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Introduction: Researching Cinema and Media Technologies

Annie van den Oever

In an anthology of terms presented in a Surinam newspaper on February 25, 1898,¹ an anonymous journalist summed up the more than fifty different terms which were used by technicians to label the new technical inventions (and patents) which they came up with after the amazingly successful Lumière invention of the kinematograph. The long list of terms clearly indicates the powerful impact of the new Lumière technology on other technicians' imaginary:

[...] kinegraaf, kinetograaf, kinematograaf, kinematoterm, kineoptoskoop, kineoptikon, kinematoskoop, kinebleposkoop, kinegrafoskoop, kinevivagraaf, kinesetograaf, photokinematograaf, photoskoop, motophotoskoop, phoio-troop, mutoskoop, motorgraaf, movendoskoop, mouvementoskoop, manimatoskoop, theatograaf, vitagraaf, vitaskoop, vitaphostoskoop, eierskuop, kathoskoop, magniskoop, mutoskoop, phonendoskoop, gerialgraaf, sterioptikon, fammograaf, zoograaf, biograaf, heligraaf, velegraaf, rollograaf, artograaf, vivendograaf, vitamotograaf, kinestereograaf, badizograaf, heliecinegraaf, phautograaf, panoramograaf, pantobiograaf, pantomimograaf, chronophotograaf, photochronograaf, scenamatograaf, pictorialograaf.²

The journalist's point was to show how deeply the Lumière kinematograph had affected and inspired the other inventors and also how quick they were to jump on the bandwagon in hopes to profit from this lucrative invention themselves by slightly changing the new technology and putting the seemingly new invention under the protection of a new patent of their own. The long list of terms also suggests the many different ways in which technicians envisioned the new technology to be further developed for a great variety of future uses. Clearly, the "truly new" Lumière innovation evoked all sorts of new ideas in the minds of other inventors, artists as well as technicians, and triggered an energetic torrent of copying activities and some further vibrant experiments, producing a stream of minor and major inventions. It created one of those intervals of bliss with new technological inventions that affected people far beyond the circle of engineers. As the writer of *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, Lev Tolstoy, for instance re-

marked in his diary entry of April 26, 1895, describing a day in which he took his daughter Sasha and a friend to the theater, the little girls were apparently so excited and affected by the electric lights that they could hardly take in much more of the *matinée*.³ If it is largely by technology that contemporary society hangs together, as philosophers have stated,⁴ then it should not surprise us that technology also caught quite a bit of attention of philosophers. For similar reasons did it attract attention from film and media scholars. Not only had the young practice called “cinema”⁵ from its early years onwards been saturated with hardware, people in the industry had also been quick to understand that the new technological inventions demanded a skilful and artful use. The Greek word *τεχνικός* (*technikos*) means “of or pertaining to art, artistic, skilful.” The term “*technikos*,” as the etymological root of “*technique*,” situates the technical in the field between art and hardware, in other words, between technology (as knowledge of techniques) and knowledge of a skilful or artful use.⁶ There are film scholars who have argued that film history is the history of technology (for an overview, see Benoît Turquety in this book). Moreover, the history of theories of film certainly is punctuated with theories of technology. In all these theories, the impact of cinema’s technologies on the viewers played a crucial role. To name but a few: Louis Delluc, Germaine Dulac, Jean Epstein and others theorized on *photogénie* and the close-up; Sergei Eisenstein, Vsevolod Pudovkin, Dziga Vertov on montage; Rudolph Arnheim on techno-perception; Jean Baudry and Christian Metz on the “apparatus” of the cinema. They affected film studies in major ways. Furthermore, some major 20th-century philosophers and media scholars, who were made to rethink the impact of (media) technologies on culture, had a considerable impact on the fields of film studies and media archaeology. An obvious example is Walter Benjamin, who was to reassess the rupture in perception and aesthetics created by the new cinema machine and more in general the effects of mechanical reproduction on the aura of the artwork. Another example is Marshall McLuhan, who was as much inspired by the new era of television as he was by Harold Innis, when he coined the famous slogan that the “medium is the message.” A third example, from the new era of digital media of the 1990s, is Friedrich Kittler, who inspired attention for the medium’s materiality and the distinction between *technische Medien* (technical media) such as photo and cinematographic media, and other communication media such as language. Yet others like Bernard Stiegler, who constructed a post-phenomenological account of the mediated experience, and Paul Virilio, who explored the “logistics of perception” and the ways in which media technologies and wars are tied together, also had a considerable impact on the fields of film and media studies.

One of the questions to be addressed in this book is how the new philosophies (of technology) created in relation to major technological transformations – such as the new philosophies of technology formulated by Benjamin, Heidegger, McLuhan, Kittler, Stiegler, or Virilio – could or did contribute in turn to the

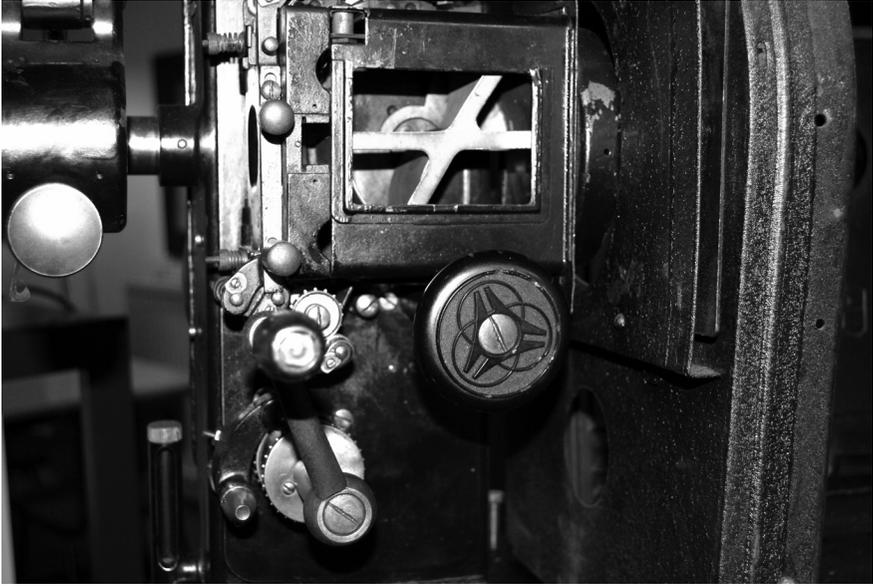


Fig. 1: Details from a Zeis Ikon 35 mm projector. Photo made by Johan Stadtman. Courtesy of the Film Archive, University of Groningen.

modification of film theory and some of its key concepts. A second question is whether there is perhaps something distinctly cyclical to this, meaning that the intervals in which theorizing on technology took priority were intercut by intervals of relative silence with regard to the question of technology. A third question to be addressed is whether the theoretical shifts instigated by Benjamin, Heidegger, Kittler and others could be made productive for the field of film studies. These questions are even more pressing when we take into account that the cinema (as suggested above) is generally perceived of as a practice ruled by hardware, and that film as an artifact and a medium were often firstly affected on a very practical level by the introduction of new technologies, but once these technologies were well and truly appropriated, they, secondly, called into question the very underpinnings of the field. For instance: Did the new digital simulation, recording, editing and projecting technologies not call into question theories of “realism” in film, suggesting they had reached their expiry date? Since the early 1990s, which saw the beginning of the digital era, many contemporary scholars have been preoccupied by theoretical issues related to the context of media technologies. Film history and film theory were reassessed by them over and over again. It is the objective of this book to contribute to this enterprise.

About this Book

Part I opens with Dominique Chateau's "The Philosophy of Technology in the Frame of Film Theory," in which he returns to Walter Benjamin's famous essay on "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility." This seminal text has repeatedly been a source for reflections on the birth of the cinema and the impact of technology on culture in the past twenty years. Chateau's contribution to the discussion of technology envisioned in this book, however, uses Benjamin's text as a case to study the reciprocal relation between technological and theoretical innovation. He starts with a question which is of fundamental interest for the field at this point in time: If major technological transitions felt by everyone tend to trigger new theories or philosophies of technology, then the question raised is also whether the new cluster of ideas related to such technological transitions in turn have contributed to the transformation of film theory and several of its key concepts. Chateau first of all demonstrates that "The Work of Art" provides a substantial ground for this discussion, as Benjamin presents a series of answers to the very question he raises with a degree of relevance for the different time periods in which they were reassessed. Chateau does not present a linear reading of "The Work of Art." He sees the essay as "a network of concepts" whose interrelations offer a "matrix" which one can use to interpret the implications of the invention of cinema as well as the advent of the digital revolution.

In "Toward an Archaeology of the Cinema/Technology Relation: From Mechanization to 'Digital Cinema'" Benoît Turquety looks at the historiography of the cinema from the outside in, as if he were not part of it, in an attempt to re-establish the history and historiography of the cinema within the now often forgotten context of the social sciences of the time. He starts with the statement that the history of the cinematic medium has established itself from the very beginning as a *technological* history. According to Turquety, the patents regarding cinematic innovations issued during the early phase of the cinema and their economic and patriotic implications; and the scientific curiosity from which sprung many of those innovations that shaped the cinema as we now know it, are tell-tale signs of the preoccupation of the cinema with technology. Not surprisingly, motion picture-oriented publications between 1895 and 1925 all focused on describing the "evolution of the machines," and the "historical-ideological determination" of important innovations. In addressing such issues, Turquety lays bare the complex, multi-faceted relation between the history of cinema and the history of technology, where *cinema* is characterized through *technology*, and vice versa.

In the forties and early fifties, an era marked by television and the atom bomb and a cascade of new devices that ushered in the new era of consumerism in the West, Martin Heidegger reflected on the complex relation between technology and humanity. His *Die Frage nach der Technik* [The Question Concerning Technol-

ogy] has become a classic of indisputable value. In “*Technē and Poīēsis: On Heidegger and Film Theory*,” film philosopher Robert Sinnerbrink assesses Heidegger’s (potential) impact on film theory. First of all, Sinnerbrink acknowledges that although Heidegger’s philosophy of subjectivity and his re-thinking of the “question of Being” have transformed modern thought, and despite the fact that it is obvious that existential phenomenology, hermeneutics, deconstruction and French poststructuralism all “owe a debt to Heidegger’s work,” Heidegger appears to be a philosopher who has little to offer contemporary film scholars. After all, he rarely commented on the topic of film. Nevertheless, despite his skepticism concerning photography (and by association, cinema), Heidegger was notorious as a critic of the modern age. In “*Technē and Poīēsis*,” Sinnerbrink’s objective is to show the significance of Heidegger’s thought for contemporary film and media theory and the philosophy of cinema by addressing two important facets of Heidegger’s view: the “question of technics” in modernity and its meaning for audiovisual media; and the idea of a “Heideggerian poetics” of modern art, “having the poetic power to disclose new horizons and worlds,” an idea with substantial implications for re-thinking what cinema can be.

Bernard Stiegler is a philosopher of technology with a keen interest in time. In “*Stiegler’s Post-Phenomenological Account of Mediated Experience*,” Patrick Crogan argues that in *Technics and Time* Stiegler developed a substantial critical renovation of phenomenological approaches to experience by focusing on the mediation and transmission of experience through techniques and artifacts. More specifically, Crogan examines Stiegler’s notion of the “industrial temporal object.” To assess the significance of Stiegler’s new theorization of cinema in the context of his wider project, Crogan presents an overview of Stiegler’s account of the role played by technics in general (and mnemotechnics, in particular) in the dynamics of human life as a form of “technical life.” Digital (including digital audiovisual) media forms having emerged recently, the current period is approached as “post-cinematic,” lying between the epoch of analog and digital systems of recording, representation, communication and simulation. Crogan argues that Stiegler’s philosophical views on the cinematic experience of “disorientation,” and its critical and cultural potentials are invaluable to film theory today, not only because they offer a reconsideration of cinema as a technocultural form that has transformed human life globally, but also because they offer insights into “how the post-cinematic digital media are transforming the conditions of the production of experience today.”

Media technologies have saturated the current practices of communication and representation. These technologies urgently demand research from media studies; moreover, a critical reassessment of the ways in which media studies have defined “media” so far. In “*What Are Media?*” Lambert Wiesing poses the question of how to define media in a provocative way. “When we look at the current state of media studies, we might well think that it may be better not to ask the

question, What are media? but rather, What isn't a medium? Indeed the situation seems to be such that media studies is determined by a rather large number of concepts of media that are, however, equally wide, in part even unlimited." A second problem, as he argues, is that research in media studies is determined "by concepts of media that to a worrisome degree have moved away from the everyday understanding of the medium as a means of communication." (Communication, understood by Wiesing, includes all forms of exchange of information, even representations and the arts.) To demonstrate his point, he analyzes the main theses of the media theories that dominate media studies: the technical-oriented approach of Marshall McLuhan; the system-theoretical approach of Niklas Luhmann; and phenomenological media theories (with elaborate quotes taken from Merleau-Ponty). A crucial problem Wiesing brings forward is the "transparency" of the medium (e.g., Merleau-Ponty's classical example of language: when simply used as a means to transmit meaning, the medium itself will go unnoticed). If "transparency" is taken as a pivotal feature of media, as media phenomenologists tend to do, the notion of a "medium" inevitably is broadened in a problematic way, to include all "means that remain unthematized during their employment." In the second half of his chapter, Wiesing rethinks the notion of "medium" in terms of the classical idea of Husserl's phenomenology, the distinction between *genesis* and *validity*, with remarkable results. First of all, he argues that media are "tools that make it possible to separate genesis from validity." Secondly, he defines media accordingly, as "tools or means that are transparent during their employment; but they are also specific tools that are capable of something that other tools cannot achieve, namely a separation of genesis and validity." Thirdly, he explains the complex notion of "validity" (as used by Husserl) to conclude that media "are precisely those tools that make it possible that not just something *equivalent* but also the *very same thing* can be seen, heard, and thought at different times, in different places, by different people – and this likely is the reason why media can hardly be overestimated in their anthropological significance."

Part II presents a series of reflections on cinema and media technologies, describing and assessing the ways in which the relations between the "hardware," the "software" and the "wetware" are visualized, schematized, hypothesized and conceptualized in current cinema research as well as in past theories. One objective is to explore the impact of particular (new) cinema technologies (e.g., 3D; digital technologies) on audiences in terms of perceptual impact, cognitive processes, affects and emotions. Another objective is to determine if and how new developments of the hardware and new practices of usages may have affected theorizing and how the combined factors of technological, cultural and social aspects have been approached in theories (e.g., on television, on early cinema, on new and digital media) in the last decades. This part of the book opens with a reassessment of the "history of vision"-debate by Annemone Ligensa and a re-

flection on the so-called modernity thesis and early cinema studies. The basic assumptions of the “history of vision”-debate have had a considerable impact on cinema and media research. According to Ligensa, its assumptions are particularly relevant today, because of the similarities between early cinema’s historical emergence as a modern, commercial mass medium and our current, global “digital revolution.” The assumptions developed in the context of early cinema studies regarding the considerable (perceptual) impact of the cinema machine on viewers – highly influential since the late 1980s – have been challenged by scholars from the fields of cognitive and evolutionary psychology, who argue that perception is biologically determined and thus fairly stable. As Ligensa shows, some scholars have argued that this debate is “mostly due to differences in the definition of ‘perception’ (the content vs. the process of perception, sensory perception vs. apperception etc.)” Understanding the basic psychological processes of media reception, regardless of their unchangeable or changeable nature, Ligensa argues, is important when studying contemporary or historical audiences. She therefore proposes to take an interdisciplinary stance to the study of media-related behavior, following John L. Sherry’s plea for a “neuroscience paradigm” that offers a “systemic model of behavior that would investigate the interaction of biology and culture.” The “history of vision”-debate, Ligensa contends, has been fierce and polemics have not always been subtle, but at least it has opened up discussions between scholars from various disciplinary fields which can certainly benefit cinema and media studies.

Ian Christie’s chapter on 3D, “Will the 3D Revolution Happen?,” offers a detailed analysis of the arguments and positions taken in the 3D debate by critics, viewers and theorists alike, ranging from the recent and substantial defense and promotion by AVATAR director James Cameron, to the fierce and vicious attacks in articles and blogs by Roger Ebert and other disapproving critics, to the very elegant and well-argued pieces on “stereoscopy” in the works of Bazin and Eisenstein. Some crucial questions are: What does 3D (stereoscopy) do exactly? And is what the new 3D technologies can do, or claim to do, effective? Moreover, Is it appreciated by the audiences (who have to pay extra)? Is the new technology put to good use by the directors? Interestingly, both Bazin and Eisenstein, early on, produced rich and highly interesting essays on the topic. These essays are nevertheless relatively unknown, and thus remained understudied in the field of film studies, which is even more surprising as Bazin and Eisenstein are among the best-known and well-read theorists of the cinema worldwide. Christie carefully analyzes Bazin’s and Eisenstein’s arguments within the context of their work. Besides addressing the current, and perhaps already waning, “3D boom” in cinema, Christie focuses on the late 1940s and early 1950s, a brief period when 3D again successfully emerged in the cinema, in part as a response to the new rival on the scene; the mass medium of television. The very detailed analysis of the development of 3D that Christie explores shows that although the entertain-

ment and leisure industry was initially responsible for the appropriation of stereoscopic technology from the pre-cinema era onwards, unsuspected fields such as medicine and warfare also made use of the technology.

In “Television’s Many Technologies: Domesticity, Governmentality, Genealogy,” television scholar Markus Stauff demonstrates that research on television provides interesting provocations to existing definitions of technology as found in film and media studies, and most clearly with respect to television’s latest transformations, which undermine any clear technical definition of the medium. Technological innovations change and challenge the identity of the medium – but this may be a truth all too obvious, Stauff argues. Hence he proceeds to look at the period where technological innovations and radical transformations perhaps seem less pronounced: the “seemingly more simple television landscape between the 1960s and 1990s.” Thus “classic” research on (mainstream) television is a good place to start. Interestingly, however, the everyday medium that came into existence in that specific period, simple as it may seem, Stauff argues, triggers some highly relevant reflections on the question of technology in media development precisely because of its “domestic character.” Moreover, as television combines the “day-to-day use of highly complex machinery” with constantly changing connections with other domestic technologies, the medium as such poses “quite different questions than the more public use of technology in cinema” or “the mobile always-connectedness of digital media.” In his overview, Stauff carefully analyzes the “intricate relationship between technology as technical system, as material object, as social practice, and as techniques of the body.”

In “Postmodern Hi-fi vs. Post-Cool Lo-fi: An Epistemological War,” Laurent Jullier addresses the question, How can I know, as a spectator of a fictional narrative, what a Napoleonic battle was like? In other words, does a film displaying an 18th-century battle allow the spectator access to a “real” believable knowledge of the world?; and which technological devices does film employ to provide this kind of realism? Thus, Jullier aims to show the way in which the antagonistic cinematic hi-fi and lo-fi apparatuses (high fidelity, low fidelity) are trying to provide some reliable “real” knowledge to the spectator. In a detailed case study exploring the epistemological dichotomy of hi-fi and lo-fi technology, Jullier shows that computer-generated imagery (CGI) is usually associated with the hi-fi device to provide an often photo-realistic bird-eye view of the world, whereas the lo-fi device usually implies the use of a hand-held shaky camera to record the world in a “run-and-gun style” that manages to put the spectator right at the heart of the battlefield. The hi-fi apparatus, Jullier explains, refers to a postmodern *exocentric* type of encoding environment data: “It allows a kind of disembodied experience in order to embrace the wholeness of a scene.” The lo-fi apparatus, on the other hand, refers to a, what Jullier labels, “post-cool,” *egocentric* type of encoding environment data. These two competing types of encoding are not mutually exclusive, Jullier indicates, as both aim to describe “a scene with the

most possible accuracy.” Therefore it should not come as a surprise that hi-fi and lo-fi technologies are more and more intermingled in each new release. Using these devices to achieve “realism” does come at a price, Jullier argues, especially in France, where (orthodox) modernist cinephiles still tend to favor getting absorbed in the diegesis over being wowed by audiovisual excesses they simply do not feel comfortable with. Another threat to the harmony between audience and aesthetic features, Jullier argues, is the ageing of technology. Just as the popular use of zoom-in telephoto lenses of the 1970s, 3D CGI, too, will someday lose its evocative power and become an outmoded device in the history of film style. Thus, the way we interpret technological effects, Jullier explains, “varies through time and depends on cinephile communities.” Nevertheless, filmmakers and spectators do not refrain from airing their preferences for “the so-called lo-fi or hi-fi ways of making images,” which in turn leaves film scholars with an array of interesting arguments that phrase these preferences.

Pasi Väliäho opens Part III of the book by recalling that the histories and theories of cinema are in most cases approached in terms of the technology of projection, in line with the pre-cinema tradition of optical spectacles and magic theaters. An alternative conception of cinema is created by the focus on the technologies for the recording of movement as pointed out in the context of the late-19th-century life sciences in particular. Well documented (by Marta Braun, Mary Ann Doane, etc.), it was in this context that pre-cinematic devices such as chronophotographic apparatuses as well as graphic self-recording machines were developed to track down the living object in terms of its dynamic expressions. A whole complex of various kinds of machines was produced to capture and reproduce “movement,” which was seen as the essence of life. This series of machines was epitomized by the “chronophotographic gun” Étienne-Jules Marey made in 1882, as Väliäho indicates. In his “Marey’s Gun: Apparatuses of Capture and the Operational Image,” he explores the alternative trajectory of cinema’s history as indicated to account for the medium as a specific kind of apparatus (Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben, Jean-Louis Déotte) of knowing and reproducing the moving and the living. He analyzes how cinema and pre-cinematic technologies gave rise to a particular kind of “diagrammatic vision,” the function and purpose of which was “to track down, automate, abstract as well as take control of the dynamics of living beings.” On a more philosophical level, he discusses the relationships between technology, perception and power, which Väliäho sees in relation to scientific technologies of visualization and modernity’s biopolitical project (the notion of “biopolitical” refers to Foucault’s idea of the apparatus). Lastly, Pasi Väliäho points out links between the late-19th-century diagrammatic vision and today’s screen-based systems of control of populations, e.g., automated machine-perception as well as digital face recognition technologies.

Early Soviet film is in many ways exemplary of *technē in action*, if only because the pivotal figures (Sergei Eisenstein, Dziga Vertov, Vsevolod Pudovkin, Alexan-

der Dovshenko) tended to learn the trade by partaking in the extensive practice of re-editing films made by (often famous) foreign directors (Griffith among them), whose films, regardless of their qualities and reputations, were put back on the montage table and cut in shape before they were found suitable by new Soviet Union's censors to be distributed for screening to post-revolutionary Soviet audiences. Being invited to cut up movies other (brilliant) directors made – was that not considered an avant-garde dream? Moreover, this was part of a variety of ephemeral activities, ranging from alternative screening practices (e.g., film festivals), teaching, publishing, to film collecting, known as film culture today, as Malte Hagener has shown in his study *Moving Forward, Looking Back* (2007). In “Re-editing as Psychotechnique: Montage and Mediality in Early Soviet Cinema,” he shows how the specific avant-garde context gave rise to a creative employment of the medium's possibilities. Although in different ways, Vertov and Eisenstein both put the materiality and mediality of film at center stage. Analyzing them from this perspective, Hagener argues that Eisenstein's [early] thinking on montage “can be summarized as a series of ideas on psychotechnics and biomechanics related to how film technology and mental activity intersect.” Hagener mostly focuses on the years directly after the Russian revolution, 1919-1924, just before Eisenstein, Pudovkin and Dovshenko “suddenly and seemingly out of nowhere bursts onto the scene.” The cases and context Hagener presents here allow him to “to rethink the nexus of style and technology as a complex negotiation in which neither side dominates the other, thus avoiding any kind of determinism.”

The Italian film theorist Francesco Pitassio devotes his attention to the interwar period in Italy, more specifically the “technophobic” tendency in Italian film theory in the 1920s and 1930s triggered by, or feeding on, Italian idealism. In “Technophobia and Italian Film Theory in the Interwar Period,” Pitassio states that Italian film scholars of the interwar period were “technophobic” in that they feared the effects of technology. Their attitude stands in sharp contrast to the keen interest in cinema's technological innovations eagerly discussed within early European film theory (certainly in the 1920s) at large; one need only think of the French debate on *photogénie* or the Russian debate on montage. As opposed to this, Italian film theorists according to Pitassio shied away from the European technology debate by framing their theories in terms of the mainly idealist premises and concepts handed to them by the prominent Italian philosophers of the time. Moreover, Italian film theorists tried to define and examine cinema within the broader context of media systems as an apparatus belonging to modern life. In addition to previous research done on the period, Pitassio aims at providing an in-depth analysis of the institutional, philosophical and political frames which determined Italian film theory in relation to technology in the interwar period.

Video is perhaps the technological invention of the post-war era that was to affect the field of film studies more than any other technology, if only because it gave the field a device to easily rewind and reassess films for the first time in its

history. In *Death 24x a Second* (2006), Laura Mulvey already reflected on its profound and lasting impact on the field, cleverly alluding to Jean-Luc Godard's use of video in her book title. His masterpiece of the early 1980s, *HISTOIRE(S) DU CINÉMA*, has the ominous subtitle *Cogito ergo video*. Even though his transformation of the Cartesian phrase – “*Cogito ergo video*” – is sometimes considered humorous, as Godard-expert Céline Scemama argues in this book, it is nevertheless a founding principle for him and his film provides a discourse on his method. How could one present a history of the cinema before the existence of video? How to collect, select, assess, play and rewind all the fragments that make up the history of the cinema (for Godard)? How to creatively play with the new possibilities video allows and invites? In part, *HISTOIRE(S) DU CINÉMA* is Godard's reassessment of the relations between *technē* and *poiēsis* in the field of film. Many philosophers and film theorists reflected on the topic before him and many of them are referred to by Godard. One of them, Béla Balázs, referred to here by Scemama, once wrote, “Technological inventions bring the idea of a new art form. But once the idea exists, [...] it inspires technology in turn, gives it a direction and a specific mission.” Scemama argues that what matters is not so much whether Godard's interest in new technologies put him ahead of his time, but rather the way in which he instantly thought of using them to serve his outlook on the times.

In “Performativity/Expressivity: The Mobile Micro Screen and Its Subject,” Nanna Verhoeff and Heidi Rae Cooley reflect on the performative and expressive qualities of current-day technologies such as mobile screens that presently saturate private and public life and their impact on the subject. They ask themselves, in what way performativity and subjectivity are central to an understanding of technology. Their reflections are informed by a tradition of cinema and visual culture studies on the one hand, and science and technology studies and new materialism on the other. In order to theorize new media technologies and related practices, Verhoeff and Cooley mobilize Peircean semiotics in their exploration of the performative and expressive features of ubiquitous mobile technologies. They argue that it is in these performative and expressive inscriptions that technologies have cultural, social and historical embedding and meaning. In their chapter, they explore how the specific “dispositif of mobility,” and the “fluid spatio-temporality of emergence” – which they see as the underpinnings of the new “visual regime of navigation” created by mobile screens – require that theorists and media scholars acknowledge that technologies, practices and subjects are now in a particularly dynamic relationship.

Part IV is devoted to two discussions, one on Friedrich Kittler as a major media theorist, who had a considerable impact on the field of film studies and the young discipline of media archaeology; and a second discussion on Christian Metz and his so-called “apparatus theory.” These discussions have the form of a dialogue. “Rethinking the Materiality of Technical Media: Friedrich Kittler, *Enfant*

Terrible with a Rejuvenating Effect on Parental Discipline” presents a dialogue with media expert and Kittler translator Geoffrey Winthrop-Young. The second dialogue, “Revisiting Christian Metz’s ‘Apparatus Theory,’” presents a discussion with film theorist and Metz expert Martin Lefebvre, who has had access to the Metz archive since 2008 and is able to consult Metz’s personal writings to contextualize the apparatus theory. These two dialogues are meant to discuss and reassess the work of these two major thinkers and their productivity for film and media studies today. For further introductions, see the beginning of Part IV.

In Part V the future of film and media studies is envisioned in two radically different chapters. The first one is written by André Gaudreault and is entitled “The Future History of a Vanishing Medium.” In a playful, tongue-in-cheek way, he reflects on the so-called “digital revolution” and the question of the “death of cinema,” which is announced and mourned each and every time a major new technology presents itself in the field to rival the cinema. Gaudreault specifically aims at envisioning the possible impact on future film historiography by the announced disappearance of celluloid under the influence of the current digital revolution of which we have not yet seen the end. “*We too are also in the midst of a process of mutation. We as film viewers, but also as active members of the small community of film studies scholars.*” The question is: How profoundly will the cinema change and how will cinema studies change in its wake? Gaudreault’s analysis and vision are voiced by a stand-in of a younger generation, who speaks to us from a distant point in the future.

The last chapter in this book, “Experimental Media Archaeology: A Plea for New Directions,” is written by media historian Andreas Fickers and me. It envisions a future for film and media studies in the form of a plea. Acknowledging that media studies and the young discipline of media archaeology have done important work to put the study of media on the map in the humanities, and that media-saturated life at this point in time implores researchers to address important media-related questions head-on, we plead for a further step in terms of studying the materiality of media. Inspired by the idea of historical re-enactment, we provide a theory and a method to study media practices and the ways in which use is inscribed in media head-on and hands-on. We envision ways not only to close the gap between media studies in the humanities and the sciences, but also to use the immense collections of media apparatuses (*l’appareil de base*) waiting in film and other archives for further research. Ultimately, we would like to initiate and stimulate a dialogue between the academic community of film and media scholars with engineers, curators, archivists and the millions of media amateurs, collectors and other technical experts who wish to share their expertise and knowledge in online platforms and home pages.

Notes

Introduction: Researching Cinema and Media Technologies

1. N.N., “Het succes van de Kinematograaf,” *Suriname: koloniaal nieuws- en advertentieblad*, Februari 25, 1898, <http://kranten.kb.nl/view/article/id/ddd%3A01034025%3Amp021%3A0003%3A0017>.
2. As the journalist broadly refers to an anthology of terms published in the (German) journal *Laterna Magica*, it seems most likely that the list of terms cited is taken from this issue: *Laterna Magica* 21, no. 50 (April 1897): 25.
3. Lev Tolstoy’s diary entry of April 26, 1895, quoted in: A.N. (Angus) Wilson, *Tolstoy [1988]* (London: Atlantic Books, 2012), 430-431.
4. See “Philosophy of Technology,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, last modified June 22, 2009, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/technology/>.
5. On “cinema” as a young practice and a young institute, see André Gaudreault, “From ‘Primitive Cinema’ to ‘Kine-Attractography,’” in *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, ed. Wanda Strauven (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 99.
6. For a further reflection on the etymology of the word, see the chapter on Heidegger in this book; see also the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* online: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/technology/>; and “Heidegger’s Aesthetics,” last modified May 10, 2011, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/heidegger-aesthetics>.