatus].¹⁴

AvdO: The Parisian post-'68 context – which you label as “heated” – certainly was deeply political, and the critical focus on ideology must in part have sprung from that context. An attack on the camera as an ideological “apparatus” or as part of an ideological “apparatus” as Pleyne articulated must have fitted into that context quite well. Would you say that Marcelin Pleyne was important for Baudry in this phase?

ML: Pleyne is briefly referenced by Baudry, and it is hard to miss the connection between the claims of the two Tel Quelians regarding the camera (*l'appareil*) and its ideological effects, with Baudry adding a key psychoanalytic turn to the argument. Perhaps a terminological note is in order here. The French word “*appareil*” (apparatus) has been in common usage to designate the camera (among other things) since 19th-century photography. However Baudry is, at least at first, somewhat equivocal in his use of the term. In the 1970 article, he includes under it all the “technical” aspects and machinery of filmmaking (indeed his diagram for *l'appareil de base* also includes the script and *découpage*, the film stock, montage, the projector, the screen, as well as the spectator); and yet, throughout the

piece he especially emphasizes the role of the camera. In the second essay of 1975, he tries to clarify the situation by stating: "In a general way, we distinguish the *basic apparatus* (*l'appareil de base*), which concerns the ensemble of the devices and operations required for the production of a film and its projection, from the *dispositive* (*dispositif*) which solely concerns projection and which includes the subject to whom the projection is addressed. Thus the *basic apparatus* comprises the film stock, the camera, film developing, montage considered in its technical aspect, etc., as well as the *dispositive* of projection."¹⁵

AvdO: Was Baudry important for Metz in this early phase?

ML: There is no doubt that Baudry's work often overlaps with Metz's own findings, sometimes preceding them as in the case of his discussion of "primary" and "secondary" identifications, of the mirror-stage analogy, of the cinematic construction of a transcendental subject/spectator. And, in turn, it is likely that Metz's early work also had an impact on Baudry: the latter's idea that cinema is a machine that "represses" its film frames (and shots) was stated by Metz, though in non-psychoanalytical terms, as early as "Le cinéma: langue ou langage" and served to some extent to ground the development of the *grande syntagmatique*. Did Metz share his ideas with Baudry while he was working on the essays that make up *The Imaginary Signifier*? According to Raymond Bellour, they saw each other "semi-regularly" in those days, and it is Metz who requested Baudry be invited to submit an article to *Communications* 23. Metz himself published his first two psychoanalytical articles in that same issue. Metz and Baudry tread very common metapsychological ground: analysis of the cinema's impression of reality, of the dream state and regression of the viewer caught in a situation of reduced mobility and heightened visual attention, a critique of idealism or idealist film theory, etc. And yet, beyond the commonalities and points of contact, there are also some real differences. Perhaps this was what Metz had in mind when he mentioned in passing, in *The Imaginary Signifier*, that he was following Baudry "obliquely."

AvdO: Where do Metz's and Baudry's analyses of the apparatus become distinctly different enterprises?

ML: Beyond obvious small variations in theory and beyond the equally obvious fact that Metz's psychoanalytic intervention in film studies is meant to cover much more ground than that of Baudry, there are more distinct differences. When we consider Baudry's two essays, we find him trying to make two separate though related points: 1) the cinema, through its basic apparatus, creates a "phantasmaticization of the subject" as transcendental ego by calling on Quattrocento perspective and by repressing what it does technically, i.e., by repressing

the difference between individual film frames and, therefore, enabling narrative continuity. The effect of which is to “transfer” this continuity onto the viewing subject, maintaining it “whole” or “unified” and therefore maintaining the idealism that dominant ideology requires (namely the notion that consciousness is independent from its objects and from social relations); and 2) the idea that the success of this apparatus rests on a specific *desire* whose *assouvissement* requires, within the apparatus, a specific *dispositif* (*dispositif*), one akin to that described by Plato in his myth of the cave, but also by Freud in the *Traumdeutung*. Baudry describes this to be a regressive desire for an earlier moment in psychic life where perceptions and representations are undifferentiated, a form of wish-fulfillment fantasy that mixes perception and representation: one where real perception paradoxically turns into the perception of representations (rather than offering itself as the perception of reality). This second point, of course, is very close to Metz’s own analysis of spectatorship. Now, as I mentioned earlier the key distinction between Baudry and Metz concerns the social sphere (ideology), or better yet, the relation between the “symbolic” and the “social” and Metz’s caution with regards to the way they interact and coalesce. But there is also a second important difference which concerns the place of phenomenology in Metz’s argument. Let me begin by this second point.

As Dominique Chateau and I have tried to show,¹⁶ Metz spent his entire career finding ways to accommodate phenomenology and semiology, including when semiology merged with psychoanalysis. In an unpublished book manuscript, Metz even referred to *The Imaginary Signifier* as a work of “phenomenological psychoanalysis” – a claim Baudry would certainly not have made regarding his own work! Metz’s analysis of spectator identification, the analogy with the Lacanian mirror, the study of the scopic drive from Sections III and IV of *The Imaginary Signifier* are in fact a reiteration, through psychoanalysis, of the phenomenological argument first given a decade earlier in his paper on the impression of reality (“A propos de l’impression de réalité au cinéma”).¹⁷ The same terms of reference are used: the specificity of cinema as related to its perceptual regime, its uncommon perceptual richness, the fact that it nonetheless gives us shadows instead of “real” objects, the comparison with theater, etc. Like Baudry, Metz claims that the spectator is led to misrecognize himself as the transcendental ego of Husserlian phenomenology. This leads to a critique of the idealist-phenomenological tradition in film studies for being blind to the deception it falls prey to, for failing to recognize the alienated nature of the spectatorial self as subject of pure perception. And yet – and here Metz distances himself considerably from Baudry’s analysis – just like the ego (in Lacanian terms) cannot escape being deluded in front of the mirror, Metz argues that without the transformation of the spectator’s perceptual consciousness into a “false consciousness” (the latter translating itself phenomenally in the spectator’s alienated consciousness as cinema’s impression of reality), film would be incomprehensible. The point, then, is not so much to politically combat alienation (the

“mirror effect”) as to explain it, to see its function in the overall experience of cinema (at least narrative fiction film). Perhaps this is also a way to disarm it, but not so much to denounce and oppose it, since this would amount to oppose the pleasure film brings which is the source of Metz’s writing. Interestingly, this is how Metz (symptomatically) read Laura Mulvey’s famous piece of 1975, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.”¹⁸ In his undated notes on the essay he writes: “[...] the article speaks very little, barely at all, of the means to be used to destroy the old cinema. Could it be that the article is an alibi to study and love the latter?”

AvdO: And then there is the different attitude toward ideology?

ML: We’ve just briefly touched on it. The other key point indeed has to do with ideology. The social – which is the domain of study of history, political economy, sociology, anthropology, etc. – is for Metz the *source* of all symbolism, with the latter being the object of study of semiology and psychoanalysis (the one investigating what Freud called the secondary process and the other the primary process). Metz however refuses the vulgar Marxist temptation to look at the symbolic as a superstructure whose only task would be to reproduce the infrastructure from where it arises. In fact, the symbolic for Metz is neither wholly superstructural nor entirely infrastructural: he calls it, following Marxist philosopher Lucien Sève, a *juxtastructure*. That is to say, it is distinct from the social infrastructure and, yet unlike the superstructure, interacts with it at the same level, even in part adding itself to it. The example Metz takes from Sève being biology in relation to the social base. This, in fact, is an interesting example if one considers a manuscript I found in the Metz archive at BiFi. These are notes, entitled “Vision bino-culaire et vision monoculaire (idéologie et données psycho-physiologiques)” written for his seminar of 1973-1974.¹⁹ The manuscript considers in detail depth perception in mono- and binocular vision, describing the inverse square law of distance, the law of consistency of size and shape and other principles that ensure a good *gestalt*. However, the manuscript concludes by asking, “In what measure and in what way is perspective ideological?” The simple answer is that perspective is and is not ideological. The key here is to distinguish between the discovery (or invention) of perspective, its functioning and its use (for what ends or purpose?). First, Metz explains, perspective was a discovery (the discovery of certain mechanisms of vision) and an invention (the integration of these mechanisms to the production of a visual stimulus). This means that the code of perspective “contains within it a scientific knowledge,” such as the knowledge of the inverse square law, as well as the knowledge that this law, which is active in natural perception, is unknown to its natural “users.” Consequently, in the functioning of perspective not everything is a deception. First, the depth we feel (the “impression of depth”) isn’t simulated (not an illusion or a deception) but is really present: “because it results from the same mechanisms that produce it in

real vision.” Indeed, Metz shows that there are several monocular factors (masking, movement, axial movements involving the law of inverse square) that play an important role in depth perception in binocular vision. These factors are monocular in that they are optically independent of the fact that both eyes perceive bidimensional images that are slightly different. Secondly, true binocular vision as we experience it with both our eyes is really absent – and really felt to be absent – from bidimensional perspectival representations. We don’t mistake perspectival images for 3D stimulus, and though they reconstruct some of the mechanisms of real depth perception they don’t pretend to do more than that. However, in the functioning of perspective there are also forms of ideological deception. For one thing, perspective imagery functions on the basis of “hiding” the very code it relies on. The functioning of the code gives the illusion of its absence due to the resemblance or impression of reality it fosters. This is a key Metzian idea: the code, when it “works,” always suppresses itself as code. Also ideological is the (psychological) denial that accompanies perspective imagery: the viewer knows that true depth is absent, and yet the presence of an impression of depth due to the monocular factors mentioned above, drives him/her to do as if real depth were present. However maximum ideology resides in the use that is made of the perspective code, namely in the fact that it is most often used with “the sole end to represent stories (or visual spectacles, as in painting) by endowing them with an air of truth.” It’s this sort of subtle response to the problem of perspective that ultimately distinguishes Metz’s approach from Baudry’s notwithstanding all they do share. Furthermore, if I may, Metz was a true cinephile, even though he was fully aware of how the love of film risks short-circuiting theory (he discusses this in the opening pages of *The Imaginary Signifier*). I would go so far as to say that this cinephilia forms the repressed side of *The Imaginary Signifier*. It’s “symptoms” are fairly obvious to one who knows his work well. Not so much I think for Baudry (at least in the two essays discussed here), which, paradoxically (perversely perhaps?), may well have been something Metz appreciated in Baudry’s work.

AvdO: Interestingly, both Baudry and the love for cinema are mentioned in the opening pages of *The Imaginary Signifier*. It always seemed to me that his reflections on the cinema as an apparatus were triggered by both: Baudry’s theorizing; and Metz’s wish to determine how the “love for the cinema” affects theorizing. As to his love for cinema: when Metz discusses the different relations to the “equipment of the cinema” in the small chapter on the “The cinema as technique,”²⁰ he explains that “a partial component of cinematic pleasure is to be carried away by the film (or the fiction, if there is one),” another “to appreciate as such the machinery that is carrying [one] away.”²¹ The filmic pleasure of connoisseurs or cinephiles specifically “lodges in the gap between the two”: the *appareil de base* (which is concealed or absent) and its effects (which are overwhelmingly

present).²² This triggers and facilitates the interest for technique in cinephiles. It is not accidental that all sorts of professionals, such as directors and critics, do often “demonstrate a real ‘fetishism of technique,’” as Metz argues, adding that he uses the word “fetishism” here in an ordinary sense.²³ A fetish always being material, there is an obvious concern amongst cinephiles with the “cinema in its physical state.” Furthermore, of all the arts “the cinema is the one that involves the most extensive and complex equipment”; the language of the cinema is greatly dependent on the “hardware.”²⁴ Regarding his concern with theorizing the apparatus of the cinema, it seems to me that Metz’s primary objective – slightly different from Baudry’s indeed – was to explain the powerful effects created by the cinema, more particularly the mechanisms and processes working in viewers when they go to the cinema, talk about the cinema, love the cinema...; moreover, to lay bare the ways in which these very powerful mechanisms might affect or were affecting the new scholarly enterprise they were all engaged in: introducing the study of film as an academic discipline in Paris’s universities in those days. Most of those studying film were cinephiles to begin with. They simply “loved cinema,” classical cinema. As opposed to academic scholars in the other arts, the problem was not how to understand film. Film is difficult to explain because it is easy to understand – a statement by Metz that always stuck. Studying film was a new and wholly different matter. The complex mechanisms which made film so easy and effective needed explaining, and perhaps those in classical films in the first place. Was one function of his apparatus theory not simply: to point out that the study of film would need to live up to the very specific demands of an art of which “the ‘technical’ dimension is more obtrusive [...] than elsewhere”?²⁵ For sure, I see in Metz no love for gadgets as was often apparent in the (then new) study of new media in the early 1990s.

Furthermore, would you argue that his background in phenomenology may in some ways have prepared him well for this new enterprise? I specifically think of Merleau-Ponty and the one observation which is always the focus of interest of phenomenological media theories: the transparency of the medium or the self-denial of the medium; the observation that “media display something without displaying themselves” (Wiesing).²⁶ The paradigmatic example of a medium being transparent is language: when successfully used, the meaning comes across and the signs are immediately forgotten. “The perfection of language lies in its capacity to pass unnoticed” (Merleau-Ponty).²⁷ Obviously, it is quite a challenge to try to explain the transparency of an art form which (certainly when compared to languages and literature) is so heavenly loaded with hardware as the cinema is; moreover, the film medium is subject to constant technological innovations which make themselves felt as part of the apparatus of the cinema, and do create medium awareness, if only momentarily. One way to explain the process of rendering the techniques transparent for Metz was in terms of codes which created (restored) the reality effects of film. As you just put forward as a

key Metzian idea: the code, once it “works,” always conceals itself. As does the medium.

ML: Firstly, I think technology, *per se*, is not a key concern for Metz even though, materially, the cinematic signifier as he understands it is determined by it. We can come back to the idea of juxtastructure mentioned above. In discussing Merleau-Ponty’s notion that cinema is a “phenomenological art,” Metz writes the following:

It can only be so because its objective determinations make it thus. The position of the Ego in cinema does not derive from a miraculous resemblance between cinema and the natural characteristics of all perception; on the contrary, it is anticipated and marked in advance by the institution (equipment, layout of film theatres, mental apparatus [*dispositif*] that interiorizes all of this), and also by the more general characteristics of the mental apparatus (*appareil*) (such as projection, the mirror structure, etc.). which, although less strictly dependent on a period of social history and a technology, by no means express the sovereignty of a “human vocation,” but rather inversely, are themselves fashioned by certain particularities of man as an animal (as the only animal that is not an animal): his primitive *Hilflosigkeit*, his dependence for care (long lasting source of the imaginary, of object relations, of the great oral figures of feeding), the motor prematurity of the infant which condemns it to first recognize itself through the sense of sight (and therefore in a way exterior to itself) anticipating a muscular unity that it does not yet possess.

In short, phenomenology may contribute to the knowledge of cinema (and it has done so) insofar as it happens to resemble it, and yet it is cinema and phenomenology, in their common illusion of *perceptual mastery* that need be brought to light by the real conditions of society and man.²⁸

So part of the institution of cinema is dependent on technology (equipment, layout of film theaters) as a condition of society (in Marxist terms, the infrastructure), but next to it, juxtaposed to it, are psycho-physical determinations. It is the connection, the juxtastructure, between these two determinations that is of interest to Metz in studying the institution of cinema which he defines as the meeting of three “machines”: the industrial machine which is “external” (industrial and business practices of filmmaking, film distribution and exhibition, but also film technology, equipment, etc.); the psychology of the spectator, which is an “internal” machine (it interiorizes aspects of the industry – the political economy of cinema – through a libidinal economy in a juxtaposed circuit of exchanges); and finally film criticism as a third machine further juxtaposed to the other two machines. In this scheme, it is true, Marxism and (semio-)psychoanalysis, political economy and libidinal economy are on the side of “science” and “knowledge,” as

they independently – or semi-independently – shed light on the determining conditions of the cinema institution. In short, with regards to psychoanalysis, technology is only of interest to Metz in terms of its juxtastructural relation to the psycho-physiological determination of the cinema institution.

In the brief section of *The Imaginary Signifier* you mention, the analogy is between the structure of fetishism and the situation of cinephiles who “know” how much the cinema requires a heavy investment (in both senses of the term: financial/industrial and libidinal) in equipment or technique and yet nonetheless appreciate the (classical) film as if it were an immediate transcription of a world that gives itself over to contemplation. The point being that the more one knows about film (not just technique, but everything connected with the enunciative side of filmmaking writ large: contractual details of the production of a film, directorial intentions, etc., but also scholarly knowledge of film history, film aesthetics, and theory), the more one has to disavow this knowledge in order to achieve the kind of “fetishistic” pleasure classical fiction cinema is capable of procuring. Even here, however, the argument isn’t a deterministic one: film technology doesn’t necessarily lead to such psychic structuring as Metz is describing. Take the case of very early spectators. It seems they were interested in the projection equipment almost as much as they were in the images (or “world”) it projected. The projector and its exhibition were part of the overall spectacle of motion pictures, along with the projected images even though, one could argue, the projector “faded” from sight (and mind – or at least from attention) as soon as the lights went out and the screen began to register the moving shadows (the projector could still be overheard, however). This said, the coming of encased projection booths in nickelodeons (in part for security reasons) implied that the projector, now conceptually “domesticated,” was no longer part of the “show” and could be construed as evidence that its presence might in fact disturb those attending the spectacle. Its disappearance, if you will, enacting (or helping enact) at an institutional level the sort of disavowal that characterizes the fetishistic structure Metz claims for the spectator and especially the cinephile, the spectator “in the know.” For Metz, who is interested in classical cinema’s ability to construct a world, interested in what he calls the *romanesque* (the novelistic), the pleasure the film affords is always shaded by some degree of disavowal and therefore by perversion.

In the manuscript I mentioned earlier which will be published in 1895 (“Existe-t-il une approche sémiologique de l’esthétique?”, a conference paper from 1971), Metz compares the tasks of semiology and psychoanalysis in trying to answer the question of what sort of cinema, if any, semiology could endorse. He writes:

Every film effectively engages primary processes (for example, condensation and displacement), but usually they remain ignored (by the filmmaker as

much as by the audience). And this is why (see Lyotard) they can accomplish desire (not fulfil it, but accomplish it hallucinatingly)

Now it is obvious that an expanded semiology would be led to pursue to some extent a film that would take as its subject, as its goal the analytical exhibition of the way condensation and displacement function. Yet, by the same token this film would be fatally deceptive and mobilize defenses. Desire would find in it its un-accomplishment (except where part of the libidinal economy has genuinely moved over to the side of a desire to unmask, a desire to know, that is to say, in the end, an assumed *voyeurism*, an attitude that would be at once perversion and its opposite. Instituting in each of us such an economy is no simple undertaking).²⁹

That same year, 1971, Metz wrote an important essay on special effects (“Trucages et cinéma”)³⁰ where he distinguished clearly between two forms of pleasure in the cinema: pleasure arising from the diegesis (in this case, invisible special effects) and pleasure arising from the “cinema-machine,” a form of pleasure which is more closely tied with the film’s enunciation (in this case, the pleasure concerns special affects that are recognized as such and therefore function as a feat to be celebrated in that regard). These remarks help explain why Metz came late to the problem of enunciation in the cinema: his pleasure lay on the side of the diegesis which he nonetheless relentlessly and ruthlessly assaulted in seeking to lay bare its mechanisms, its codes. This isn’t to say that his work on enunciation is devoid of “cinophilia.” Quite the opposite, in fact: it’s the book where he cites the most films, almost at times a catalogue, and often offering loving descriptions where adjectives such as “magnifique” (à propos *URGENCES* [1988] by Raymond Depardon), “les belles images” (à propos *LE TROU* [1960] by Jacques Becker) abound. Perhaps the “displacement” of the site of pleasure, from diegesis to enunciation required this new form of writing. At the Zurich conference, Dana Polan showed very convincingly how *L’Énonciation impersonnelle* is a very “loving book” and I agree with him that it “goes against the argument that exposing the apparatus breaks down ideology”³¹ as the people at *Screen* had inferred. Indeed, in his unpublished “review” of *WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT* (Zemeckis, 1988) Metz writes: “It is the triumph of the signifier, since the story doesn’t matter anymore, and the only thing the cinema does here is to self-exhibit, but this triumph is not what post-’68 materialism would have believed. With the “signifier” it is the money-grubbers (*les marchands de soupe*) who triumph.”³²

Now, to come back to your question, perhaps it was the phenomenologist in him that expressed itself in that pleasure in the diegesis, the pleasure from seeing a world, the cinephilic pleasure – the very pleasure Bazin, among others, expressed in his reviews. However his “attacks” on the normal working of the code, his constant attempts to go beyond or behind perception show the dilemma he was in: his discourse was not to be confused with Bazin’s. In the end, and

this is obvious in *The Imaginary Signifier*, phenomenology was essential and valued by Metz, but only as the (required) *negative* side (or dialectical *flip-side* if you prefer) of the semio-psychoanalytical enterprise.

AvdO: In retrospect, how do you assess Metz's work in the 1970s? Put differently, would you agree that apparatus theory contributed to the constitution of cinema studies as an object *sui generis*, defined by a number of concepts – the cinema apparatus, the *appareil de base*, the *dispositif*, etc. – that changed the study of film in that very period? Moreover, do you feel film and media scholars today may still gain interesting insights from Metz's reflections on the apparatus as developed in *The Imaginary Signifier* (taking into account that these essays were written in the heyday of psychoanalysis and that the latter lost much of its aura since)? Or would you rather argue that Metz's (and Baudry's) apparatus theory today is mainly interesting from a historical and epistemological perspective?

ML: In the end, the impact of 1970s apparatus theory was perhaps greater than could've been anticipated at the time, even though much of it is largely pooh-poohed today. For one thing, it gave new vigor to the study of spectatorship within the orbit of film and media studies. Whereas spectator studies had always been marginal forms of sociological and psychological interests in the discipline (from the Payne Fund studies all the way to the Filmology movement), apparatus theory was instrumental in initiating a move away from the film itself (or from cinematographic codes as manifested in films) as sole object of study. And while it was certainly guilty of the very idealism it sought to critique, offering a universalizing conception of the spectator, as it was soon pointed out, it nonetheless opened up an new area of study. Furthermore, by offering a target for historicized, local-specific, gendered as well as cognitive accounts of spectatorship – all of which criticized apparatus theory in part or in *toto* – one could say it was also dialectically/negatively valuable and important for our field. Thus, there can be no doubt that it had a profound impact on film and media studies. That's for the historical value of apparatus theory.

AvdO: Agreed, the historical value cannot be denied, but looking from an epistemological perspective, would the apparatus theory still be important to the field of film studies today?

ML: If one looks at the issue epistemologically, then I think one of the questions raised by apparatus theory concerns the good usage of analogy in theory. Let's go back to Baudry for a minute. There is no denying that the canonical ideal of Western film going – a situation we find today in cinémathèques more so than in any suburban multiplex – shares a number of features with Plato's myth of the cave. One question, then, is What are we to make of such (suggestive) likeness?

And more importantly, What are we to make of the differences – what are the “limits” of the analogy? In short, How are we to productively make use of analogies (keeping in mind that this is what they are)? Now to put it simply: Plato’s cave is an allegory, film going isn’t. What Baudry’s analogy was inadvertently doing was turning film going into an allegory, hence the idealistic, universalizing traits that clung to it. What Baudry produced, then, was an *image*. But is this image, in itself, useful? And to what end? One problem with this image, as media archaeologists and historians have shown us through their work, is that it kept hidden important historical facts about various apparatuses, spectatorial situations, different *dispositives* which have played a role in the emergence of cinema. Images show us things, but they can also turn out to hide things away.

I think this is also where Metz is more interesting, in this regard, than Baudry. To be sure, Metz uses analogies – there’s nothing intrinsically wrong with that, quite the opposite. But his analogies are properly structural. This is always how he worked. If you look at the wonderfully rich essay that ends *The Imaginary Signifier*, the long piece on metaphor and metonymy, you see that he’s not really interested in these terms, “metaphor” and “metonymy,” *per se*. What interests him is the deep semantic and logical structure they stand for, a structure which is independent of their surface manifestation in rhetoric or verbal language. A deep structure that seems to manifest itself also in dreams (according to psychoanalysis) and in films. This is why his isn’t an attempt to “map” linguistics or classical rhetoric onto film. The point for him, moreover, is always to account for an impression film leaves on the viewer, in this case the impression that films mean more than what they show, than what is given to visual perception alone. The same holds true for the other essays of that book, including “The Imaginary Signifier” where a good deal of what is at stake concerns classical cinema’s impression of reality and its involvement in the pleasure that films can provide – in good measure due to the machinery of cinema, whereby the world of fiction is doubly imaginary, doubly absent – and the forms of desire they rely on. Metz’s work does not “criticize” the cinema (as Baudry does), he offers a *critique* of it (in an almost Kantian sense): studying the (psychic) conditions of possibility for the pleasure it affords and how they merge with or juxtapose technical conditions.

AvdO: Metz’s interest in the “conditions of possibility” for providing “pleasure,” as you say, was made possible by cinema’s technical aspects, its apparatus. Yet in your reflections on Metz’s theory, the technological seems to be outweighed by the psychoanalytical...?

ML: If it appears like I’m downplaying the technological, apparatus side of Metz’s work in the 1970s, it’s because I want to avoid mechanistic/deterministic readings of it which I don’t think properly echo his project. The material aspects of the cinematic signifier reflect desire and pleasure as much as they dispense it.

And in as much as pleasure and desire are what is at stake in Metz's psychoanalytic account of the apparatus, I think there are still insights to be gained from it, even today. Indeed, if one avoids reifying it, avoids the implicit (and in, naïvely, an almost Hegelian sense) historical scheme posited by Baudry (from Plato, to Renaissance perspective all the way to cinema, as the only trajectory or lineage for projected moving images), there is no reason why Metz's overall perspective couldn't cross-pollinate with some of the more historical and media archaeological work being done today. Do the same desire and pleasure occur in watching a film on my iPhone or iPad? I think Metz would argue that they do, for the signifier is equally imaginary there as it is when a traditional movie screen and projector are used (I know for a fact that Metz watched a lot of films on television and on videotape!). Of course, the sort of pleasure Metz discusses may be harder to achieve or sustain when the iPhone starts ringing or when emails come in while I'm watching a film – does this mean that we're back to a situation akin, if only in this respect, to that of early film goes likely disturbed by sitting next to the projector? But then again with so many people nowadays using their smartphones in commercial film theaters, achieving and sustaining pleasure may be a difficult project there as well...

AvdO: Is the signifier indeed equally imaginary if the screen size and other elements of the *appareil de base* and the *dispositif* are radically changed? What happens when we remove the traditional movie screen, the projector and its light beam, the dark cinema auditorium? That certainly is a Metzian question. Of course such a question was not asked in the heyday of classical cinema. But we may indeed wonder. What about film viewers in a train on a bleak winter day bending over their phones to watch, say *THE WIZARD OF OZ*? It has struck me many times that viewers when bending over their phones would suddenly put this typical soft smile on their faces, as if seeing something innocent and cute. In art history this type of effect is addressed in relation to miniature art, miniature portrait painting, doll houses, etc. Would miniature artifacts – or IMAX screens, for that matter – exist if they would not affect viewers? Then: Do phones affect the imaginary status of the seen? Do they affect the imagination of viewers in a radically different way? One can argue that, in the end, they do not, that is, when viewers have become users who are used to watching like this, to phrase it tautologically. In other words: the film experience may end up being not all that different in terms of the imagination for viewers who shift screens habitually.

ML: It is obvious that the phenomenal conditions of film watching on, say, a miniature screen are different from those offered by mainstream large-screen film theaters. One could claim that there is a loss of impact in image and sound, for instance (however, one could equally ask whether there are gains "elsewhere" in the experience). The counterpoint, of course, is that individuals now have

home theaters built to recover part of that impact. It's difficult to say how Metz would have theorized these changes in the material and perceptual conditions of viewing films and it's unfair to him to speculate what his views would be. However, Metz was not insensitive to technological change in the cinema. In notes that he took on Rudolf Arnheim's *Film as Art*, Metz wrote: "Perhaps, as of 1980, the cinema in its entirety is dead at the benefit of TV and new media." Now Metz was very fond of Arnheim's work and he devoted an entire seminar to him. Further on in his notes, however, he critiques Arnheim for failing to consider cinema's technological evolution:

The blind spot, the closing of the mind is that he [Arnheim] didn't understand this: that, because it is technological, the cinema is fatally subject to evolution. The latter can only lead to improving cinema's impression of reality, and also render the latter more automatic. It is true that this eliminates the coarse and childish "signifying effects" Arnheim loved (a gigantic shadow used symbolically doesn't fare well in a strongly "realistic" film), but it is also normal (and this Arnheim also rejected) that, when a young art develops signifying effects become much more subtle, and, by the same token, compatible with the complete reproduction of reality, such as the true or false alternating and repetition effects in Hitchcock that R. Bellour studied. Arnheim didn't want to see – simply for a biographical reason, that of a self-attachment to his own era – that inseparably linked to the technical progress he abhorred, the anonymous collectivity of filmmakers was becoming ever more clever, ceaselessly recomposing its margins of creativity.³³

Notice, however, that the argument concerning technology here is an *aesthetic* one. If we come back to the problem of the apparatus, it's important to recognize that Metz's theory of the *dispositif* as *vehicule* of the cinematic signifier is dependent on a number of *principles* (especially the specific regime of absence/presence that the cinematic signifier ensures) that still hold when watching a film on a miniature screen. In short, in Metzian terms, and keeping in mind that the signifier is not the machine, the real question one should be asking here is the following: with the proliferation of screens and formats, has the nature of the cinematic signifier changed?

12. Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, trans. and intr. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 4.
13. Winthrop-Young, *Kittler and the Media*, 59.
14. Arnheim quoted in Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, 11-12.
15. Winthrop-Young, *Kittler and the Media*, 60.
16. Further see Eric Schatzberg, "Technik Comes to America: Changing Meanings of Technology before 1930," *Technology and Culture* 47, no. 3 (2006): 486-512.
17. Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, xl.
18. Friedrich Kittler, *Optical Media*, trans. Anthony Enns (Cambridge: Polity, 2009).
19. See Frank Hartmann, "Vom Sündenfall der Software. Medientheorie mit Entlarvungsgestus: Friedrich Kittler," available at <http://www.heise.de/tp/artikel/6/6345/1.html>.
20. See the lecture online at <http://www.egs.edu/faculty/friedrich-kittler/videos/the-relation-of-art-and-technique/>.
21. Kittler, *Discourse Networks 1800/1900*.
22. See the dialogue on Christian Metz and apparatus theory in this book. Christian Metz, *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and the Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977).
23. Christian Metz, "La grande syntagmatique du film narratif," in *Essais sur la signification au cinema*, vol. 1 (Paris: Klincksieck, 1968).
24. These lectures are assembled and translated [by Anthony Enns] under the title *Optical Media*.
25. Viktor Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," in *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays [1917]*, trans. Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), 3-57.
26. Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," 12.
27. See Lambert Wiesing, "What Are Media?" in this book.
28. Friedrich Kittler, *Platz der Luftbrücke. Ein Gespräch mit Stefan Banz* (Nürnberg: Verlag für moderne Kunst, 2011). For the following see pp. 41-46.
29. Kittler, *Platz der Luftbrücke*, 44.
30. On this point further see Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, 108; Geoffrey Winthrop-Young, "Drill and Distraction in the Yellow Submarine: The Dominance of War in Friedrich Kittler's Media Theory," *Critical Inquiry* 28, no. 4 (2002): 825-854; Vilém Flusser, *Towards a Philosophy of Photography* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000).
31. Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, 2.

Revisiting Christian Metz's "Apparatus Theory" – A Dialogue

1. Martin Lefebvre and François Albera, eds. "La filmologie de nouveau," *Cinémas: Journal of Film Studies* 19, no. 2-3 (2009).
2. Dominique Chateau and Martin Lefebvre, "Dance and Fetish: Metz' Epistemological Shift," *October* (forthcoming). Parts of this article were presented as a paper in a panel on Christian Metz at the Film Philosophy Conference in London in September 2012.

3. Martin Lefebvre, "Existe-t-il une approche sémiologique de l'esthétique?" 1895, no. 70 (forthcoming). Please note that all quotations from Metz's manuscript have been translated from the French by Martin Lefebvre, unless indicated otherwise.
4. "The semiological paradigm and Christian Metz's 'cinematographic' thought" [Le paradigme sémiologique et la pensée, 'cinématographique' de Christian Metz], (conference organized by the University of Zurich, Film Studies Department, 12-14 June, 2013).
5. Christian Metz, "Le cinéma: langue ou langage," *Communications* 4 (1964).
6. See online: http://www.reseau-cinema.ch/fileadmin/files/images/oo_news/E-Flyer-DGZ.pdf.
7. [Eric de Kuyper and Emile Poppe, eds], *Seminar semiotiek van de film. Over Christian Metz*. *Sunscrift* 159 (Nijmegen: SUN, 1980). *Sunscrift* 158 was devoted to a partial translation in Dutch of Metz's *The Imaginary Signifier*. Moreover, many of Metz's articles were translated by and published in *Versus*, the academic film journal De Kuyper and Poppe founded and edited until late 1992. For an integral digital presentation, see <http://filmarchief.ub.rug.nl/root/Sub-collecties/Papierenarchief/Film-tijdschriften/>.
8. Christian Metz, "La grande syntagmatique du film narratif," in *Essais sur la signification au cinéma*, vol. 1 (Paris: Klincksieck, 1968).
9. Christian Metz, *Le Signifiant imaginaire* (Paris: UGE, coll. 10/18, 1977), 12, 329n14.
10. Jean-Louis Baudry, *L'Effet cinéma* (Paris: Editions Albatros, coll. Ça cinéma, 1978).
11. Marcelin Pleynet, "Économique, idéologique, formel," *Cinéthique* no. 3 (1969): 10.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *ibid.*
14. Jean-Louis Baudry, "Effets idéologiques produits par l'appareil de base," *Cinéthique*, no. 7-8 (1970).
15. Jean-Louis Baudry, *L'Effet cinéma*, 31n1.
16. See Chateau and Lefebvre, "Dance and Fetish."
17. The text was originally published in *Cahiers du cinéma* and Metz refers to it in the opening pages of *Le Signifiant Imaginaire/The Imaginary Signifier*. Christian Metz, "A propos de l'impression de réalité au cinéma," *Cahiers du cinéma*, no. 166-167 (1965).
18. Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16, no. 3 (1975).
19. Christian Metz, "Vision binoculaire et vision monoculaire (idéologie et données psycho-physiologiques)," (unpublished manuscript, Metz archive at Bibliothèque du film (BiFi), Paris, 1973-1974). Subsequent quotes are all taken from this manuscript.
20. Christian Metz, *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and the Cinema* [1977], trans. Celia Britton et al. (London: Macmillan, 1983), 74-76.
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Ibid.*
26. For a concise reflection on phenomenological media theories and Merleau-Ponty see Lambert Wiesing, "What Are Media?" in this book.

27. For the whole quote, see “What Are Media?” in this book.
28. Metz, *Le Signifiant imaginaire*, 75.
29. Christian Metz, “Existe-t-il une approche sémiologique de l’esthétique?” (unpublished manuscript of a conference paper, Metz archive at Bibliothèque du film (BiFi), Paris, 1971). The paper will be published in 1895, no. 70 (forthcoming).
30. Christian Metz, “Trucages et cinéma,” in *Essais sur la signification au cinéma*, vol. 2 (Paris: Klincksieck, 1972).
31. In a private email.
32. Christian Metz, (unpublished review, Metz archive at Bibliothèque du film (BiFi).
33. Christian Metz, from notes on Rudolf Arnheim’s *Film as Art* (unpublished notes, Metz archive at Bibliothèque du film [BiFi], Paris).

The Future History of a Vanishing Medium

1. Notice: some footnotes are from the present (by the author of the text, André Gaudreault), others are supposedly from the future (by the avatar of the author of the text, Paul-Emmanuel Odin). This will be indicated by one of the two following tags: [Note by the author] and [Note by the avatar of the author].
2. [Note by the author] Only the first edition of this conference has taken place, in November 2011 at the Cinémathèque québécoise in Montreal, organized jointly by André Gaudreault (Université de Montréal) and Martin Lefebvre (Concordia University). See the conference report by Daniel Fairfax in *Cinema Journal* 52, no. 1 (Fall 2012): 127-131, available at http://muse.jhu.edu/login?auth=0&type=summary&url=/journals/cinema_journal/v052/52.1.fairfax.html.
3. [Note by the avatar of the author] Peter Bogdanovich and Orson Welles, *This Is Orson Welles*, ed. Jonathan Rosenbaum (New York: Da Capo, 1998), 23. It should be noted that Welles and Bogdanovich are not much fonder, it seems, of the expression “motion pictures” than they are of “cinema.”
4. [Note by the author] *Ibid.* My thanks to Timothy Barnard for bringing this quotation to my attention.
5. [Note by the avatar of the author] William Paul, “Uncanny Theater: The Twin Inheritances of the Movies,” *Paradoxa* 3, no. 3-4 (1997): 321-347.
6. Paul, “Uncanny Theater...,” 231 [in note]. The “Announcement” was originally published in *The Moving Picture News*, September 27, 1913, vol. 8, 13, 15.
7. *Ibid.*, “An Acknowledgment,” originally published in *The Motion Picture News*, October 25, 1913, vol. 8, 16, 14.
8. [Note by the author] This quotation is in fact drawn from the present-day website: http://www.cmstudies.org/?page=org_history.
9. [Note by the author] *Ibid.*
10. [Note by the author] *Ibid.*
11. [Note by the avatar of the author] See in particular, as early as 1996, the title of two books by Noël Carroll: *Theorizing the Moving Image* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) and *Interpreting the Moving Image* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).