

# Notes from David Bordwell's *NARRATION IN THE FICTION FILM*

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Fragmentary notes on David Bordwell's book *Narration in the Fiction Film* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985). Paragraph-initial numbers correspond to the pagination of this edition.

## ***Introduction***

Three possible approaches to narrative:

- a) As representation
- b) As structure
- c) As narration, as process



Narration understood as "the activity of selecting, arranging, and ordering story material in order to achieve specific time-bound effects on a perceiver" (xi). Bordwell starts from Formalist aesthetics, which "encourages the breaking of arbitrary boundaries among theory, history, and criticism" (...) "While it is true that the Formalists stressed the specificity of the aesthetic function, they were quick to assert the central importance of social convention in defining what any culture counted as 'work of art'" (xii). There is a relational and functional (but not an essential) difference between poetic language and practical language.



xiii - "Filmic narration involves two principal formal systems, syuzhet and style, which use the spectator to frame hypotheses and draw inferences". Sets of conventions, modes, are known to both filmmakers and audiences. There are four major modes: *classical narration*, *art-cinema narration*, *historical materialist narration*, and *parametric narration*.

## PART I: SOME THEORIES OF NARRATION

### ***1. Mimetic theories of narration***

3- Back to Aristotle. Diegetic versus mimetic theories of narration (narration as telling / as showing).

4- *Perspective as narration.*

Mimetic theories of narration take the act of vision as model; perspective is a key term. Stage and perspective in drama, and framing of fiction. Perspective in Antiquity.

5- Perspective binds together viewer and object; it presupposes "a rule-governed, measurable scenic space organized around the optical vantage point of an implied spectator." "Space is autonomous, a grid or checkerboard or stage preexisting any arrangement of objects upon it". Western perspective closes off the subject from the object, while "Tarabukin contended that Oriental inverse perspective placed the spectator at the center of a scene that surrounded him".

6- Visual tricks through perspective; a perspectival medieval stage, etc. In modern staging, the Renaissance proscenium roughly equals a "windowpane" pictorial perspective. The central point of view is occupied by the ruler's box in the auditorium.

7- Narrative pressures actually make "pure" perspective a compromise. Perspective is a mental, not an optic system.

*Perspective and Point of View in Literature.*

Traditionally, mimetic theories have been proposed (Henry James, etc.).

8- "James explicitly develops point of view as a post-Renaissance perspectival metaphor". Percy Lubbock places emphasis on the dramatic mode, and opposes it to the pictorial method. The novel is a synthesis of both. "James and Lubbock collapse

the question 'Who speaks?' into the question 'Who sees and knows?'" The question of language is played down in favour of perception and thought. Norman Friedman, Wayne Booth and Wolfgang Iser strengthen the pictorial and theatrical analogy; narrative and film are equivalent,

9- "All of which assumes cinema to be yet another perspectival art".

### *The Invisible Observer*

Cinema theories, before 1960, are mimetic. An invisible observer is created. "On this account, a narrative film represents story events through the vision of an invisible or imaginary witness". Cf. Pudovkin, who conceives "an observer ideally mobile in space and time" — equivalent to a narrator, an "all-purpose answer to problems involving space, authority, point of view, and narration". But they must limit the awareness of the camera's omniscience.

10- Objections to this view [*which Bordwell takes a bit too literally*]. Bordwell stresses fictionality and technique [*like García Landa in Acción, Relato, Discurso, he assumes that perspective shapes the story a posterior, retrospectively*].

11- "In the fiction film, not only the camera position but the mise-en-scene, as it unfolds in tone and space, is addressed to the spectator".

12- All elements in the fiction film function narrationally: "The invisible observer is not the *basis* of film style but only one *figure* of style."

### *Eisenstein: Narration as Scenography*

Eisenstein pushes the mimetic position to an extreme—using a "cinematic" stage, etc.



- 13- Acting conceived as the processing of a material: the spectator's emotions.
- 14- Cinema conceived as a contemporary extension of theater, similar "attractions", directed to catch the attention of the audience; similar reactions are sought (perceptual, affective, and cognitive). The "dialectical" approach to shooting and editing mimes the stream of consciousness, etc. Emphasis on style. Narration conceived as an expressive representation of the story action. Eisenstein versus the notion of an invisible witness: the effect on the audience is the goal, and the camera the means; there is little concern for verisimilitude. Staging is conceived as the first ideological processing—he speaks of *mise-en-scene* (but also *mise en jeu*, *mise en geste*, *mise en cadre*).
- 15- A continual awareness of the director's shaping hand is assured (though not mentioned by Eisenstein). There are even self-reflexive or metafilmic moves. Eisenstein sets the bases for a future theory of film narration.

## ***2. Diegetic Theories of Narration***

- 16- In Plato, and in Étienne Souriau, diegesis equals "recounted story", a represented fictional world. Priority is given to the poet's voice.
- 17- Bakhtin conceives the novel as language, as play of voices. Brecht brings out the diegetic element in drama. Barthes: narration rests on linguistic codes. 1966 essay: transition, shift from the study of signification to the study of enunciation. Emphasis on process and play. Formalists spoke of the poetic use of film—they seek equivalents

for literary devices. But they lack a fully developed linguistic theory of cinema or literature—which would have to wait for the structuralists.

### 18- *Film narration as Metalanguage*

Colin McCabe compares cinema to the 19th-century novel. Both frame the object languages with a metalanguage which

- 1) thereby creates a hierarchy of discourses,
- 2) is "true" and
- 3) issues from no identifiable speaker.

In film, the camera roughly equals this metalanguage.

19- In McCabe there is a crude distinction between object language and metalanguage, etc. Bordwell pro Bakhtin's dialogism: "Bakhtin denies that there can be any static or stable metalanguage".

20- The division between object-language and metalanguage may run through a word—it does not refer to distinct patches of text. Every language is a system of languages. Bordwell is against the notion of privileging the camera work over other film techniques. There is an interplay of narrational factors, not a single "metalanguage".

### 21- *Film Narration as Enunciation*

Application to cinema of Benveniste's theory of enunciation (*histoire / discours*, etc.). Benveniste is not very consistent. According to Kerbrat-Orecchioni, after Benveniste, the study of enunciation derives into the study of the marks of enunciation.

Derivations from Benveniste are to be found in Barthes and Genette.

22- For Christian Metz, film gives an illusory impression of *histoire*, but it is discursive. He proceeds to track discursive signs.

23- Problems of using Benveniste applied to film: e.g. the notion of *discours* masquerading as *histoire* is not found in Benveniste (who speaks simply of *histoire*). Metz confuses *discours* with enunciation itself. "That traditional cinema is 'enunciative' would not automatically make it 'discursive' in Benveniste's sense". There is an absence of justification for applying linguistic categories in enunciation theories (of film); they make for a troublesome translation. Vs. automatism. E.g.:

24- "the shot is a material division, not necessarily a signifying one". "The lack of a clear theory of enunciation leads to an intuitive, ad hoc spotting of *discours*. Camera work and editing, the two techniques privileged by the invisible observer model, become the principal bases of enunciation (...)." Should the camera be equaled to enunciation? to voice? to the narrator? to the author? [*By the way, Bordwell is in favour of the distinction narrator does not equal implied author does not equal real author*].

25- Stephen Heath formulates the most ambitious theory of enunciation. "Position" used in 4 senses: physical perspective, mental space created, narrative point of view, and "subject-position" as the stability of a self. However, they are not integrated. Mimetic assumption "that shots create invisible observers and that editing creates ideal ones".

26- Bordwell: "because a film lacks equivalents for the most basic aspects of verbal activity, I suggest that we abandon the enunciation account". He is against the

unjustifiable privileging of certain techniques over others.

## PART 2: NARRATION AND FILM FORM

### 3. *The Viewer's Activity*



29- The viewer's activity is mostly ignored by mimetic and enunciation theories. The spectator is conceived as a "victim or dupe of narratorial illusion-making". —"A film, I shall suggest does not 'position' anybody. A film uses the spectator to execute a definable variety of *operations*". [*In my view these are just alternative ways of putting it*].

30- The "Spectator" does not equal the "ideal reader", but is "a hypothetical entity executing the operations relevant to constructing a story out of the film's representation"





*[Again, this hypothetical entity is precisely an equivalent of the role assigned to the ideal reader, implied reader, the textually constructed reader in fiction—a constructed textual subject!!]*

The spectator is active, cued by "intersubjective protocols"—"I am assuming that a spectator's comprehension of the film's narrative is theoretically separable from his or her emotional responses." —"I do not treat the spectator's operations as necessarily modeled upon linguistic activities". Bordwell's aim is to explain the viewing, not the interpreting, of films. *[That is, his aim is to formulate a phenomenological semiotics of film—not a cultural semiotics of the same. Although the discussion of different styles and narrational modes inevitably moves somewhat in the direction of historical or cultural semiotics].*

### *A Sketch for a Psychology of Film Perception and Cognition*

31- Constructivism conceived of "perceiving and thinking as active, goal-oriented processes", carried out through inference-making. There are top-down and bottom-up inferential processes (whether the basis for the inference is some hypothesis, or sense data).

32- Schemata of several types are involved in perception (etc.)—Bordwell advocates a constructivist aesthetics. The artwork encourages certain schemata. Aesthetic perception is nonpractical— Attention is turned to the process itself; repertoires of

schemata are altered. A constructivist account of cinema involves both our perceptual and cognitive capacities, and the structure of film, interacting with each other.

33- E.g., reconstructing the order of events in a film works versus keeping track of current action: "we should consider film viewing a complicated, even skilled, activity".

### *Narrative Comprehension*

"The viewer must take as a central cognitive goal the construction of a more or less intelligible story". Analogy of psycholinguistic accounts of language comprehension.

34- "This effort toward meaning involves an effort toward unity" — The viewer must construct a representation of the location of the events, of time, space, and causality.

35- "Template" schemata used as markers of the overall system—e.g. "canonical" average narrative structure. Goal orientation is a basic scheme (at least in Western culture).

36- Prototype and template schemata are employed by procedural schemata. Motivation is used as a procedure by the audience. There are several types of motivation: *realistic, transtextual, compositional, artistic*. "Artistic motivation is a residual category and remains distinct from the others: the spectator has recourse to it only when the other sorts do not apply". These involve stylistic schemata, often processed unconsciously "owing to the stylistic uniformity of mainstream cinema".

37- Film style can operate as a vehicle for narration and as a system in its own right. The process of viewing involves the construction of assumptions, inferences, hypotheses...

38- (Cf. Meir Sternberg's account of narrative processing). There is a hierarchy in

these processes, e.g. there are macroexpectations—also, events do not have the same category, some are kernels (in Barthes's terminology). Perception takes into account the primacy effect. There are effects of retardation, the creation of curiosity, the grounding of further hypotheses on those hypotheses which have been confirmed... All of which applies to perception and understanding in general, but:

39- "In art (...) alternative hypotheses tend to be much more explicitly defined, their set tends to be closed, and they get challenged fairly often". "Narrative art ruthlessly exploits the tentative, probabilistic nature of mental activity". Emotion is linked to comprehension. [*Not only there, though.*]

### *Believing and Seeing*

Hitchcock's *Rear Window* as a staging of this constructive process [*a METAFILMIC staging—although Bordwell does not use the term that is what he means*].

44- Bordwell in favour of Sternberg's view of narrative as "a dynamic system of competing and mutually blocking retardatory patterns".

45- "film style not only guides our inductive processes, but becomes, in whatever general a way, one object of them. For instance in [*paralepses - although again this term is not used by Bordwell*]. "Every film trains its spectator" to understand its own particular interplay of motivations, conventions, etc.

## **4. Principles of Narration**

48- A description of the viewer's responses must not be confused with criticism of the film — We must take into account that "most work of narrative comprehension seems to occur in what Freud called the preconscious, the realm of elements 'capable of entering consciousness'."

49- The description of the viewer's responses should be understood as giving an account of the "most logically coherent range of conventionally permissible responses". Narration as "a process which is not in its basic aims specific to any medium".

### *Fabula, Syuzhet, and Style*

Back to Aristotle (again). Fabula understood as something constructed by the perceiver. It is embodied in verbal synopsis. "A film's fabula is never materially present on the screen or soundtrack" (Note, p. 344: "I take narration to be the all-inclusive process which uses both *syuzhet* and style to cue spectators to construct a *fabula*, or story").

50- *Syuzhet* does not equal the text *in toto*, "it is a more abstract construct, the patterning of the story as a blow-by-blow recounting of the the film could render it". As to "style", it is "the film's systematic use of cinematic devices". "Logically, *syuzhet* patterning is independent of the medium, the same *syuzhet* patterns could be embodied in a novel, a play, or a film". (Note, p. 345: The perceiver, given a narrative text, is invited to recognize a *syuzhet* and infer a *fabula* from it whereas the artist constructs a *syuzhet* according to assumptions about how the spectator could infer a fabula from it. And these assumptions will form part of the artist's material."



51- *Fabula / syuzhet* does not equal the pair *histoire / discours*. "Three sorts of principles relate the *syuzhet* to the *fabula*": narrative logic (causality, etc.) time (Genette's analysis is useful here) and space.

52- "A novelist's commentary, however discursive, forms an integral part of the *syuzhet* [it may have a retardatory function, etc.]. "Style is a notable factor in its own right, even when it is 'only' supporting the *syuzhet*" [A question which is not left clear, but it would appear that style is to be conceived as more medium-specific than *syuzhet* or *fabula*].

53- "In the fiction film, narration is the process whereby the film's *syuzhet* and style interact in the course of cueing and channeling the spectator's construction of the *fabula*" (a notion similar to the one in Iuri Tynianov and others). Story + the "excessive" (style) — unjustified even by aesthetic motivation? No: it must be included under this heading. Here we will only deal with *fabula* and *syuzhet*.

### *Tactics of Syuzhet construction*

54- "The *syuzhet* shapes our perception of the *fabula* by controlling (1) the quantity of *fabula* information to which we have access; (2) the degree of pertinence we can attribute to the presented information; and (3) the formal correspondence between *syuzhet* presentation and *fabula* data". We can distinguish "rarefied" versus "overloaded" *syuzhets*, either as momentary technique or all over the film. Notion of the "hypostatized ideal *syuzhet*" which supplies information which is relevant to the coherent and steady construction of the *fabula*. "Selection creates gaps; *combination* creates composition" —cf. Sternberg's account in *Expositional Modes and Temporal*

*order in Fiction.*

55: Retardation and redundancy in composition. Types of gaps. Gaps may be:

- temporary or permanent;
- diffuse or focused (i.e. relevant, specific or not to the story),
- flaunted or suppressed.

57- Types of retardation, of exposition, of redundancy, etc. are described (at fabula level, or at syuzhet level).

*Knowledge, Self-consciousness, and Communicativeness.*

(Sternberg as inspiration again). Narration may be knowledgeable or less so; it varies in range, depth....

58- Unlike prose fiction, the fictional film seldom confines its narration to what only a single character knows". "We tend to motivate restricted narration realistically (...) but to motivate more unrestricted narration transtextually". Self consciousness is "a recognition that it [the narration] is addressing an audience". "All filmic narrations are self-conscious but some are more so than others". Communicativeness exists in various possible degrees:

59- "That a highly 'omniscient' narration and a highly restricted narration may both be considered communicative shows the importance of context". Generic norms taking over film-specific [decorum] when [paralepses] occur, etc.

60- "In general, we must distinguish between generically codified shifts in the range or depth of knowledge and more or less overt indications of suppressiveness"—weighing transtextual norms against intrinsic structural demands. All these clarify the

problem of "point of view". Here, "point of view" will be used in a more restricted sense and will only refer to "The optical or auditory vantage point of a character". Also, an analysis of "reliability" must be carried out (—is it forthcoming? Accurate?). Another problem is posed by judgmental factors [*i.e.* "ideological point of view"].

A highly suppressive narrative looks down on its audience. [*In a way perhaps the contrary might be argued: a difficult or highly suppressive narrative constructs a highly knowledgeable and sophisticated implied audience—whether the real audience falls short of this is another question. Actually, Bordwell may be right: setting the stakes high through the implied audience is a way of making the actual audience feel their own shortcomings, or simply a way of infuriating or alienating them*]

### *Narrator, Author*

There are often (literal) narrators in film, in voice-over, narrating characters, etc.—but they "are invariably swallowed up in the overall narrational process of the film, which they do *not* produce" (Branigan). We might speak of an implicit, nonpersonified narrator—

62- "But in watching film, we are seldom aware of being told something by an entity resembling a human being". [*So Bordwell will not be using the term narrator in this sense, as a textual subject "narrating" the whole film*]. Also against the notion of an implied author in film: "To give every film a narrator or implied author is to indulge in an anthropomorphic fiction" [*As to myself, I think audiences are aware that they are told a story—by a collective agent, we might call it "the film"—sometimes specific*

*individuals may be identified as being more responsible for some aspects of this collective narration. But the anthropomorphization denounced by Bordwell is a questionable term, since no other beings except humans indulge in the telling of stories, whether individually or collectively. Perhaps what Bordwell means to say is that the use of the terms "narrator" and "implied author" literaturizes film or film semiotics, by inadequately transferring to it a set of terms originally designed for discussion of communication protocols in another medium, i.e. written narratives. So there is narration indeed in the fiction film, Bordwell argues, but there is no "narrator" (which of course may sound paradoxical!!). Bordwell argues against Seymour Chatman's views here: "narration is better understood as the organization of a set of cues for the construction of a story. This presupposes a perceiver, but not any sender of a message. This scheme allows for the possibility that the narrational process may sometimes mimic the communication situation more or less fully." Sometimes there is a narrator and a narratee, but "There is no point in positing communication as the fundamental process of all narration" [Here Bordwell is using communication, I am afraid, in an excessively narrow sense. In the usual or more adequate sense of "communication", of course all narration, including film narration, is communicational in its intent and nature, whatever additional semiotic elements it may contain or involve]. "The narration, appealing to historical norms of viewing, creates the narrator" [here there is a suggestion that this "narrator", perhaps understood here in a wider sense after all, is a construction of the viewer, as cued by the narration].*



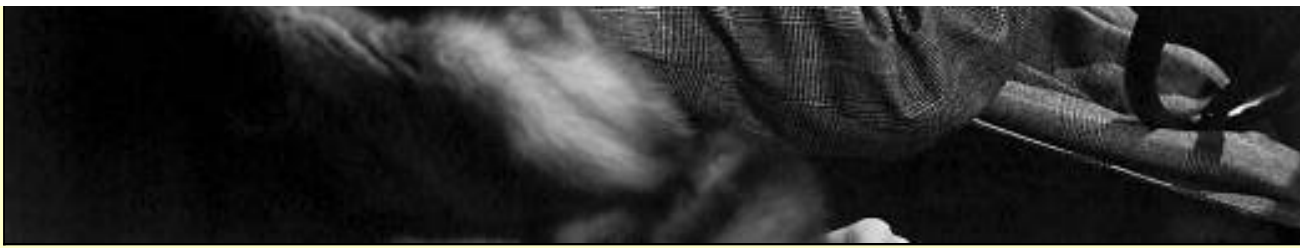
## 5. Sin, Murder, and Narration

### *The Detective film*

The schema of the typical fabula here is "crime + investigation". "The fundamental narrational characteristic of the detective tale is that the syuzhet withholds crucial events occurring in the 'crime' portion of the fabula (...) the syuzhet is principally structured by the progress of the detective's investigation." The primacy effect is tempered (as first impressions are shown to be misleading) and retardatory material is introduced.



65- "*The Big Sleep* is a detective film in which the interest of constructing the investigation fabula takes precedence over the construction of a coherent crime fabula". In the detective film, brief marks of unrestricted narration function to enhance curiosity and suspense; elsewhere it is the detective's knowledge that we share, and similarly



his informational restriction. In *The Big Sleep*, music often reflects Marlowe's understanding of the scene.

"To a great extent, our

'identification' with a film protagonist is created by exactly this systematic restriction of information". In fact, omniscient narration is restricted for a specific purpose:

66- for the modulation of suspense, curiosity or surprise. Some camera positions are motivated by Marlowe's knowledge but proceed from an omniscient narration. This is also evident in credits, expository transitional shots, beginnings of sequences, etc.

Moderate self-consciousness and omniscience appear behind Hawks's "invisible" filmmaking.

67- Communicativeness and "fair play" towards the detective in detective film—but as the solution must not be discovered anyway, there is in the narration a lack of communicativeness which has to be motivated.

68- In *Murder My Sweet*, "the degree of subjective depth is usually inversely proportional to the extent of Marlowe's reasoning capacity." Sometimes "The narration (...) combines adherence to Marlowe's 'deeper' mental state with a divergence from his perceptual awareness";

69- "an omniscient narration retrospectively reveals the sharp limits that have been imposed upon our knowledge throughout." The device is laid bare by self-conscious allusions to the investigation process.

## *The Melodrama*

70- The melodrama maximizes virtually everything to emotional impact. It is characterized by wide fabula information; the past is played down and interest is centered in *curiosity*—about the development of events and the characters' reactions to them. Omniconmunicativeness is typical. Gaps and retardation come mainly through shifts in focus and from parallel plotting:

71- "if the viewer is to execute the inferential moves conventional in the genre, character behavior must have an emotional zigzag. From a rhetorical standpoint, the character's volatility is a structural necessity for the genre's narrational processes and effects" — ("we try to anticipate how an event will alter a character's conduct"— interest in *reactions*). "Coincidence retains our interest in the unfolding syuzhet": surprise is essential. "Any sharp restrictions or suppressions stand out". Self-consciousness + communicativeness = stylization. Musical emotional underlining (the *melo-*).

73- "As a medium, cinema is particularly suitable for supporting the syuzhet's manipulation of time and space."

## **6. Narration and Time**

74- "In watching a film, the spectator submits to a programmed temporal form". There are expectations about scene development and shot duration. To a great extent,

76- "our comprehension of cinematic space depends upon cinema's ability to govern the rate of our viewing and thus the rate at which we propose, test, and confirm

hypotheses." A fast rhythm imposes a "quick elimination of hypotheses"—a strategy on the viewer. Sternberg speaks of a sense that "the *syuzhet* span devoted to a *fabula* event lies in proportion to the event's contextual importance". "Rhythm in narrative cinema comes down to this: by forcing the spectator to make inferences at a certain *rate*, the narration governs *what* and *how* we infer."

### 77- *Features of Temporal Construction*

Lack of deixis in cinema: temporal relations are inferred. Relationships of order, duration, frequency... (cf. Genette's analysis in *Narrative Discourse*).

- *Order*: Simultaneous or successive presentation of events, both in *fabula* and *syuzhet*. There are four possibilities: (a) events simultaneous in *fabula* and simultaneous in *syuzhet*, (b) events successive in *fabula* but simultaneous in *syuzhet*, etc. Simultaneity can be arranged through several devices: double screen, sound overlap between the scenes, etc. Types (c) and (d) are the most common ones: the successive presentation in the *syuzhet* of either (c) simultaneous or (d) successive *fabula* events.

78- Flashbacks and flashforwards. Notice that these can take place through the *enactment* or through the *recounting* of previous (or later) events. Not the same binomial as *showing/telling*. Time manipulation is most frequently orchestrated through recounting. Reshuffling of the *fabulaic* order of events qualifies the primacy effect. Questions of narrative order are linked to informational gaps, and to point of view. External flashbacks "display events that occur prior to the first event



represented in the syuzhet". Flashbacks (or flashforwards) may be psychologically motivated, or not. Psychologically motivated ones evince a smaller degree of self-consciousness in the narration.

79- No external flashforwards are possible. "The flashforward is very hard to motivate realistically" —thence they are often self-conscious devices, and causally teasing.

80- *Frequency*: Modulations of frequency are used to heighten viewers' reactions and to guide interpretation. Most kinds are rare: "repetitions chiefly occur as a repetition *in the fabula world*"—they are "motivated realistically — typically through character subjectivity, as a memory".

-*Duration*: Three dimensions of duration: fabula duration, siuzhet duration, and screen duration. *[We can appreciate here that Bordwell is actually using a triple-level analytical layering— fabula, siuzhet, and film —although occasionally the difference between the siuzhet and the film or "screen" level are somewhat confused. Compare Aristotle's "praxis", "mythos" and "poiema" (or "tragedy"), or my own three-tiered model of narrative analysis in [Acción, relato, discurso](#)].*

81- "At the level of the whole, the fabula duration is expected to be greater than the syuzhet duration, and siuzhet duration is assumed to be greater than projection time." At a [microstructural] level, this is not the case: each shot coincides with the same length of events in action. *(Here we should not be assuming that most temporal compression takes place between cuts, so to speak—through a selection of snippets of action. Actually, the presented events themselves are subtly*

*compressed through filmic convention, a whole gamut of modes of compression ranging from coincidence enhancement to conventional signalings of duration. The difference between fabula, siuzhet and screen time is analytically useful but cannot be pushed too far or literalized, since it is itself a cognitive mechanism for the construction of the fiction film).* Compression, Bordwell notes, is a possible form of time reduction without ellipses and is "probably not rare". [*To say the least!*]

82- Relations of equivalence, of reduction or of expansion between fabula time and siuzhet time. Fabula includes the "pertinent antecedents" of the events.

83- Expansion of duration can be effected through insertion or dilation. The difference between insertion and deletion (and the others) is explained by relating siuzhet time and screen time.

84- "All of these manipulations can be accomplished by various film techniques", e.g. crosscutting. Crosscutting can expand one line of action while it shortens the other (e.g. in *The Birth of a Nation*). An overlap of cuts on the same action prolongs the transition and makes it smoother.

88- The viewer chooses the simplest interpretation on the issue of duration.

### *Temporal Stratagems and Spoils*

88- "the 'serious' postwar European cinema can be characterized by its effort to structure a film around a highly self-conscious narration". This is done in part through the creation of norms peculiar to the film in question—the narrational mode of European art film: "this narrational mode often asks us to treat the syuzhet as mixing subjectivity and objectivity with no promise of eventual choice between the two" [*That*

is, the status of events, in the terminology of Acción, Relato, Discurso—whether fictional or nonfictional, subjective or objective, is often undecidable]. The viewer always constructs the fabula following narrational cues, but 92- "conventional cues can become ambiguous if they are shaken out of redundant relations with one another".

95- Internal narrational norms, defined as "a primacy effect pertaining not to the fabula events (...) but to schemata that the nation will employ," can be established. In the art film, the viewer's hypotheses are often unresolvable, and open endings are common.

## ***7. Narration and Space***

The question of narrational space transcends the mere "position" of the camera.

99- "Rather than conceive of the spectator as the apex of a literal or metaphorical pyramid of vision, we can treat the construction of space dynamically."

### *Constructing Space*

Bordwell argues against perspectivism and Gestaltism; the former is naively empirical, and faces the problem that "the stimulus is insufficient to dictate perceptual experience", the latter is too abstract and relativist. He favours *constructivism*. "On the constructivist theory, perception is an inferential process which reworks stimuli." But it is a probabilistic construction that is achieved, as against the Gestaltist static, absolute imposition of mental order upon the world. "Some perceptual inferences are drawn in involuntary, virtually instantaneous manner". Bordwell pro relativism of

perception (cf. Ames's optical constructions).

104- "in a narrative film the drive to construct a coherent fabula out of what we see and hear will lead us to seek particular spatial cues and rely upon particular spatial schemata."

*Perspective and the Spectator:*

104- Systems of perspective:

105- [Note that Bordwell does not include such elements as "overlap", "familiar sizes of objects", etc. as perspectival elements—vs the limitations of the Euclidean elements of previous perspectival systems].

106- Perspective vs. *trompe-l'œil*: "Under normal viewing conditions, the greater a picture's perspectival depth, the *less* likely we are to be fooled" (and the more evident the pictorial surface). Scientific perspective answers to more specific ideological needs than the faith in a master spectator external to the object (... Bordwell on the scientific mind).

107- The camera is not doomed to replicate a central perspective. The mechanics of vision do not determine the perceptual experience of film.

*Ideal positionality: Shot/Reverse shot*

Although the camera's viewpoint is often associated to a character's perspective, 111- "the viewer becomes 'uneasy' when the camera "actually occupies the position of the character in that position" (Oudart). An imaginary space is implied (gaps are created). Oudart speaks of The Absent One, the author or narrator of the film, but



Bordwell is against positing the agency of an "author" unless evident manipulation exists. [*It would seem Bordwell only accepts the notion of author in film as a fictional or second-degree author—otherwise this statement that there is no author "unless evident manipulation exists" makes no sense. Does he mean an "auteur" with a non-standard use of conventions? Otherwise, manipulation is evident everywhere in a film—as is the evidence of a COLLECTIVE work of authorship, a conjunction of intentions and results which is perhaps best referred to as "the film"*].

113- Multitude of factors help establish a virtual space—not only the shot itself or "suture".

113- *Cues, features, and functions.*

*Graphic* (merely nonrepresentational composition) vs. *scenographic* (or fabula-) space. The latter is the product of shot space, editing space or sonic space, both on or offscreen:

*Shot space*: Constructed through cues: overlapping contours, texture difference...

115- "Representational space can never be strictly flat"—rather, there is a variety of depths (in Egyptian painting these are shallow, represented through mere overlap).

117- *Editing space*: Articulated following a series of constructive principles and conventions: the fourth wall where the camera is placed, the 180° line joining the partners in a conversation (which the camera does not cross in shot/reverse shot), "cheat" cuts, etc.

118- *Sonic space*: "In most films, speech appears to occupy the foreground, noise the background" (cf. the opposition between figure and ground). Sight outranks

hearing for space information (and cheating is more permissible through the latter).  
Against the notion of direct fidelity.

119- *Offscreen space*: Divided into diegetic and nondiegetic zones ("the camera"), which is constructed, not constructor, as "hypostatized offscreen narrational agency".

120- "At any moment, the narration can evoke the camera as an entity within either nondiegetic or diegetic offscreen space" [*Through a self-conscious gesture, sometimes breaking frame, what Genette calls "metalepsis"*].

125- The standard style favours a moderate camera omnipresence, and cues for the use of subjectivity in narration... etc.

130- *Space in "The Confrontation"*.

The shot is a stylistic unit; the scene is a syuzhet unit. Stylistic effects of long shots discussed. Jacsó recreates space in film by defying strategies of spatial construction.

144- "Much of the frustration and anxiety of Jacsó's narration is produced by an approach in which we should be able to see and know more than we do." Self-consciousness lurks behind an apparent "witness" approach to narration.

146- Cf. Soviet cinema: it is political, objectively referential, and self-consciously abstract. Bordwell advocates a study of the historicity of film narrational modes.

## PART 3: HISTORICAL MODES OF NARRATION

### ***8. Modes and Norms***

149- "however much the ability to form schemata relies upon innate mental capacities, viewers acquire particular prototypes, templates, and procedures *socially*."

150- Some distinct narrational options have emerged within various filmmaking traditions—"Modes" should be seen as transcending genres, schools, movements and nations. "A narrational mode is a historically distinct set of norms of narrational construction and comprehension." Challenges to the norms are themselves codified — Modal norms (extrinsic ones) vs. the intrinsic norms of the film.

150-51- "Because of the primacy effect and the durational control that the viewing situation exercises, the viewer tends to base conclusions about the narrational norm upon the earliest portions of the *siuzhet*".

151- "Like all norms, intrinsic norms can be transgressed or modified." "Moreover, the individual film's *deviation* from its intrinsic norm can be a perfectly acceptable *fulfillment* of an extrinsic one."

Qualitative grounds of norm-establishing: prominence, foregrounding, regularities of pattern... Foregrounding defined as "the salience of a narrational tactic with respect to intrinsic norms", and prominence is salience with respect to intrinsic norms.

153- "In general, the degree of prominence is proportional to the historical probability that the film will manifest this intrinsic norm." Bordwell's classification of modes is not presented as exhaustive.

154- Verisimilitude is mode-specific.

"Film teaching consists to a great extent of exploring norms which the student already

knows (...) or introducing the student to new norms." "Accepting a historical basis for narrational norms requires recognizing that every mode of narration is tied to a mode of film production and reception.

### **9- Classical Narration: The Hollywood Example** (c. 1917-60)

156- Classical narration as a definable set of strategies. Bordwell vs. use of clichés like "transparency" or "*discours* posing as *histoire*".

#### *Canonic Narration*

156- "The classical Hollywood film presents psychologically defined individuals who struggle to solve a clear-cut problem or to attain specific goals." Hollywood manuals insist on classical scheme of action: an undisturbed state - a disturbance - a struggle - elimination of disturbance. Character's actions are functions of these patterns.

Bordwell notes the saliency of causality in classical fabulas.

157- "That the climax of a classical film is often a deadline shows the structural power of defining dramatic duration as the time it takes to achieve or fail to achieve a goal."

Two causal structures coexist in films: the heterosexual romance, plus another sphere of personal relationships. In each we find a goal, obstacles and a climax.

158- Neoclassical criteria in Hollywood film style. Rhythm of sequences is defined: punctuation marks the end of each. The segment is closed spatially and temporally, but left causally open. Each scene is divided into parts: exposition, etc. *Linearity* of classical techniques of linking of causal lines: Bordwell speaks of a "tendency of the classical syuzhet to develop toward full and adequate knowledge."



159- As the happy end is predetermined by convention, the interest falls on the retarding devices (theorized by Sternberg). There is a discordance between the preceding causality and the preset denouement, and ideological difficulties may become perceptible here. A forgetting of small causal loose ends is promoted thorough the use of an epilogue, "a brief celebration of the stable state achieved by the main characters". Quite often, there are pseudo-closures.

160- "Classical narration tends to be omniscient, highly communicative, and only moderately self-conscious" (but there are codified exceptions to all these). The narration is less "invisible" at the beginning and at the end of the film.

161-62-The viewer of classical film concentrates on the fabula, not on style or on construction (vs. the viewer of art cinema).

162- "Classical flashbacks are typically 'objective': character memory is a pretext for a nonchronological *siuzhet* arrangement [*Note here a potential ambiguity of the term 'objective'—other theorists speak in this respect of subjective analepses motivated by the characters' mental processes, while the lineal chronological order of events, including the act of reminiscing, is not altered by the narrator—only by that subjective mental activity on the part of the characters. Borwell uses the term 'objective' meaning that these (subjective) flashbacks are objectively present in the fabula, as events—thence a possible confusion for some readers*]. Similarly, optically subjective shots [*see, here the characters' focalizations are "subjective"!*] become anchored in an objective context". In the classical mode, "the camera seems always to include character subjectivity within a broader and definite objectivity".

## *Classical Style*

162- "(1.) On the whole, classical narration treats film technique as a vehicle for the syuzhet's transmission of fabula information"-- it is motivated compositionally.

163- "(2.) In classical narration, style typically encourages the spectator to construct a coherent, consistent time and space for the fabula action. Stylistic disorientation (...) is permissible when it conveys disorienting story situations."

"(3.). Classical style consists of a strictly limited member of particular technical devices organized into a stable paradigm and ranked probabilistically according to syuzhet demands" (e.g. continuity editing). The "invisibility" of classical style relies on the codification of styles with respect to the contents depicted.

164- The classical style is not a timeless formula; it is historically constrained. And there are innovations from one film to another at fabula level.

## *The Classical Spectator*

164- The classical spectator is not passive—also active: he comes very well prepared with strategies and generic contextual knowledge. Fabula-oriented viewing; no disorientation is promoted, "cheat cuts" are ignored. Attention is kept through recency effect and through an unresolved issue at the end of the scene. Fast rhythm throughout: the rate of comprehension is controlled. There is a high level of redundancy. (*Which also contributes to ensure control*).



### *Seven Films, Eight Segments*

In silent films, expository vs. dialogue titles (the former are more narrationally self-conscious).

170- "In the sound era, these titles would be replaced by less overt devices like signs, establishing shots, and other transitional material."

186- Flexibility of classical paradigm: Play and surprises are possible. Bordwell

analyzes the effect of sound on style, etc. Use of the "montage" sequence, more or less equivalent to an implicit intertitle.

187- Images of newspapers used in classical films as convenient vehicles of objective narration. (351- Some of these elements of the classical style come from a vulgarization of Soviet montage).

188- By 1930, "the classical Hollywood film consisted of only two types of decoupage unite: *scenes* and *summaries*." "Always an overtly rhetorical moment, the montage sequence became codified as a likely site of spectacle and a self-conscious narrational gesture".

Classically, asymmetries and empty spaces in the frame announce future movements of the characters (an example on p. 188). Innovation (in Welles, etc.):

192- "It is a matter not of a drastic change in style but of the promotion of particular stylistic options to a more prominent position."

According to Butor, every detective story superimposes two temporal sequences: that of the drama which leads to the crime, and that of the inquiry.

194- Flashbacks, etc. *Film noir* is not outside the pale of classicism.

199- New technologies (cinemascope) were adapted to the classical stylistic norms. In cinemascope, "the longer the shot, the more centered the composition". Are longer takes encouraged by cinemascope? No—on the whole, the classical paradigm remained untouched.



## 10- Art-cinema narration

205- Art-cinema narration is characterized by the interaction of "objective" realism, subjective or expressive realism, and narrational commentary. There is less redundancy, more (obvious) gaps, and less motivation. Delayed exposition is common.

### *Objectivity, Subjectivity, Authority*

"New" reality proposed by art cinema—cf. that of literary modernism, characterized by unknowability and indeterminacy. There is less play of cause and effect; everything is more symbolic. New subjects appear: alienation, lack of communication. Verisimilitude is emphasized, although this is done through non-Hollywood devices as a way of motivation. Contingency of events. Episodic structure, or patterned coincidence.

207- Characters "lack clear-cut traits, motives, and goals." They slide passively from one situation to another. Symmetry, parallelism, are emphasized. [*There is more than a touch of the parametric as one of the limits of art-cinema narration, it would seem*]. Character, too, is emphasized. Inspired on what Ruthrof calls the "new" short story (dealing with a "boundary situation"). Dominant mode is reaction, not action.

208- "The art cinema developed a range of mise-en-scène cues for expressing character mood: static postures, covert glances, smiles that fade, aimless walks, emotion-filled landscape, and associated objects". Its "psychological realism consists of permitting a character to reveal the self to others and, inadvertently to us." The syuzhet is also guided by "inquiry into character"—

209- dramatized memories, etc. : this produces expectation, suspense, etc. Psychological motivations are common. There is a Bergsonian approach to time (subjective). Overt narrational "commentary", striking style, self-consciousness. Lack of closure; the play of schemata is not halted, "the unexpected freeze frame becomes the most explicit figure of narrative irresolution"

210- "the canonic story schema we bring to the film may be disarrayed"; "the very construction of the narrative becomes the object of spectator hypotheses." Self-conscious handling of flashbacks, even flashforwards. Limited communicativeness of narration.

211- "In *Senso* and *1900*, events are presented with an operatic opulence that invites us to consider the profilmic event itself as the narration's restaging of history" — "Deviations from the classical norm can be grasped as a commentary upon the story action." In art cinema, the "author" gains a formal function that Hollywood films lack. A director's film work are considered as the filmmaker's oeuvre, or his confession at times. Use of narrators, or author-as-narrator. Films quote other works or are dedicated to them; they allude to conventions. Film-within-a-film structures appear as realistic motivations of these practices.

212- "The art cinema's spectator, then, grasps the film by applying conventions of objective and expressive realism and of authorial address". But the realist and expressionist aesthetics are hard to merge—which is the solution? *Ambiguity*, either of the tale or of the telling. Ambiguity is valued, acquires a denotative sense—"the art film, like early modernist fiction, holds a relativistic notion of truth" — "the art-film narration solicits not only denotative comprehension, but connotative reading, a

higher-level interpretation".

213- Art films favour an increase in norm-breaking, and more intrinsic norms.

*The Game of Form*

Analysis of *La Guerre est finie*.

222- The ambiguity of art cinema is limited; a general ground of narrational coherence is shared with classical narration.

224- "foregrounding gets stronger according to how many dimensions of siuzhet or style are involved and how predictable the deviation is with respect to intrinsic and extrinsic norms". Art cinema works against the intrinsic future orientation of film.



### *The Art cinema in history*

Interplay between its components (avant-garde, neorealism, subjectivity and flashback) achieved in late 50s and 60s. Combination of novelty and of nationalism as a marketing device. The development of critical interpretations interplays with a cinema of ambiguity—the art cinema shaped the conception of what a good film is; understood as an expression of the director's view.

232- Art film as a rereading of Hollywood. Later, mixture of the two. In *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* (Alain Resnais) the realism of art cinema verges into the



stylization of parametric narration.

## ***11- Historical-Materialist Narration: The Soviet Example (1925-33)***

### *Narration as rhetoric*

235- Historical-materialist narration is characterized by its strong rhetorical cast, guided by didactic and persuasive principles.

235- "There is the tendency to treat the siuzhet as both a narrative and an argument.." It is tendentious: "the fabula world stands for a set of abstract propositions whose validity the film at once presupposes and reasserts." Narrative causality is supraindividual, deriving from social forces. Characters become prototypes.

236- At times, "the more psychologically motivated the character (...) the surer the character is to be denigrated as bourgeois." Driven by both narrative interest and thesis, expressed through a "structure of confrontation" or a "structure of apprenticeship" (according to Susan Suleiman).

237- "The rhetorical aim enabled the films to 'defamiliarize' classical norms of space and time." Overt narration is common. High proportion of expository titles (as opposed to dialogue titles). Later, nondiegetic sound montage and camera techniques. Also, figures are foregrounded against the background; poses are static, lighting is not classical, etc.

238- Narration is given away by "the propensity for frontality of body, face, and eye in

these films." —"Now the narration overtly *includes* the profilmic event, has already constituted it for the sake of specific effects." Omniscient and omnipotent narration. The key concept of historical-materialist narration is editing ("montage"): it is conceived as an act of interpreting reality. Construction of the event: a higher number of shots are used than in Hollywood style, and they are shorter:

239- "there are always more cuts than needed for lucid cueing of fabula construction": —no action is seen as an unmediated piece of fabula world. Rhetorical tropes, both of thought and of speech, are mimicked by editing.

240- Historical-materialist narration is characterized by extreme communicativeness, proscription of equivocations, and high redundancy. Self-consciousness: exhortatory expository titles; narration is overtly judgmental.

241- *Predictable fabula, Unpredictable narration*

The approach to the spectator of the historical-materialist film is not so totalitarian nor so "textual" as has been said by other theorists. There is no play with subjectivity (unlike art film)—here the difficulties proceed from the self-conscious narration.

242- Historical-materialist narration compensates its limited narrative schemata "by unusually innovative spatial and temporal construction".

243- Gaps are flaunted, and asymmetrical structures; or else the audience is not ignored by the character (the "Kuleshov effect"), etc.

244- There is a tendency to present any cut as embodying a possible break in fabula time.

245- "Open" or ambiguous spaces are favoured, which allow for a multiplicity of

possible constructions.

237- Violations of conventional space and time in historical-materialist narration.

249- Abstract tendency (conceptual parallelism, etc., outside fabula causality). The epitome of this tendency is the "intellectual montage" of images which do not belong to the fabula world. Fast cutting is common.

### *The New Babylon*

261- In historical-materialist narration, interconnections of disparate scenes create a fictional space laden with symbolic values. The viewer's activity consists in mentally juxtaposing spaces, wrestling with incompatibilities, etc.

### *268- Toward an Interrogative Cinema*

The Soviet approach to storytelling is a strong if minority alternative to classical narration.

269- It was stereotypically absorbed by Hollywood, and Socialist Realism after 1933 abandons the basis of montage; the contrast between narrational address and narrational principles becomes more similar to Hollywood classical narration. The theory of montage influenced Brecht and Dudow.

270- Lukács opposed montage and overt narrational presence, and favoured classical realism. Historical materialist narration was perpetuated mainly through Brecht.

271- A new influence of historical materialist storytelling was exerted in Western Europe, on French film, in the 1960s. (From Althusser and *Tel Quel* to the New

Wave). But montage was absorbed into the general issue of self-conscious narration. 272- The newest instances of the mode refuse a fixed doctrine and a clearly didactic purpose. There is a Brechtian heritage of interrogating cinematic representations ([Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet](#)), influenced as well by Art cinema.



## ***12. Parametric Narration***

274- Parametric narration is less located historically than the previous modes: it appeals to isolated filmmakers and fugitive films.

### *275- A New Role for Style*

In general, "stylistic patterns tend to be vehicles for the syuzhet's process of cueing us to construct the fabula". But in parametric narration, "the film's stylistic system



creates patterns *distinct from the demands of the syuzhet system.*" (Tynianov and Mukarovsky as theorists of parametric narration).

276- Aesthetically it is analogous to serial music, the *nouveau roman*, the OULIPO... Structuralism encouraged "parametric" thinking. Theorists like Jakobson, Butor, emphasize simultaneity in textual design, the dominance of paradigm over syntagm.

277- "the phenomenal form of the text tends to be seen as a permutational distribution of the invisible set" (*These remarks should be seen in conjunction with Espen Aarseth's discussion of "ergodic" narrative forms, in which the generative system is a distinct level from the specific trajectory generated by the reader or user.*

*Computational and combinatory artworks, hypertextual structures, etc.—have all contributed to the present heyday of ergodic forms*). For Bordwell, "both serialism and structuralism are often hard pressed to show that the work's formal principles are registered by the perceiver".

278- Serialism tends to emphasize intrinsic norms, structuralism extrinsic ones.

"What *L'année dernière à Marienbad* was to the *nouveau roman*, *Méditerranée* (1963) was to the *Tel Quel* group". Noël Burch puts forward a sensualist theory of film. "He posits that technical parameters are as functionally important to the film's overall form as are narrative ones".

279- Use of permutations, serial variations, etc. In the parametric mode, films are constructed as music—although Burch recognizes a non-formalizable element of representation. Many critics question whether the parametric dominance of style over narrative ever takes place (*They may be thinking of mainstream fiction film. Quite obviously, parametric narration tends to proliferate in the shorter modes, and the*

*commercial extensions of the mode are most visible in musical videoclips and advertisements—JAGL).*

### *Shapes and Strategies*

282- In parametric narration, only an artistic motivation for style—unlike mere ornamentation (just like rhyme and metre are not ornamental). Style is usually forced into thematic meaning. Bordwell comments on the dangers of assuming that technique is thematized in every film:

285- —"The error lies in assuming that style and syuzhet have a fixed relation to one another." Parametric effects are not invisible; they are noticed "by many spectators"—as against Meyer's comments on the imperceptibility of serial structures in music. Besides, unnoticed structures does not equal *irrelevant structures*—although some may be both (as argued by Riffaterre vs. Jakobson in the debate on Baudelaire's "Les chats"). But parametric narration can be said to rely on 1) sufficient redundancy, 2) prior schemata, 3) a recognition of "natural" predispositions of human perception; 4) a recognition of the limited "channel capacity" of the perceiver.

Perceptibility is therefore ensured.

286- The parametric film follows closely an intrinsic norm, developing "an unusually limited range of stylistic options." A "sparse" approach, involving an exploration of perceptibility.

287- "In this mode, the spectator's task becomes one of recognizing stylistic repetition and staying alert for more or less distinct variations." Play of hypotheses as well, as in other modes. There are parameters relative to style, and even to siuzhet

too.

288- A tension is established between the need to repeat and the need to go on—similar to what happens in music, where the plot is opposed to the music. Repetition and ellipticality are traits of the parametric *siuzhet*.

289- "Noncinematic schemata, often religious ones, may then be brought in to motivate the workings of style" [*Religious—or emblems of pop culture, rhythmic parameters, or commercial ones, in the case of music videos, musicals, advertisements—far more common than Bordwell's religious examples!*]

### *The Parameters of Pickpocket*

296- In Bresson's *Pickpocket*, "characters *move into position* for the shot / reverse shot combination as if figure behavior and camera position secretly collaborated to fulfill an abstract stylistic formula." An aura of mystery and transcendence permeates Bresson's work:

305- "stylistic patterning is somewhat distinct from *siuzhet* patterning." —"Order without meaning tantalizes."

But what we perceive through the patterning is not an "authorial voice"—rather, an impersonal stylistic system.

### *The Problem of Modernism*

Meaning the problem of the influence on film coming from literature and criticism. But it is more important to see modern art as changing and creating new norms.

### ***13. Godard and Narration***

It is not that Godard's works are profound—rather, they are ambiguous at a denotative level. Godard's style poses the problem of the perceptibility of discourses, of transtextuality, of the arbitrary use of technique... His practices have been justified by critics as essayistic, belletristic, or even "scientific", which they are not.

313- "The critic's task is not to find the correct meaning, to domesticate the extraordinary, but rather to explain the conditions within which the difficulties emerge and have consequences." Godard mixes "established narrative modes in disorienting ways"; unification comes "by constructing a strongly characterized narrator."

#### *Schemata in conflict*

314- Godard refuses to let a film unify around a single mode.

316- Godard does not synthesize art-film and classical norms, like Truffaut", instead, "he makes them collide (...) dehumanizing each mode and revealing its relative arbitrariness". There is a "continual foregrounding" of technique, but unlike parametric narration, also "sheer multiplicity and difference"—his style moves towards "absolute unpredictability".





317- Blatant symbols and commentary (vs. the tradition of art-cinema, etc.).

### *Spatializing Narration*

"Collage" of styles in Godard. "The temporal thrust of the process of the fabula construction is checked to some extent by the accumulation of 'paradigmatic' materials." The spectator is overpowered, looks for a coherent "film behind the film". The film is perceived as a string of vivid but isolated effects and moments.

### *322- Narrator and Palimpsest*

Godard uses an overt narrator, given particular traits and a concrete role (as against the relatively impersonal stylistic systems of parametric cinema). Characters, on the other hand, are sketchy. Subjective shots are used only to enhance the self-consciousness of the narration itself.

324- "we ought not to attribute narration to a narrator unless invited by textual cues and historical context." But Godard is a clear instance: "in no contemporary filmmaking is the distance between textual persona and historical individual so small". But the persona is Godard as ideal filmmaker: the author of an "egocentric cinema" — "the shooting of the film becomes just part of the film's narrational process".

325- (cf. Daney and Oudart). Palimpsest structure of Godard's films; structured by one process after another, leaving traces of earlier ones. This goes against the practices of mainstream film, in which "each production stage strives to reproduce the preceding one."

326- Godard refuses to identify the profilmic with the diegetic (analogous in this sense

to the defamiliarizing Russian tradition). Godard goes to the extent of letting the profilmic event be invaded by tactics characteristic of techniques operating at "later" stages of production—the use of the camera, the editing, etc.: a self-conscious approach to film-making.

328- Deliberate mismatches of shots, and inadequate length of shots, remind us of the difference between the *shot shot* and the *edited shot*. An impression is left of another subjacent film beyond the film.

332- In Godard, the narration is not reducible to "reflexivity". "It is *cinéma d'auteur* with a vengeance".

*1968 and after.*

The later evolution of Godard's style.

## **Conclusion**

335- The crucial notion to keep in mind is that the spectator's activity is solicited by the film—in different ways in the different modes. The theory expounded here is a *partial* theory of fictional cinema (e.g. subjects like sexuality or fantasy are left out of the theory). The "notion of authorship in cinema could be recast in narrational terms". Discussion of genres too. "Narrational norms are a central mediation between ideology and its manifestation in artworks."

376- Although the main emphasis here has been on formal issues, Bordwell

advocates a historical poetics of cinema.

[La realidad flojea](#)