

# CINEMA COMPARAT/IVE CINEMA



VOLUME III · no.7 · 2015

**Editors:** Gonzalo de Lucas (Universitat Pompeu Fabra) y Manuel Garin (Universitat Pompeu Fabra).

**Associate Editors:** Ana Aitana Fernández (Universitat Pompeu Fabra), Núria Bou (Universitat Pompeu Fabra), Xavier Pérez (Universitat Pompeu Fabra).

**Assistant Editor:** Chantal Poch

**Advisory Board:** Dudley Andrew (Yale University, Estados Unidos), Jordi Balló (Universitat Pompeu Fabra, España), Raymond Bellour (Université Sorbonne-Paris III, Francia), Francisco Javier Benavente (Universitat Pompeu Fabra), Nicole Brenez (Université Paris 1-Panthéon-Sorbonne, Francia), Maeve Connolly (Dun Laoghaire Institut of Art, Design and Technology, Irlanda), Thomas Elsaesser (University of Amsterdam, Países Bajos), Gino Frezza (Università de Salerno, Italia), Chris Fujiwara (Edinburgh International Film Festival, Reino Unido), Jane Gaines (Columbia University, Estados Unidos), Haden Guest (Harvard University, Estados Unidos), Tom Gunning (University of Chicago, Estados Unidos), John MacKay (Yale University, Estados Unidos), Adrian Martin (Monash University, Australia), Cezar Mîgliorin (Universidade Federal Fluminense, Brasil), Alejandro Montiel (Universitat de València), Meaghan Morris (University of Sidney, Australia y Lignan University, Hong Kong), Raffaella Pinto (Universitat de Barcelona), Ivan Pintor (Universitat Pompeu Fabra), Àngel Quintana (Universitat de Girona, España), Joan Ramon Resina (Stanford University, Estados Unidos), Eduardo A. Russo (Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Argentina), Glòria Salvadó (Universitat Pompeu Fabra), Yuri Tsvian (University of Chicago, Estados Unidos), Vicente Sánchez Biosca (Universitat de València, España), Jenaro Talens (Université de Genève, Suiza y Universitat de València, España), Michael Witt (Roehampton University, Reino Unido).

**Contributors:** Jordi Balló, Fran Benavente, Gerard Casau, Raquel Crisóstomo, Miguel Fernández Labayen, Manuel Garin, Alexandra Popartan, Glòria Salvadó, Carolina Sourdis, Xavier Pérez.

**Translators:** Marga Carnicé, Gonzalo de Lucas, Albert Elduque, Miguel García, Manuel Garin, Bruno Hachero, Chantal Poch, Anna Rosenberg, Carolina Sourdis, Valentín Vía.

**Original design and layout:** Pau Masaló (original layout), Sara Torrent (PDF design).

**Acknowledgements:** Lodge Kerrigan, Carlos Losilla, Alejandro Montiel, Sergi Sánchez, Arnau Vilaró.

**Publisher:** Colectivo de Investigación Estética de los Medios Audiovisuales (CINEMA), Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF).

This issue has been funded with the economic support of the Departamento de Comunicación (Universitat Pompeu Fabra).

**Place of publication:** Universitat Pompeu Fabra. Departamento de Comunicación. Campus de la Comunicación – Poblenou. Roc Boronat, 138 08018, Barcelona (España).

**E-mail:** [comparativecinema@upf.edu](mailto:comparativecinema@upf.edu).

**Website:** [www.upf.edu/comparativecinema](http://www.upf.edu/comparativecinema)

**URL:** <http://www.ocec.eu/cinemacomparative/>

*Cinema Comparat/ive Cinema*, Volume 3, N° 7, «How filmmakers think TV», Barcelona, 2015.

**Legal Deposit:** B.29702-2012.

**ISSN:** 2014-8933.

*Comparative Cinema does not have either article submission charges or article processing charges (APCs). This journal provides immediate free access to its content under the principle that making research freely available to the public, which promotes a greater global exchange of knowledge.*

*Some rights are reserved. Published by Universitat Pompeu Fabra and the Observatory of European Contemporary Cinema under a Creative Commons License.*



Cover photo: *Six Fois Deux/Sur et sous la communication* (Jean-Luc Godard, Anne-Marie Miéville, 1976)

# Introduction

---

*Cinema Comparat/ive Cinema* is a biannual publication founded in 2012. It is edited by Colectivo de Investigación Estética de los Medios Audiovisuales (CINEMA) at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF), and focuses on comparative cinema and the reception and interpretation of film in different social and political contexts. Each issue investigates the conceptual and formal relationships between films, material processes and production and exhibition practices, the history of ideas and film criticism.

*Cinema Comparat/ive Cinema* addresses an original area of research, developing a series of methodologies for a comparative study of cinema. With this aim, it also explores the relationship between cinema and comparative literature as well as other contemporary arts such as painting, photography, music or dance, and audio-visual media.

*Cinema Comparat/ive Cinema* is published in three languages: Catalan, Spanish and English. The journal is biannual and the numbers are published in summer and winter. At least half of the articles included in the journal are original texts, of which at least 50% are written by authors external to the publishing organisation. The journal is peer-reviewed and uses internal and external evaluation committees.

The journal will also accept visual essays on the topic raised in the issue, both as part of a written article or as an autonomous work.

Finally, each issue of the journal is complemented by documentary materials and texts published online, which facilitate and enrich the topics studied in each volume, thus establishing links between longer research projects and monographic focuses throughout this process.



# Table of contents

---

## EDITORIAL

<i>How Filmmakers Think TV</i> by Manuel Garin and Gonzalo de Lucas .....	7
---	---

## DOCUMENTS

<i>Cinema and television</i> by Roberto Rossellini.....	9
<i>Three questions about Six fois deux</i> by Gilles Deleuze.....	12
<i>Birth (of the image) of a Nation</i> by Jean-Luc Godard.....	16
<i>The viewer's autonomy</i> by Alexander Kluge .....	17
<i>Cinema on television</i> by Marguerite Duras and Serge Daney.....	19
<i>Critical films were possible only on (or in collaboration with) television</i> by Rainer Werner Fassbinder.....	22
<i>Medvedkin and the invention of television</i> by Chris Marker.....	24
<i>TV, where are you?</i> by Jean-Louis Comolli.....	26

## FILMS EN DISCUSIÓN. ENTREVISTAS

<i>Between film and television. An interview with Lodge Kerrigan</i> by Gerard Casau and Manuel Garin .....	28
---	----

## ARTICLES

<i>Ten founding filmmakers of serial television</i> by Jordi Balló and Xavier Pérez .....	36
<i>Sources of youth. Memories of a past of television fiction</i> by Fran Benavente and Glòria Salvadó.....	42
<i>Television series by Sonimage: Audiovisual practices as theoretical inquiry</i> by Carolina Sourdis.....	52
<i>The televisual practices of Iván Zulueta</i> by Miguel Fernández Labayen.....	57

## REVIEWS

JACOBS, Jason y PEACOCK, Steven (eds.), <i>Television Aesthetics and Style</i> by Raquel Crisóstomo.....	68
WITT, Michael. <i>Jean-Luc Godard. Cinema Historian</i> by Carolina Sourdis.....	70
BRADATAN, Costica y UNGUREANU, Camil (eds.), <i>Religion in Contemporary European Cinema: The Postsecular Constellation</i> by Alexandra Popartan .....	72



# How Filmmakers Think TV

---

Manuel Garin and Gonzalo de Lucas

Since the Fifties, the television projects of many filmmakers implied an aesthetic and political dimension: a quest to widen both mediums, to explore new pedagogic and creative possibilities in a sort of fiction lab that bridged different genres and artistic disciplines: History, art and philosophy (Rossellini, Godard, Marker, Kluge, Watkins, Warhol), theatre and the novel (Bergman or Fassbinder).

It is a lesser-known or lesser-seen history, partly because of the poor distribution that most of those films, programs and series had after their original broadcast (sometimes due to the networks' laziness or lack of real interest; others because such long-duration works are rarely screened in film theaters), but a very important one for its unique quality and specificity -determined by the means of production- and for the transmission of controversial forms and ideas regarding image and sound, forms that question and reshape the narrowing boundaries between cinema and television. Even so, in most monographs about such filmmakers their television work occupies a marginal space or it's regarded as a sort of retirement from cinema or even a self-abasement, ignoring that some of them worked for television consistently throughout their careers (as in the case of Bergman's, Fassbinder's or Rossellini's television oeuvre). But the fact is that it would be fair to claim that *Six fois deux* (INA, 1976), *Atti degli apostolic* (RAI-ORTF, 1969), *La Maison des bois* (ORTF 2, 1971) or *L'Héritage de la chouette* (La Sept, 1989) remain among the best of Godard/Mélville, Rossellini, Pialat or Marker.

Therefore, many filmmakers have understood television as a space of public critique and intervention, which allowed reaching a wider audience; as a place for rethinking the educational and knowledge processes that moving images make possible; as a space of performance that opens new methodologies to work with the actors (from Renoir to Watkins). At the same time, television also grounded the work of many documentarians -Wiseman's longstanding production for the PBS being the most celebrated case- and gave birth to unique essayistic forms (Pasolini, Welles or Godard), not to mention the possibilities that serial television fostered for filmmakers like Lynch or Von Trier.

In 1977, Rossellini mentioned that 'the coming into stage of television triggered a series of absurd battles between the small and the big screen'. Almost forty years have gone by and the absurd persists. In this issue of *Comparative Cinema* we intend to share our passion and curiosity about the television projects of a number of filmmakers that, for decades, worked naturally in both mediums, from Renoir to Kluge, between Godard or Iván Zulueta: promises of a future past of television that, according to Fran Benavente and Glòria Salvadó, have always been part of the medium's DNA. To go back to the working materials of Orson Welles in the Fifties (words, the voice) to better understand what someone like Louis C. K. is doing now. To interview a contemporary filmmaker like Lodge Kerrigan to listen him explain, in a down to earth manner, how directing TV episodes now reminds him of classical Hollywood's directorial assignments. To explore connections between the past and the present in order to bring cinema and television screens together, comparatively.

If, as Fassbinder said, it is not the same to explain a story in three hours than in fifteen, the liaisons between television and cinema reshape key issues of audiovisual language such as narrative structure and tempo, repetition and difference, the type of viewer or the size of the screens. This issue seeks to explore in depth some of those formal and ideological variables through comparison, trying to go beyond the preexisting binaries of the cinematic and the televisual. What does filming a face episodically, or repeating a gesture one episode after another, entail? Can we think of a responsibility of cinema and a responsibility of television? How much truth is there in the authorial claims of *showrunners*? Impossible to give a simpler answer, but maybe these pages will help us raise, as Rossellini claimed, more questions. •





# Cinema and Television

Roberto Rossellini

Television is, nowadays, the most powerful and suggestive of this two communication media because it has a greater audience. Television should be, therefore, the most adequate medium to promote integral education; this is to say –according to Antonio Gramsci’s words- ‘a new proletarian Weltanschauung’, a new concept of life and people. Gramsci affirms:

‘One must redo the creation of a new integral culture which would have the popular character of the Protestant Reformation and the French Enlightenment and the classic features of Greek civilization and of the Italian Renaissance. This would be a culture that (to use Carducci’s words) would synthesize Maximillian Robespierre and Immanuel Kant, politics and philosophy, in a dialectical unity inherent not only in a French or German society, but in a European and world-wide one.’

It is not necessary to add that, in the present time, those who control and direct television stations all around the world do not have these concerns. Neither seems to interest them the challenge when studying a new form of education; the idea of achieving an ‘integral culture’ has not crossed their minds. For them, television is nothing but a media to get ‘enjoyment’ and popularity; they use it as propaganda to sell certain goods, and to gain followers to that ideology, to this or that political party, to give or rest importance to certain groups of pressure. The speed of television’s development and consolidation, before its rapid deterioration and its reduction to an advertisement vehicle of a product or an opinion, is obvious. The speed with which it has gotten away from all the concrete truth, the intelligence, and all authentic knowledge, is obvious as well. But the emergence of television has created some other diseases: it has allowed the triumph, acceleration and institutionalisation of the process of corruption of cinema, just in the moment when more important concerns, other than enjoyment or entertainment, were being aroused in the cinematographic field.

The coming into stage of television, triggered an absurd battle between the small and the big screen. An infinity number of parties from one or the other medium suddenly leaped to

enunciate ludicrous theories about language, aesthetics, the social or ‘cultural’ incidence of cinema or television.

Nobody, or almost nobody, bothered to adopt a fairer perspective: that the apparition of this new technique could mean an extraordinary vehicle of dissemination of its products (films, etc.) to an ever-growing audience.

The war between cinema and television had disastrous consequences for media.

Cinema, at the beginning, tried to defeat television by shaking the exhibition screens at cinemas, generalizing the use of colour and disproportionately increasing the production costs (which only achieved to make it harder for new creative talents to be incorporated in the progressively stagnated structures).

Television, by its part, took great advantage of the initial times of attraction that are always generated by novelties, it was benefited by the new living conditions that coincided with its appearance: traffic problems, urban decentralization, etc.

Barely introduced, and aimed at accelerating its dissemination, it made an effort for making its ‘shows’ progressively popular: the games, the songs, the journals and the most banal comicalness, were the vectors for its impetuous penetration.

To counteract television’s success, cinema tried by every mean to retain its audience, which was deserting from the screening theatres. It then produced more sensationalistic and vulgar films, and simultaneously, it disguised its merchandising intentions with an advertisement made by opulent words: ‘beauty’, ‘intellectuality’, ‘commitment’, ‘thirst of liberty’, etc. But the only certain thing is that cinema started to debase progressively, with scandal and obscenity.

## The Cinema Crisis

Cinema is currently going through a severe crisis.

Television has deeply settled in our daily life. Although it performs a very similar role everywhere, its organisation varies from one country to another. In certain countries the so-called commercial television predominates: United States constitutes the best example for this. North American television

sells almost all its broadcast hours to advertisement. And consequently, their shows are conceived to attract the biggest amount of television spectators, because the increase in the audience ratings determines a proportional increase in the advertisement income. Thus, for every eight or nine minutes of a show, one or two minutes of ads parade through the small screen.

In other countries such as France and Italy, the television is a state monopoly. In those countries, the televisual organization is funded according to a canon that the T.V. owners are forced to pay (in a matter of fact, the owners of radio apparatuses are mortgaged by a similar canon). Thus the French Radio-Television stations or the Italian RAI-TV collect yearly thousands of millions (of ancient francs or lyres) as a compensation for the services they provide to the television spectators throughout the year, and whose nature is freely decided by the criteria of these organisms.

Definitely, while cinema has to conquer every time, film by film, the spectators who pay for its production, the monopolist state television broadcasts programs to previously guaranteed spectators, who have paid beforehand: it enjoys, then, of an incomparable privilege.

In Italy, cinema and television have almost equivalent annual budgets: three hundred thousand lyres each (more than five hundred million new francs). Not a lot of imagination is required to understand the advantages that would report, both to the industries and the audience, the accumulation of both budgets, complementing one another instead of competing. We will come back to this issue.

Anybody with an idea of cinema, as small as it might be, knows that the adventure of producing a film is only possible when the minimum budget is guaranteed (under any of these formulas: presale, coproduction, advance on tickets, etc.). But even those precautions are not enough to reduce or eliminate risks. Cinema, then, seeks shelter in the repetition of commercially successful formulas, exploits the tendency. How long are those formulas valid for? We know from experience that, as much in cinema as in any other field, the tendency lasts 'the blink of an eye'.

Cinema is thus condemned to Sisyphus torture, it is a slave of a system that forces it to start from scratch, to assume once and again the risks implied on guessing the successful in the timely quest of what audiences will enjoy, and all of these within an incredibly short amount of time.

At its beginnings, however, cinema regulated a very different direction: its great moment coincided with the time when North Americans turned the old English saying 'the goods follow the flags' into 'the goods follow the films'.

Films meant in that time, in effect, an insuperable force, a

sovereign medium of 'institutional' advertisement for a great quantity of new products: from the car to the fridge, from the vacuum to the toaster, from the fan to the telephone and the electric shaving machine. In one word, the one thousand and one products that were precisely imposing to society (that was not yet a consumer society, but was about to become one). And cinema, contributed in that sense to the dissemination of the new models of life, to create other necessities and other desires. Cinema has been a medium for entertainment and, simultaneously, the Trojan horse for the consumption society. While those were the operative conditions for cinema, the funding posed greater problems, because the capital enjoyed completely independent advantages of the success of the film. The production was abundant, and its abundance allowed, even if slowly, to widen the limits of cinematographic art, to try – even once in a while – new experiences.

Conditions have drastically changed today. The institutional advertisement has fallen in disuse, as it has not a reason of being and has achieved a good part of its fundamental purposes. From that point of view, the function of cinema and television is different nowadays: they are not useful anymore to foster a determined type of society, as the films from other time did, but they play their role as the 'opium for the people' and make everything within the possible – I am not sure if in a way of tropism or consciously – to keep the masses in a infantilism state, moved by the fanciful sufficiency given by the illusion of freedom. This infantilism is convenient, without doubts, for the leading figures of our society: it facilitates the propaganda that leads the masses towards the alternative that the power or the pressure groups create.

### **A Service of General Interest**

A national television is only justified if it really is, as the law prescribes, an 'indispensable service with a character of general interest' and 'participates in the cultural and social development of the country'.

For achieving a cultural promotion at the service of the people, the diverse television stations (at least those from the state), the parliamentary control organs and the unions should put into practice new procedures for the television shows to contribute to the democratization of the country. Which purposes should be proposed and which methods? Regarding the purposes, one shall remember what the great currents of contemporary thought, from Christianity to Islam, from Socrates to Marx have stated each in their own way: the only possible purpose is that of making human society to mature. All these current of thoughts share a common base: faith on men. Mahoma himself has said that the diversity and variety of human intelligence were the proof and existence of God's generosity. Science

proves him right nowadays, by demonstrating the multiplicity of intelligence. It is a richness we have to take advantage of.

Regarding the methods, television could develop a cultural promotion within everyone's reach. As it make use of images, it would overcome the teaching difficulties, if there is some true in Comenius's affirmation, in a great extent: 'the difficulty on learning comes from the fact that things are not taught to the students through direct vision, but through very tedious descriptions that print the image of things in the intellect with a lot of difficulty; they penetrate memory with such softness that they are easily vanished or are understood differently from the correct way'.

Television could provide a 'direct vision' of things, of men and of the history of millions and millions of individuals. History teaches us that social changes –unavoidable inasmuch as we are destined to evolve towards a better world- follow the new thinking systems. But thinking systems only evolve when men are able to *recapitulate* what they know. For that, informing everyone is crucial, putting knowledge within everyone's reach, and it is crucial as well to constantly update this knowledge. In one word, knowledge must be democratized.

Is it possible for men to accomplish its integrity, as it already happened two or three times throughout history? Yes, as long as all men, or at least the majority, are able to recapitulate the greatest quantity of data as possible. With this purpose, it is necessary to develop a cultural information addressed to all, disposed to disseminate all knowledge and ideas. Then, and only then, all men will be able to make synthesis and orient their minds in such a way that they make possible new developments. We would thus reach the harmonious participation of all the individuals in social affairs.

This would be the ideal, naturally.

Practice, unfortunately, is very different. Television ignores this principles and cinema does so even more.

The initiatives of cinema in educative matters are null. Television, as opposed, has settled some objectives, but all its teaching efforts are calqued from the school model, including the professional schools. However, there is a distinguished exception in Italian television, the television film series called 'Sapere'. Except from it, television, in the image of school, does not seem to have any other purpose but helping students to 'have a career' within the margins of the current system. Gramsci affirmed that the traditional school is an oligarchy, because it is addressed to a generation of men whose unique destiny is to govern the country. I will add, on my behalf, that these future 'governors' are, in fact, docile and submissive because they have

limited horizons. Television, for the common wealth, should foster those information and cultural forms that the school does not provide and that will help with the development -due to consciousness and not to propaganda- of a rigorous critical sense, crucial to the progress and the evolution of the social current structures. Such evolution would serve everyone's interest, both the privileged and the dispossessed masses.

Apart from the necessity to modify its purposes, creativity is the fundamental factor for television and cinema to survive. If a collaboration was to be settled between both structures, the possibilities of fostering the inventive spirit would increase undoubtedly, with the consecutive repercussion for the benefit of ideas. We have seen that in Italy (as it happens in more or less every country) the budget for television and cinema are equivalent, around three hundred thousand lyres, despite the television spectator are more numerous than the usual clients of the cinema theatres.

If television participated in the cinematographic production, it would share the film's income, thus relieving its dependency on advertisement. The media workers would enjoy a better guarantee of their jobs. A wider and healthier market would permit to carry out the cultural promotion operations we have previously referred and which would contribute in training minds: an 'integral culture' would have thus a better chance of turning into reality. These promotion methods, once improved, would stimulate the implementation of new audiovisual media (videocassettes, etc.) - of which so much has been said and so much money has been invested, vainly for the moment.

---

*This text collects part of Rosellini's Speech in the symposium «L'engagement social et économique du cinéma» which he organized at The Cannes Film Festival on the 13th and 14th of May 1977. It was published in: ROSSELLINI, Roberto (1977). Un esprit libre ne doit rien apprendre en classe Libraire Arthème Fayard. Paris. Translated to spanish by José Luis Guarner in: ROSSELLINI, Roberto (1979). Un espíritu libre no debe aprender como esclavo. Escritos sobre cine y educación. Gustavo Gil. Barcelona.*

# Three questions about Six fois deux

Gilles Deleuze

**Cahiers du Cinéma has asked you for an interview, because you're a "Philosopher" and we wanted to do something philosophical, but more specifically because you like and admire Godard's work. What do you think of his recent TV programs?**

Like many people, I was moved, and it's a lasting emotion. Maybe I should explain my image of Godard. As someone who works a great deal, he must be a very solitary figure. But it's not just any solitude, it's an extraordinarily animated solitude. Full, not of dreams, fantasies, and projects, but of acts, things, people even. A multiple, creative solitude. From the depths of this solitude Godard constitutes a force in his own right but also gets others to work as a team. He can deal as an equal with anyone, with official powers or organizations, as well as a cleaning lady, a worker, mad people. In the TV programs, Godard's questions always engage people directly. They disorient us, the viewers, but not whoever he's talking to. He talks to crazy people in a way that's no more that of a psychiatrist than of another madman, or of someone "playing the fool." He talks with workers not as a boss, or another worker, or an intellectual, or a director talking with actors. It's nothing to do with adopting their tone, in a wily sort of way, it's because his solitude gives him a great capacity, is so full. It's as though, in a way, he's always stammering. Not stammering in his words, but stammering in language itself. You can normally only be a foreigner in another language. But here it's a case of being a foreigner in one's own language. Proust said that fine books have to be written in a sort of foreign language. It's the same with Godard's programs; he's even perfected his Swiss accent to precisely this effect. It's this creative stammering, this solitude, which makes Godard a force.

Because, as you know better than I do, he's always been alone. Godard's never had any popular success with his films, as those who say 'he's changed, from such and such a point onward it's no good' would have us believe. They're often the very people who initially hated him. Godard was ahead of, and influenced, everyone, but not by being a success, rather by following his own line, a line of active flight, a repeatedly broken line zigzagging beneath the surface. Anyway, in cinema, they more or less managed to lock him into his solitude. They pinned him down. And now he's used the opportunity presented by the holidays, and a vague demand for creativity, to take over

the TV for six times two programs. It may be the sole case of someone not being duped by TV. You've usually lost from the outset. People wouldn't have minded him promoting his films, but they can't forgive him for making this series that changes so many things at the heart of TV (questioning people, making them talk, showing images from a variety of sources, and so on). Even now it's over, even if it's been stifled. Many groups and associations were bound to get annoyed: the statement from the Union of Photographic Journalists and Cameramen is a good example. Godard has at the very least stirred up hatred. But he's also shown that a differently "animated" TV is possible.

**You haven't answered our question. Say you had to give a "course" on these programs... What ideas did you see, or sense in them? How would you try to explain your enthusiasm? We can always talk about everything else afterward, even if it's what's most important.**

OK, but ideas, having an idea, isn't about ideology, it's a practical matter. Godard has a nice saying: not a just image, just an image. Philosophers ought also to say 'not the just ideas, just ideas' and bear this out in their activity. Because the just ideas are always those that conform to accepted meanings or established precepts, they're always ideas that confirm something, even if it's something in the future, even if it's the future of the revolution. While 'just ideas' is a becoming-present, a stammering of ideas, and can only be expressed in the form of questions that tend to confound any answers. Or you can present some simple thing that disrupts all the arguments.

There are two ideas in Godard's programs that work this way, constantly encroaching on one another, getting mixed up and teased apart bit by bit. This is one reason why each program has two parts: as at primary school there are the two elements of learning about things and learning about language. The first idea is to do with work. I think Godard's constantly bringing into question a vaguely Marxist scheme that has spread everywhere: there's supposed to be something pretty abstract called "labor" that one can buy or sell, in situations that either mark a basic social injustice or establish a little more social justice. But Godard asks very concrete questions, he presents images touching on what exactly is being bought and sold. What are some people prepared to buy, and others to sell, these not necessarily being the same thing? A young welder is prepared

to sell his work as a welder, but not his sexuality by becoming an old woman's lover. A cleaning lady's happy to sell the time she spends cleaning but won't sell the moment she spends singing a bit of the "Internationale", why? Because she can't sing? But what, then, if one were to pay her for talking about not being able to sing? A specialist clockmaker, on the other hand, wants to get paid for his clockmaking efforts, but refuses to be paid for his work as an amateur filmmaker, which he calls his "hobby"; but the images show that the movements he makes in the two activities, the clockmaking sequence and the editing sequence, are so remarkably similar that you can mistake one for the other. But no, says the clockmaker, there's a great difference of love and warmth in these movements, I don't want to be paid for my filmmaking. But then what about filmmakers and photographers who do get paid? What, furthermore, is a photographer himself prepared to pay for? He's sometimes prepared to pay his model. Sometimes the model pays him. But when he photographs torture or an execution, he pays neither the victim nor the executioner. And when he photographs children who are sick, wounded, or hungry, why doesn't he pay them? Guattari once suggested at a psychoanalytical congress that analysts should be paid as well as analysands, since the analyst isn't exactly providing a "service," it's more like a division of labor, two distinct kinds of work going on: there's the analyst's work of listening and sifting, but the analysand's unconscious is at work too. Nobody seems to have taken much notice of Guattari's suggestion. Godard's saying the same thing: why not pay the people who watch television, instead of making them pay, because they're engaged in real work and are themselves providing a public service? The social division of labor means it's not only work on the shop floor that gets paid but work in offices and research laboratories too. Otherwise we'd have to think about the workers themselves having to pay the people who design the things they make. I think all these questions and many others, all these images and many others, tear apart the notion of labor. In the first place, the very notion of labor arbitrarily sets one area of activity apart, cuts work off from its relation to love, to creativity, to production even. It makes work a kind of maintenance, the opposite of creating anything, because on this notion it's a matter of reproducing goods that are consumed and reproducing its own productive force, within a closed system of exchange. From this viewpoint it doesn't much matter whether the exchange is fair or unfair, because there's always selective violence in an act of payment, and there's mystification in the very principle of talking in terms of labor. It's to the extent that work might be distinguished from the productive pseudoforce of labor that very different flows of production, of many disparate kinds, might be brought into direct relation with flows of money, independently of any mediation by an abstract force.

I'm even more confused than Godard. Just as I should be, since the key thing is the questions Godard asks and the images he presents and a chance of the spectator feeling that the notion of labor isn't innocent, isn't at all obvious –even, and particularly, from the viewpoint of social criticism. It's this, quite as much as the more obvious things, that explains the reactions of the Communist Party and some unions to Godard's programs: he's dared to question that sacrosanct notion of labor... And then there's the second idea, to do with information. Because here again, language is presented to us as basically informative, and information as basically an exchange. Once again, information is measured in abstract units. But it's doubtful whether the schoolmistress, explaining how something works or teaching spelling, is transmitting information. She's instructing, she's really delivering precepts. And children are supplied with syntax like workers being given tools, in order to produce utterances conforming to accepted meanings. We should take him quite literally when Godard says children are political prisoners. Language is a system of instructions rather than a means of conveying information. TV tells us: 'Now we'll have a bit of entertainment, then the news...' We ought in fact to invert the scheme of information theory. The theory assumes a theoretical maximum of information, with pure noise, interference, at the other extreme; and in between there's redundancy, which reduces the information but allows it to overcome noise. But we should actually start with redundancy as the transmission and relaying of orders or instructions; next, there's information-always the minimum needed for the satisfactory reception of orders; then what? Well, then there's something like silence, or like stammering, or screaming, something slipping through underneath the redundancies and information, letting language slip through, and making itself heard, in spite of everything. To talk, even about yourself, is always to take the place of someone else in whose place you're claiming to speak and who's been denied the right to speak. Orders and precepts stream from Seguy's open mouth. But the woman with the dead child is open-mouthed too. An image gets represented by a sound, like a worker by his representative. A sound takes over a series of images. So how can we manage to speak without giving orders, without claiming to represent something or someone, how can we get people without the right to speak, to speak; and how can we restore to sounds their part in the struggle against power? I suppose that's what it means to be like a foreigner in one's own language, to trace a sort of line of flight for words.

That's "just" two ideas, but two ideas is a lot, it's massive, includes loads of things and other ideas. So Godard brings into question two everyday notions, those of labor and information. He doesn't say we should give *true* information, nor that labor should be well paid (those would be the just ideas) . He says these notions are very suspect. He writes FALSE beside them. He's been saying for ages that he'd like to be a production



company rather than an auteur, and to run the television news rather than make films. He didn't of course mean he wanted to produce his own films, like Verneuil, or take over TV. But that he wanted to produce a mosaic of different work rather than measuring it all against some abstract productive force, and wanted to produce a sub-informational juxtaposition of all the open mouths instead of relating them all to some abstract information taken, as a precept.

**If those are Godard's two ideas, do they correspond to the theme of "sounds and images" that constantly recurs in the programs? Images-learning from things-relating to work, and sounds-learning the language-relating to information?**

No, there's only a partial correspondence: there's always information in images, and something at work in sounds. Any set of terms can and should be divided up in various ways that correspond only partially. To try and articulate the relation between sounds and images as Godard understands it you'd have to tell a very abstract story, in several episodes, and then finally see that this abstract story corresponds to a single episode of something terribly simple and concrete.

1. There are images, things are themselves images, because images aren't in our head, in our brain. The brain's just one image among others. Images are constantly acting and reacting on each other, producing and consuming. There's no difference at all between *images*, *things*, and *motion*.

2. But images also have an *inside* or certain images have an inside and are experienced from inside. They're subjects (cf. Godard's remarks on *Two or Three Things I Know About Her* in *Godard on Godard*, pp. 239-42). And there's a *gap* between actions upon these images and the reactions they produce. It's this gap that enables them to store up other images, that is to perceive. But what they store is only what interests them in other images: perceiving is subtracting from an image what doesn't interest us, there's always *Less* in our perception. We're so full of images we no longer see those outside us for what they are.

3. There are also aural images, which don't seem to have any priority. Yet these aural images, or some of them, have an *other side* you can call whatever you like, ideas, meaning, language, expressive aspects, and so on. Aural images are thus able to contract or capture other images or a series of other images. A voice takes over a set of images (the voice of Hitler, say). Ideas, acting as precepts, are embodied in aural images or sound waves and say what should interest us in other images: they dictate our perception. There's always a central "rubber stamp" normalizing images, subtracting what we're not supposed to see. So, given the earlier gap, we can trace out as it were two converse

currents: one going from external images to perceptions, the other going from prevailing ideas to perceptions.

4. So we're caught in a chain of images, each of us in our own particular place, each ourself an image, and also in a network of ideas acting as precepts. And so what Godard's doing with his "words and images" goes in two directions at once. On the one hand he's restoring their fullness to external images, so we don't perceive something less, making perception equal to the image, giving back to images all that belongs to them-which is in itself a way of challenging this or that power and its rubber stamps. On the other hand, he's undoing the way language takes power, he's making it stammer in sound waves, taking apart any set of ideas purporting to be just ones and extracting from it just some ideas. These are perhaps two reasons among others why Godard makes such novel use of the *static shot* ("plan fixe"). It's rather like what some contemporary musicians do by introducing a fixed aural plane so that *everything* in music is heard. And when Godard puts a blackboard on the screen and writes on it, he's not making it something he can film but making the blackboard and writing into a new televisual resource, a sort of expressive material with its own particular current in relation to the other currents on the screen.

This whole abstract story in four episodes sounds a bit like science fiction. But it's our social reality these days. The strange thing is that the story corresponds in various ways to what Bergson said in the first chapter of *Matter and Memory*. Bergson's seen as a sedate old philosopher who's no longer of any interest. It would be good if cinema or television revived interest in him (he should be on the IDHEC syllabus, maybe he is). The first chapter of *Matter and Memory* develops an amazing conception of the relations between photography and cinematic motion, and things: 'photography, if there is such a thing as photography, is caught from the outset in, drawn from the start right into the interior of things, and this at every point in space,' and so on. That's not to say Godard's a Bergsonian. It's more the other way around; Godard's not even reviving Bergson, but finding bits of Bergson along his way as he revivifies television.

**But why does everything in Godard come in twos? You need two to get three... Fine, but what are these twos and threes all about?**

Oh, come on, you know better than anyone it's not like that. Godard's not a dialectician. What counts with him isn't two or three or however many, it's AND, the conjunction AND. The key thing is Godard's use of AND. This is important, because all our thought's modeled, rather, on the verb "to be," IS. Philosophy's weighed down with discussions about attributive judgments (the sky is blue) and existential judgments (God

is) and the possibility or impossibility of reducing one to the other. But they all turn on the verb “to be.” Even conjunctions are dealt with in terms of the verb “to be” – look at syllogisms. The English and the Americans are just about the only people who’ve set conjunctions free, by thinking about relations. But when you see relational judgments as autonomous, you realize that they creep in everywhere, they invade and ruin everything: And isn’t even a specific conjunction or relation, it brings in all relations, there are as many relations as ands, and doesn’t just upset all relations, it upsets being, the verb... and so on. And, ‘and... and... and...’ is precisely a creative stammering, a foreign use of language, as opposed to a conformist and dominant use based on the verb “to be.”

And is of course diversity, multiplicity, the destruction of identities. It’s not the same factory gate when I go in, and when I come out, and then when I go past unemployed. A convicted man’s wife isn’t the same before and after the conviction. But diversity and multiplicity are nothing to do with aesthetic wholes (in the sense of “one more,” “one more woman”...) or dialectical schemas (in the sense of “one produces two, which then produces three”). Because in those cases it’s still Unity, and thus being, that’s primary, and that supposedly becomes multiple. When Godard says everything has two parts, that in a day there’s morning *and* evening, he’s not saying it’s one or the other, or that one becomes the other, becomes two. Because multiplicity is never in the terms, however many, nor in all the terms together, the whole. Multiplicity is precisely in the “and,” which is different in nature from elementary components and collections of them.

Neither a component nor a collection, what is this AND? I think Godard’s force lies in living and thinking and presenting this AND in a very novel way, and in making it work actively. AND is neither one thing nor the other, it’s always in between, between two things; it’s the borderline, there’s always a border, a line of flight or flow, only we don’t see it, because it’s the least perceptible of things. And yet it’s along this line of flight that things come to pass, becomings evolve, revolutions take shape. ‘The strong people aren’t the ones on one side or the other, power lies on the border.’ Giscard d’Estaing made a sad observation in the lecture on military geography he recently gave the army: the more that things become balanced at the level of the largest groups, between West and East, u.s. and USSR, with planetary consensus, link-ups in space, global policing, and so on, the more they become “destabilized” between North and South – Giscard cites Angola, the Near East, the Palestinian resistance, but also all the unrest that produces ‘a regional destabilization of security,’ airplane hijacking, Corsica . . . Between North and South we’ll keep on finding lines that derail the big groups, an AND, AND, AND which each time marks a new

threshold, a new direction of the broken line, a new course for the border. Godard’s trying to “see borders,” that is, to show the imperceptible. The convict *and* his wife. The mother *and* child. But also images *and* sounds. And the clockmaker’s movements when he’s in his clockmaking sequence *and* when he’s at his editing table: an imperceptible border separates them, belonging to neither but carrying both forward in their disparate development, in a flight or in a flow where we no longer know which is the guiding thread, nor where it’s going. A whole micropolitics of borders, countering the macropolitics of large groups. At least we know that’s where things come to pass, on the border between images and sounds, where images become too full and sounds too strident. That’s what Godard’s done in *Six Times Two*: made this active and creative line pass six times between them, made it visible, as it carries television forward.

---

*Originally published as ‘Trois questions sur Six fois deux’ in ‘Cahiers du cinéma’ no. 271. (nov. 1976). English version found in ‘Gilles Deleuze: Negotiations 1972-1990’ (Columbia University Press, 1995), translated by Martin Joughin.*

# Birth (of the image) of a Nation

---

Jean-Luc Godard

In 1977, a society that produces and makes cinematographic films and television broadcasts, Sonimage, comes into contact with representatives of the People's Republic of Mozambique by a common friends' intermediary, after a conference in Geneva.

The Sonimage society proposes Mozambique to make the most of the audiovisual situation of the country and study television before it exists, before it overruns (even if it is only in twenty years) the whole Mozambican social and geographical body.

To study the image, the desire of images (the desire to remember, the desire to show that memory, of making a mark, either of exit or arrival).

To study the production of those desires of image(s) and their distribution through the waves (oh, mermaids!) or the cables. To study the production, for once, beforehand.

To think television together because each one on its own, the small western society of cinema drowned in the daily flow of images, and the great new and forlorn country emerged from the colonial night, both simply and approximately possess the same number of cameras, recorders and monitors.

'Birth (of the image) of a Nation' will recount, then, the relationships and the story of those momentary (historic) relationships between a country that doesn't yet have television and a small television team from a country that has too much of it.

This team will be formed by a producer, a commentator/photographer, and a technician, who will there encounter a businessman, representative of a great industrial firm, a guest in the same hotel.

The films #1 and #5 will be more specifically devoted to the producer/commentator couple, to their reflections away from home (film #1) during the shooting, and afterwards, to their feelings once returned to Europe (film #5).

The producer and the commentator will be played by an actor and an actress.

The films #2, #3 and #4 will be drafts, notebooks of thoughts, of sketches, of impressions, expressing in the film #2 the producer's point of view, in the film #3 the businessman's and in the film #4 the commentator photographer's.

The film #2 (the producer) will essentially be made by interviews in light video with those who have never seen any images yet (the majority from the Mozambican population).

The film #3 will be formed by documents in Super 8 mm or 16 mm, projected in analysis as an amateur film brought by the businessman to his family.

The film #4 will mostly be composed by photos, mainly black and white, expressing the photographer's point of view.

If the series of five films is broadcasted on television, the films #1 and #5 will frame the remaining three.

The films #1 and #5 will be shown in movie theaters as one film in two parts, first faraway from Europe and then faraway from Africa.

In this way we might have glimpsed how a society forms and informs itself and the independence of this information, at the same time as the formation of its independence.

---

*This text was published in the issue 300 of Cahiers du Cinéma, issue edited by the own Godard as guest director.*



# The Viewer's Autonomy

Alexander Kluge

*Auteur* television and *auteur* cinema were related from the beginning. Rossellini, for instance, started his career as a film author and at a certain point, when the Italian film promotion was oriented to the commercial, he exiled himself in television. He made then a great film about Louis XIV; from that point on he did nothing but films for television. The same happens with several other authors-filmmakers, such as Edgar Reitz, who did not shot the mini series *Heimat* (1984-) exactly for movie theatres. If it had depended on me, I would have always worked on cinema –in fact what I do, is cinema, and I am a film history patriot, not one of television– but I have to accept that since a certain point, television became a dominant medium. And if I want to be independent, I have to defend that cause in television's core, independency, to the last consequences. That was what we did and as a proof, we have achieved the same status in television as that we had as authors-filmmakers. Some of us have done so by partnering with other media such as Spiegel TV, The BBC, The *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* or The *Süddeutsche Zeitung*... To illustrate it: the *auteur* principle is that of an artisan and it is distinguished from the so-called “dressmaking cinema”, what a tailor does, and where distribution is dominant. While production and financial capitalism exist, one can choose to remain in the side of production and be independent as Asterix, the Gaul, or to aim for Julius Caesar's politics and be on the dressmaking side. But do not get my wrong, I am not against the dressmaking, it is just not what I do. I am the son of a doctor, and a doctor is not a pharmaceutical industry employee. A doctor remains independent.

## **That quest for an independent place within a dominant medium such as TV, how does it relate to the notion of public sphere as you conceive it?**

We wrote a book titled *Experience and Public Sphere* with Oskar Negt, along the lines of Jürgen Habermas' *History and Critique of the Public Opinion*. What is consummated in intimacy becomes experience, for example, inside families, in romantic relationships or at work. However, those personal experiences only acquire self-confidence if they are exchanged in the public sphere. Love is something intimate that can acquire either confidence or an inferiority complex depending on how it is publically discussed. If the French crown publically exhibits its lovers as a political gesture, just like Henry IV proudly exhibits

Gabrielle D'Estrées, and the entire nation feels proud with the fact that their King has both a legitimate wife and a beautiful lover, one's self-confidence regarding loving matters is defined very differently from that among puritans.

## **You advocate for men to have better self-confidence...**

Autonomy. I think all men behave in an autonomous way, as long as they can, in the most essential aspects. This is to say, as long as they find a hole in oppression. In arts, particularly, autonomy is especially important. Salzburg's cardinal had a completely different musical taste from Mozart, he hated his music, but Mozart did not compose it in a different way because of that. Godard will never be obedient, even having made films for advertisement. He is still autonomous. That is *auteur* cinema. Another example is Truffaut.

## **You claim for an autonomous attitude in the viewer as well?**

Yes. But I do not need to claim a thing. Viewers are autonomous by themselves. Sometimes one constructs a mistaken idea about this. Let us take as an example Lady Di's death: most of the television network directors in my country thought that the news was a sensationalistic matter: ‘we do inform about it, but it is not important’. Nevertheless, people started to feel identified with the princess. The death in the tunnel was important to them, they were shocked. Consequently, they insisted and the medium had to give in. Actually, the media were the ones upside down. The viewers are the medium, what they cannot imagine neither can exist in the medium. In this sense, to honour ratings is to make a distorted reading of that reality. The viewers are the ones that should be honoured. Audiences resist a lot more that one thinks.

## **Resist?**

For example, I once made a very risky program together with Peter Sloterdijk about “The long way of God's rage”, ninety minutes without pause, in private television. A little while ago, I made another similar show with Peter Weibel about the methods of transcription in modernity. It does not seem simple, but it actually is: it exposes how an isolated avant-garde, moving far forward and completely annihilating the past by itself, does not exist. If we rather take any point of any existing text, whether

by Ovid, Montaigne or one from the avant-garde by Proust or Joyce, whichever, we could continue to write based on that point, in the same way a monk from the middle ages introduces small modifications to a text when making a transcription. That is the evolution towards modernity and our DNA is organized as such. The writing of life continues and it is updated through little transcriptions that imply little modifications. The same happens in art, Weibel states, and he develops the idea during the 90 minutes continuously. We had a lot of ratings; the show was watched by one of every five viewers.

**In those two shows, as in many others, you assume the role of the interviewer yourself.**

Yes, but I am not seen during the interview. I make questions, work as a pointer. My task is to make a distended situation arise, make my interviewee feel free, comfortable and make him talk. But if I notice that he is getting too comfortable, let us say, if he is “sleeping” in a certain way, or if he is no longer saying things that surprise me, I make him stop. I am a witness of a discourse that I accompany with incitement, incentives. To keep the attention of a viewer with a philosophical topic for ninety minutes seems a form of art to me. It is the rhetoric that the Greek sophists were already practicing.



*Interview by Carla Imbrogno for KLUGE, Alexander (2010). 120 historias de cine. Caja Negra. Buenos Aires.*

# Cinema on Television

---

## Marguerite Duras and Serge Daney

**Marguerite Duras:** Imagine that you watch a film for the first time on television.

**Serge Daney:** It is somehow a general matter, because I have watched and watched again a lot of films on television, or films I had not seen in a while at theatres. Television is not a media that shows an unprecedented cinema, rather the complete opposite. In fact, I constantly watch television at night, but on the other hand, I understand the perverse consternation among cinephiles. It is formidable, as far as I can tell, because it causes a more direct and effective consequence than theatres themselves before becoming deserted. What would you say about the greatness that is exhibited at theatres to someone who is willing to learn cinema?

**MD:** Think about Bresson, for example, when he discovered television. I could not have imagined it. For me, television is all what makes part of cinema compressed in a little space, but in a perfect quality. Think about *Canal Plus*, from six o'clock to five in the morning there are consecutive films, one after the other, of all genres, besides the chapters of different series and so on... And images keep that content of suspense, that purely cinematographic quality.

**SD:** Television, just as we understand it, is an act, and the figure of the film critic as literary is blurred, he is no longer isolated and the flux of films is so wide that television even allows watching both the part and the whole of a film.

**MD:** Yes, I watch cinema on TV and it is a hobby for me. It takes those long hours at night when I find it difficult to sleep. And it is perfect.

**SD:** What is television for you?

**MD:** It is marvellous. It keeps the cinematographic pure moments and that conception of suspense, of not being able to see what will happen from shot to shot.

**SD:** That idea of suspense means that this stirring moment through images, which is extraordinary and precious like the projector of the first cine-clubs where Charlot and Maurice Chevalier were screened, exists.

**MD:** Yes, but this will never happen again.

**SD:** Won't it? It is more of an American tradition to transport the whole of cinema to television, but without that rather social behaviour. Think about movies such as *Star Trek* (Robert Wise, 1979), which allows creating a fanatic space for the film when broadcasted, and become more profitable even if its social and gathering-at-cinema aspect is lost. And it is easier to play with this kind of contents that can be watched multiple times by all the members of the family, from the very young to the adults.

**MD:** Actually I have abandoned myself to *Canal Plus* and I believe the purpose of television is not to keep me calmed and quiet, it is another one. It is purely the occupation of time in space. It has a certain vacuity and in less than an hour you get an asleep person watching. But you do not know if they are watching or not.

**SD:** Let's talk about the dubbing in films.

**MD:** Well, if it is well synchronized and it corresponds perfectly to the image it produces a great pleasure, even more than if we had to be aware of the subtitles the whole time.

**SD:** And even if English is one of the most popular languages, there is always a version of the films in French. We see the gangsters, for instance, speaking in French and we find it accurate because, at the end, we distinguish dubbing from what it is not. And in this dubbing we do not discern whether the French is from one zone or another, better or worst spoken.

**MD:** But the thing is that we do not have the same speech. There will always be differences between people who live in the same place, like if we start talking about the different zones in the world where French is spoken.

**SD:** I have taken twenty years to say this, but I see that dubbing on television is one of the best encounters ever made. How can this be?

**MD:** It remains a mystery because the future of television is a great enigma.

**SD:** What do you expect from television?

**MD:** Well, I will keep my eyes on the perfection of the language, however it is, in that it remains so beautiful, always suggestive.

**SD:** For instance, talking about the viewers of the films, the number has been changing but you still have a very reliable audience. Why do you think this happens?

**MD:** Well, the number is not important. It should be rather qualifying than quantifying because if numbers had regulated cinema, a lot of films that we currently watch and find genius would have never been made.

**SD:** But if we talk about commercial films, it is different. The quality tends to a decline for the benefit of more elevated audiences records. But it is also easier to find certain funding.

**MD:** That's true, it finally tends to look like television, as it wants to imply young people as well, who are more vulnerable to this type of films. On the other hand, these films will be broadcasted later, so they reach twofold effects.

**SD:** It is difficult to know what to prefer, if cinema in original version with subtitles, or dubbed... Anyhow, it is difficult to know the "what", because finally there are always very good things, others less so, but currently with television we have to accept them, look back and draw some conclusions.

**MD:** Yes. One day, I cannot remember when, I watched on television a beautiful film. I think I have never seen a movie with that level of detail about love and with the speech so well performed. It was a unique document about cinema, and I watched it on television.

**SD:** American films have always had something to say in this respect. No matter how much resources are destined to a film, there are also very interesting works with great artistic value. For instance filmmakers such as Coppola, Scorsese and historical films or films with historic topics such as *Platoon* (Oliver Stone, 1986) end up giving a unique point of view. But there is also a huge industry behind these films about the war, the soldiers, etc. They could make a *Platoon 2* without any trouble.

**MD:** I found *Platoon* very sadist, although there are things to stand out from this film. But still, the cinema that interests me the most, and that is connected with American cinema by its cultural and artistic origins, is English cinema and its sound. This language in films is so pure and marvellous.

**SD:** And what do you think about British pronunciation? Do you think it has an inherent dramatization according to the pronunciation itself that was already in the classics authors of Anglophone literature?

**MD:** Well, yes, it is a way of making things. They have one, and it is like that. On the other hand, if you start to analyse American cinema you see that Fonda, beyond having the lead role of the films, was a symbol of that American cinema in a very concrete time. His being penetrated the films themselves. This is the American phenomenon and I really love it. The same happened with John Ford, but it was different with Hitchcock since he exceeded the actors in that moment.

**SD:** But in Europe something similar happened with Rossellini and Ingrid Bergman, although both of them were determined to approach a European reality that carried certain social concerns as much in Italy as in other countries.

**MD:** Yes, besides it was a rather pedagogic cinema and quite apart from Hollywood, in which women became a moral object for the audience.

**SD:** Currently, with television, that paradigm has changed a lot. Any young actor becomes instantly a fanatic object, famous, only for standing out a little on television. And there is something dark and unknown in what these images generate in the audience.

**MD:** Yes, in television and the system that has been generated around it, there is something really evil and dark that makes one unable to construct that type of more lasting and interesting images that cinema did allow before. For example, something very similar happens in French cinema: the actors are actually very reserved, but the behaviour in their roles have lead the public to take them to the personal scene without being able to distinguish one thing from the other.

**SD:** Yes, sure. I understand that in cinema the mind-set is to experience things to the limit for the sake of the film and even for the trajectory of the actor, but at the same time it implies to be able to handle this in a certain way, considering that people all over the world believe they can mix everything at once or when the film is over. But nevertheless, cinema's speech has always been worked on the image rather than on the sound, that is even more important than or stands out from the image itself sometimes.

**MD:** It is believed that language, speech, is hardly exportable. Nevertheless it is universal. So what interests me about cinema is precisely that, the word that can be both heard and silenced.

**SD:** But television simplifies things. You can watch a summary or a little excerpt of a certain film and then change the channel or turn it off.

**MD:** Up to a certain point it happens the same with readings. Before reading a book we always want to see that little excerpt, a summary of what we will find inside, and only after this we decide whether we get on board or not. I do not think this changes with television, and it should not be detrimental to films.

**SD:** But in television the film loses its words or its most cinematic term. This small space that is the television cabinet is not enough for the characteristic abstraction that cinema screen allows, even if its code is present.

**MD:** For me cinema is to know to listen right. To be able to do so, and even if the deepness in the code continues to exist and the abstract dimension is changed or blurred, it depends on the tolerance of the audience, what they know beforehand and how they feel in that moment.

**SD:** Then, we are talking about leaving it all to the audience, aren't we?

**MD:** Somehow we are. It is the game that television proposes: the tolerance of the audience with films. This is why I believe that at schools seeing and listening should be taught before reading. This is the key, actually: the tolerance of the audience, which already determines several production aspects.

---

*Conversation transcribed and translated by Valentín Vía.*

*This conversation took place within the radio program *Microfilm*, by Serge Daney. It was broadcasted on France Culture in April 26th, 1987.*

# Critical films were possible only on (or in collaboration with) television

---

R. W. Fassbinder

Excerpts from a conversation with Hella Schlumberger and an interview with Hans Günther Pflaum about *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (Rainer Werner Fassbinder, WDR: 1980).

## Two fundamentally different narrative styles

‘It’s a complicated project: a television series that runs thirteen and a half hours and—with another cast and a different format—a film. It’s an attempt to film the novel in two fundamentally different narrative styles [...] The television series is an attempt to encourage the viewer to read, even though he’s offered visual gratification. The film works entirely different: first of all, it narrates a story in concentrated form, which achieves its effect only retroactively, when the moviegoer’s consciousness and imagination kick in. You might say I’ve stuck close to the book. You might just as well say I’ve made some crucial changes. In favor of the women, I should point out. In Döblin the women are narrated with considerably less specific identity than the men. I’ve tried, to the extent it was at all possible within this narrative framework, to describe the women as just as valuable as the men. That’s one very definite change from Döblin’

## If you have three hours rather than fifteen, you have to tell the story differently

‘That’s a story in itself. Separately from the television screenplay, which is about three thousand pages, I wrote a special version for the cinema. Because I think if you have three hours rather than fifteen, you have to tell the story differently. That’s why I’m opposed to the idea of taking what we’ve already filmed and cutting it down to get this other version; the shooting would have been done differently, with different dynamics. But the screenplay exists, and some day, when the legal situation with regard to this work is more favorable, I’ll do the film, that’s certain. And it doesn’t bother me a bit that there already is a film and my television series—I don’t give a damn. It didn’t bother me with *Effi Briest* at the time, either. I mean, if a film’s good, it has a strength all its own’

## Series-dramaturgy and cliffhangers

‘The series will run fifteen hours. We spent 150 days shooting. You can’t just stop and start at random. That’s no good. But Döblin already had his novel divided into ten parts with main chapters, subchapters, what have you. And because of his collage technique it isn’t particularly hard to divide the story cinematically into chapters. You could also have taken and found entirely different points that would have served as beginnings and endings. There are many possibilities. It isn’t that it doesn’t have beginnings and endings, but it isn’t made according to Durbridge dramaturgy, either. So it doesn’t stop with a suspenseful situation that’ll make people tune in for the next segment to find out how the story continues. That I certainly don’t want’

## Television and *shock*, watching with less hostility

‘I myself would prefer it if the moviegoer watched the movie with less hostility and with more opportunity to be conscious of what’s taking place before his eyes and what it can mean to him personally; that’s better than if he’s shocked into rejecting the whole thing at first sight, no matter how the shock may later work in his subconscious to achieve a positive effect. That can happen, too. But with a television series it’s like this: if the viewers are shocked, they’ll stop watching. Then we’ve gained nothing. I’d rather have them watch and at least come away with the idea of the story that’s being told—and why it should be told’

## The responsibility of cinema, the responsibility of television

‘I’ve always said you have a different kind of responsibility. With a movie I would argue much more for shock effects, because I agree with Kracauer when he says that when the lights go out in the movie theaters it’s as if a dream were beginning: in other words, that a movie works through the subconscious. The movie version I’ve written really is entirely different. It’s not only not nearly so epic in style, but also not nearly so positive in its portrayal of Franz Biberkopf; rather it underscores the contradictions and the craziness of the character more than the television version. Here it’s more that people will understand it and it won’t scare them away, that they can grasp it directly



while watching it. To consider the audience you're working for is as legitimate, I believe, as it used to be, say ten years ago. People say, all right, the television viewers are people who're sitting at home while something comes into their living room... And there are incredibly many of them, that's another factor, unbelievably many, far more than at the movies. And I have a different mission with them [...] You can see that from many films I've made. And specifically from the films I actually financed entirely on my own and without any public monies, like *In a Year of Thirteen Moons* (*In einem Jahr mit 13 Monden*, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, 1978) or *The Third Generation* (*Die Dritte Generation*, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, 1979). They're much more uncompromising; I wouldn't have made them for television. I tell myself that someone who goes to the movies pretty much knows what awaits him. So I can demand more effort of him. Do you understand? And I can also expect him to get more pleasure out of the effort. The argument that used to be cited, that the viewer wants to be entertained or something in the evening, no longer applies to the movies since we've had television. On television you have such a varied entertainment program that people who want to be entertained can certainly find something every night. For that they don't need to go to the movies, I think. People really go to the movies in order to have new experiences—and quite consciously to have new experiences. That means I have an audience I can push and challenge to the utmost. But I'm also aware that many people see it differently [...] It has nothing to do with pleasing the television audience, but simply with using narrative methods that don't scare it off right away. It has to do with creating a consensus between oneself, the work—or nonwork—and the audience. What takes place on the basis of this consensus is another question. I don't think I've ever tried to "please", even in my work for television'

#### **Franz Biberkopf, to find yourself identifying with television characters**

'The television version's long enough for that, by all means. And you go through too many stages with this character not to find yourself identifying with him in some parts. I set up the role that way, too. I had two ideas about how to set up the role. One would have been to make it highly stylized, the other to open it up so you could identify with the character. I chose the latter because the script I'd written was already literary enough; I don't need to have it stylized still further by the actors. That Günther Lamprecht, Gottfried John, and Barbara Sukowa star in the three main parts in the film has a lot to do with opportunities for identification. I hope it turns out that you're jolted out of this identification time and again, that you have those moments of clarity in viewing the characters that are necessary to keep you from drowning in the story [...] That's

why I find Lamprecht so ideal for the part, because with him you have someone who immediately evokes a lot of sympathy; so the viewer will really be irritated by the bad breaks he gets in life. That's what I'd planned. When I was still intending to do both versions simultaneously—for reasons of economy, by the way, because of the sets—we could have used the same sets—I actually wanted to have an entirely different cast, not use the same actors at all. That has to do with having an entirely different narrative method, depending on whether you're presenting a story in fifteen hours or only three. And Lamprecht, it seems to me, is someone who has such a broad range of expression that it can easily cover fifteen hours, but he lacks the intensity—and I don't mean to belittle his skill as an actor—that I'd be interested in having for a two-and-a-half-hour version. For that I'd want someone whose acting was just more intense'

#### **Gear up, writing a hundred hours straight**

'You can't really measure how long it took me. The "original version" was about three thousand pages, and it took me an insanely short time. But it wasn't your usual work pattern, either. I'd work for four days, then sleep for twenty-four hours, then work for four days, without interruption. Of course that puts you in a different rhythm. If you go at it the usual way, writing some in the morning and some in the afternoon, you have to gear up again every time to get back into the material. So I didn't have that, except briefly every four days. So writing for about a hundred hours straight and only having to gear up once meant that I could write a lot faster. It's certainly not a healthy way of writing and not one I'd recommend to anybody. But that's what made it possible to do it in such a short time, which was how it had to be. The screenplay had to be finished by a certain time because shooting was supposed to start for *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (*Die Ehe der Maria Braun*, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, 1979), and all of that had to be planned out. I had only so much time, and no one believed it could be done. I wasn't absolutely sure myself that I could do it, but I tried it this way, and it worked'

---

\*Excerpts selected from FASSBINDER, Rainer Warner (1992). *The Anarchy of the Imagination*. Baltimore. The Johns Hopkins University Press.

# Medvedkin and the invention of television

Chris Marker

A necessary caution: the ‘democratization of tools’ entails many financial and technical constraints, and does not save us from the necessity of work. Owning a DV camera does not magically confer talent on someone who doesn’t have any or who is too lazy to ask himself if he has any. You can miniaturize as much as you want, but a film will always require a great deal of work –and a reason to do it. That was the whole story of the Medvedkin groups, the young workers who, in the post-’68 era, tried to make short films about their own lives, and whom we tried to help on the technical level, with the means of the time. How they complained! ‘We come home from work and you ask us to work some more. . . .’ But they stuck with it, and you have to believe that something happened there, because 30 years later we saw them present their films at the Belfort festival, in front of an attentive audience. The means of the time was 16mm silent, which meant three-minute camera rolls, a laboratory, an editing table, some way of adding sound –everything that you have now right inside a little case that fits in your hand. A little lesson in modesty for the spoiled children of today, just like the spoiled children of 1970 got their lesson in modesty by putting themselves under the patronage of Alexander Ivanovitch Medvedkin and his ciné-train. For the benefit of the younger generation, Medvedkin was a Russian filmmaker who, in 1936 and with the means that were proper to his time (35mm film, editing table, and film lab installed in the train), essentially invented television: shoot during the day, print and edit at night, show it the next day to the people you filmed (and who often participated in the editing). I think that it’s this fabled and long forgotten bit of history (Medvedkin isn’t even mentioned in Georges Sadoul’s book, considered in its day the Soviet Cinema bible) that underlies a large part of my work –in the end, perhaps, the only coherent part. To try to give the power of speech to people who don’t have it, and, when it’s possible, to help them find their own means of expression. The workers I filmed in 1967 in Rhodesia, just like the Kosovars I filmed in 2000, had never been heard on television: everyone was speaking on their behalf, but once you no longer saw them on the road, bloody and sobbing, people lost interest in them. To my great surprise, I once found myself explaining the editing of *Battleship Potemkin* to a group of aspiring filmmakers in Guinea-Bissau, using an old print on rusty reels; now those filmmakers are having their films selected

for competition in Venice (keep an eye out for the next musical by Flora Gomes). I found the Medvedkin syndrome again in a Bosnian refugee camp in 1993 –a bunch of kids who had learned all the techniques of television, with newsreaders and captions, by pirating satellite TV and using equipment supplied by an NGO (nongovernmental organization). But they didn’t copy the dominant language –they just used the codes in order to establish credibility and reclaim the news for other refugees. An exemplary experience. They had the tools and they had the necessity. Both are indispensable.

## Do you prefer television, movies on a big screen, or surfing the Internet?

I have a completely schizophrenic relationship with television. When I’m feeling lonely, I adore it, particularly since there’s been cable. It’s curious how cable offers an entire catalog of antidotes to the poisons of standard TV. If one network shows a ridiculous TV movie about Napoleon, you can flip over to the History Channel to hear Henri Guillermin’s brilliantly mean commentary on it. If a literary program makes us submit to a parade of currently fashionable female monsters, we can change over to Mezzo to contemplate the luminous face of Héléne Grimaud surrounded by her wolves, and it’s as if the others never existed. Now there are moments when I remember I am not alone, and that’s when I fall apart. The exponential growth of stupidity and vulgarity is something that everyone has noticed, but it’s not just a vague sense of disgust –it’s a concrete quantifiable fact (you can measure it by the volume of the cheers that greet the talk-show hosts, which have grown by an alarming number of decibels in the last five years) and a crime against humanity. Not to mention the permanent aggressions against the French language...And since you are exploiting my Russian penchant for confession, I must say the worst: I am allergic to commercials. In the early Sixties, making commercials was perfectly acceptable; now, it’s something that no one will own up to. I can do nothing about it. This manner of placing the mechanism of the lie in the service of praise has always irritated me, even if I have to admit that this diabolical patron has occasionally given us some of the most beautiful images you can see on the small screen (have you seen the David Lynch commercial with the blue lips?). But cynics always betray themselves, and there is a small consolation



in the industry's own terminology: they stop short of calling themselves 'creators,' so they call themselves 'creatives.'

And the movies in all this? For the reasons mentioned above, and under the orders of Jean-Luc, I've said for a long time that films should be seen first in theaters, and that television and video are only there to refresh your memory. Now that I no longer have any time at all to go to the cinema, I've started seeing films by lowering my eyes, with an ever increasing sense of sinfulness (this interview is indeed becoming Dostoevskian). But to tell the truth I no longer watch many films, only those by friends, or curiosities that an American acquaintance tapes for me on TCM. There is too much to see on the news, on the music channels or on the indispensable Animal Channel. And I feed my hunger for fiction with what is by far the most accomplished source: those great American TV series, like *The Practice* inspired a video by David Bowie and a film by Terry Gilliam. And there's also a bar called "La Jetée," in Japan.

---

*This interview made by Samuel Douhaire and Annick Rivoire was originally published in Libération, March 5, 2003, translated into English by Film Comment, may-june 2003.*

# TV, where are you?

---

Jean-Louis Comolli

Since some time ago, with left and right wings mixed up, the public powers dismantle for their own sake; clean, disorganize, undo. In one word, they destroy all what the production and experimentation device of the public television once used to be, in the name—sometimes—of audience measurements—sometimes—of profitability. The creative teams are dissuaded from staying and encouraged to leave with tempting bonuses, something that was rarely done when Guisard was there, because his action, against the grain of successive administrations, was by itself a guarantee of a truthful ambition for research and creation.

The useful is now broken, irreparably in every side, even when they stand smiling with a “hurray for the independent production”. As if INA’s production had not been—by far—the most independent ever seen in this country! Two generations of filmmakers (Godard, Biberg, Bertozza, Labarthe, Kramer, Téchiné, Akerman, Mordillat, Philibert, Beuchot, Cabrera, Grandrieux) passed through the INA and made some of their most uncomfortable pieces; and even better, an entire generation of television professionals emerged from the group of producers encouraged by Guisard, sharing a conception of public service where the main mission was to bring closer to viewers the new creative forces of contemporary television. People—is often said—are not irreplaceable. Judging by the recruiting difficulty of public television—and the mediocrity of many of those responsible of T.V. stations—this might not be entirely true. In terms of research, creation, taste, arts; this is to say that the personality, the style and the passion of people are crucial and not interchangeable. We shall take two examples of our neighbours: we have seen what the research production of the British *Channel Four* has turned into after the forced departure of two of its producers, Alan Fountain and Rod Stoneman: it is a trivial matter. In the case of Germany, we know until what point the main program of ZDF, *Das kleine Fernsehspiel*, is faithful to Eckart Stein’s desire. A manager, an administrative can be replaced by another. But producers, in their own way, are artists, and when they stop producing, something is lost and never recovered—it is in this circumstance, the example stubbornly given by Claude Guisard: that creation and public television are not unworthy of one another.

[...] Television is like a membrane that encloses us. It simultaneously identifies us and enables contact between each other. It is a breath that exchanges what is ours with what is outside us. Such are the vital roles. We are not supposed to talk about culture, but about life, life together, in groups of friends and citizens, not desensitized nor fanaticized. Whether we want it or not, television has as a mission to deal with our common fortune, our collective destinies, the relationships inside our own bodies and between them. On that side (and not only in that of “new technologies”) is where it is always convenient to talk about research and creation. Television has been invented in order to manufacture new social modes of relationship. Manufacture? That is also saying in order to innovate, invent, renovate, face our present. How can we accept that the average three-and-a-half hours of television consumed by French audiences daily are filled with standardized, tamed, marketing-oriented products? Let’s dream of a television that makes us ream, and let’s fight for that dream! •



# Between film and television.

## An interview with Lodge Kerrigan

---

Gerard Casau and Manuel Garin

After directing key films of contemporary independent cinema, like *Clean, Shaven* (1993), *Claire Dolan* (1998) and *Keane* (2004), Lodge Kerrigan has directed a number of television episodes for shows such as *The Killing* (Veena Sud, AMC-Netflix, 2011-2014), *Homeland* (Howard Gordon and Alex Gansa, Showtime, 2011-) or *The Americans* (Joe Weisberg, FX, 2013-). A month before the release of his latest project, *The Girlfriend Experience* (Lodge Kerrigan and Amy Seimetz, Starz, 2016), an eleven-episode television series produced by Steven Soderbergh, we talked with him about the differences between working for film and working for television, both in terms of narrative and mise-en-scène.

**How did you feel when you first set foot on a TV set, compared to the atmosphere you were used to while shooting your films? In which ways is the work process different?**

I think that independent filmmakers, who come from very low budget filmmaking are particularly well suited to make the transition to television, perhaps they are much better suited than directors who come from bigger budget projects, because low-budget or guerrilla filmmakers who've been trained to work with very limited resources are trained to go there and make the day. You have to make the day; you have to make your schedule, because if you don't there are no re-shoot days. I wasn't trained to have days to re-shoot, you know. So if I don't make my day as an independent filmmaker, then I have to look at what scene I'm not gonna shoot and then, you know, there's not more money coming in to allow more shooting. So in television... and I'm talking about the very standard model of television, the writer/showrunner model, the traditional model, because it's really changing a lot... But discussing this model, I think that there are more people involved in the decision making process, that I think is one of the big differences. In auteur cinema usually the writer is the director, it's the same, it's one vision, it's unified; and in the showrunner/writer TV model that's not the case. In fact, the only variable usually it's the director.

**So the director becomes the variable, then.**

Yes, they have established crews, they have the same cinematographer, the same production designer, the producer, the same crew, the same system, and the same cast by in large (depending on whether they have anyone coming for a specific

episode). But usually it's the director who changes; they bring in a guest director. There are a number of theories regarding why that's the case, but usually what happens in the traditional financing model is that the network will approve or order a pilot, and then a pilot is made, they bring in the director to do the pilot. Later the network will approve it or not, and then they have to go and write scripts, generate scripts, and in this time the directors has already left, moved on, they have no continuity of vision from the director. And I think now what's beginning to change, and what Soderbergh did on *The Knick* (Jack Amiel and Michael Begler, Cinemax, 2014-), and the first season of *True Detective* (Nic Pizzolatto, HBO, 2014-), and what we did on *The Girlfriend Experience*, is that you're starting to see either one or two directors who direct the entire show. And in the case of *The Girlfriend Experience* Amy and I wrote the whole show too, we co-wrote every episode and then we split directing duties. So you see a much bigger unity of vision, I think, but what that requires is that the scripts are all written upfront, that means that the network or the studio has to order an entire season. And you're starting to see that, you're starting to see the shift, maybe you could argue because there's so many players now in the game, with Netflix and others that are coming in, and Amazon. When the shows become binge-watchable, when everyone wants to see all the episodes at once, then it starts to transform the whole pilot model and the whole economics and the ordering of it. And, as a result, I think it's a changing landscape but it's one that's really really interesting.

**Can you elaborate on the workflow between writers and directors?**

In the traditional writer model, the showrunner is not on set, they are usually in another city supervising the writer's room and supervising the editing of the shows. They will send the writer of a particular episode to the set, to work with the director, so that the director comes in and has more knowledge of how the machinery can work and how they can fit all material in one day. Usually what happens is that scripts are too ambitious, they're too large to the amount of shooting time you have, and you have to ask the writers to make certain changes. Example: If it's a night scene could you shoot as a day scene? Could you condense scenes into fewer locations? Things like that, that would make it more efficient and allow you to actually make

the day. But it becomes an interesting negotiation, because the writers have to go to the showrunners and get their approval for any suggested script changes. But what happens is that, as a director, the showrunner is your boss; so if you ask for too many changes and then you can't fill your shooting day in twelve hours the chances are they are going to be upset and kind of hard on you. So it becomes a very interesting negotiation, and really, to survive one of the most important skills is to be able to analyze and determine how long a scene will take to shoot, with a crew and a cast that you've never worked with before, in fifteen minutes. If you can time it and know exactly how long something will take, then you're in a much better position to know what changes you need and deliver that material. But really, the big difference from auteur cinema, and from the standard writer/showrunner model is that the director is not the writer, there's no continuity of director on board, there's no continuity of the director's vision, and there are more people involved in the decision-making process, anywhere from costumes to locations to a casting to other things. There's just more people in the mix, sharing the voices, and I think the director has a significant voice, but ultimately the showrunner decides. The way I think of it is... I think of it more as pyramid, in a way, people are doing the work and then they're sending up the decisions to the next level, and then it keeps going and eventually you get to the director, whereas in an auteur film the director will be top. But here in the TV structure, the director's just below the showrunner, so they're doing the coverage, the casting. The showrunner will always get to have the final word on the casting, but hopefully it's a good collaboration and then the director will do their cut. And in a one-hour drama you get four days to do the director's cut, four days including all sound, all music, everything. And then you give it up to the showrunner, and the showrunner will then make the changes that they want.

#### **As a filmmaker, what can you bring in to that scenario?**

Well, auteur cinema is where I started, and that's hopefully where I'll go back to, but I think there are a lot of really wonderful, great things about the traditional showrunner/writer model of television. As a director, I think it's like the old studio system, where they gave you assignments. Like in the fifties or the forties, when they just gave you an assignment, you're a director on contract for the studio; they give you an assignment and tell you to direct this. And there's some shows that I've worked on where you gain so much experience, because you work for different genres, you get assignments, and if you can direct five, six or seven hours of television in a year, that's five or six or seven hours of directing experience. On set, there is no way in the feature world you could do that, there are very very few people who could do that at the feature world. And I really believe that at the end of the day if you're really

good at something you have to practice it consistently. So in terms of the experience, television is really fantastic, and also, in the traditional showrunner/writer model, as a director you get to work in genres that perhaps you wouldn't normally work in. Like I did an episode of *Bates Motel* (Carlton Cuse, Kerry Ehrin and Anthony Cipriano, A&E, 2013-) which is kind of this campy melodrama horror that I'd never, that's not my taste, I can't imagine me writing a script like that, but I loved directing it. It was incredible, the cast was fantastic, the whole aesthetic of it, I learned a new aesthetic I wouldn't have learnt otherwise. I think the ideal, though, in a lot of ways, what's really interesting now is the auteur television model, every model that's slightly different in a certain way.

#### **In which ways do you find it interesting?**

For instance, Soderbergh doesn't write *The Knick*, but it's definitely auteur TV, he is the one making the decisions on set, it's director-driven. And the same for *True Detective*, there is more useful tension I think in season one between the writer Nic Pizzolatto and Cary Fukunaga the director, apparently there was a lot of tension on the set and they were both equal parts so they had to try to decide together and coexist, which I hear was very difficult. But you can see the fact that Cary was the director throughout the episodes, how much unity of vision there is. And you could say the same for the writing, when there is one writer it has the same vision, it has a counterpart that it's equal also, and there's a unique idea of that. What Amy and I did in *The Girlfriend Experience* was really interesting too, because we wrote all the episodes and shared the directing duties, then really there's unity. I think when you have the writer and the director interpreting the same role then you're going to get a vision unlike anything else. So, I'm a big proponent of director-driven television, I think at the end of the day the skill set for directing it's different than writing, it's similar, but it's different. In my opinion, all dramatic material comes down to human psychology and it's based on action and reaction, and then the questions you ask as a director is how are you going to stage it or how you are going to cover it, if there is a relationship between the form and the content, do they reflect each other, which are all the *mise-en-scène* questions that you'd ask. But also, as a director, you're dealing with really understanding an actor's technical proficiency, understanding time of performance. The time of performances is crucial in directing, and also, you have to understand editorially how everything is going to fit. I think that even that the writer may be trained in human psychology and understand the beat of the characters, I think those other skill sets they don't necessarily possess, and that's why I think at the end of the day it really should be a director-driven medium.

**The notion of director-driven television that you bring up reminds us of certain experiences of European filmmakers, such as Rainer Werner Fassbinder...**

Like Kieslowski's *The Decalogue* (*Dekalog*, 1989-1990), exactly.

**Or Lars Von Trier with *The Kingdom* (Riget, DR1, 1994-1997) a few years later. So thinking about *The Girlfriend Experience*, in terms of the narrative structure, how do you conceive the storytelling and the mise-en-scène, the relationship between form and content? We think the premise is very interesting, the fact of readapting a movie into a serial narrative, like Fassbinder made, for instance, when he wrote two scripts for *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (Rainer Werner Fassbinder, WDR: 1980), a movie script and a series one, two different scripts. He mentioned that it is not the same thing to explain a story in two hours than to explain it in fifteen hours, there's tempo, narrative...**

That's interesting, I think the biggest difference between film and television, again in the sort of traditional showrunner/writer model, is really one of pacing. It's really the time on screen. I was re-watching *Climates* [2006], by Nuri Bilge Ceylan, the Turkish director, and what's really incredible is the performance, they use the whole screen and because of that you understand the psychology, and the reactions are constantly evolving. That's something that would be really hard to do in a traditional television format, because of the amount of material that is written and you have to cover. If your assignment is to get, in an hour show, fifty-two pages or so, and you're shooting at least four scenes a day, if not more, with a location, then you have to cover so many actions and reactions that you don't have time to let one sit. And it will they will never make the edit. So I find that is really the primary difference. But when you enter the world of auteur television, like Kieslowski's *The Decalogue* or *Berlin Alexanderplatz* or, you know, *The Kingdom*, then there is no difference. Then, I think is the filmmaker making, deciding on the pacing that is suitable for the story. It is slightly different with *The Girlfriend Experience* because Amy and I covered them both, so you're having two auteurs having a married vision, so it's not one singular vision, it's more a marriage or a synthesis, in a way. What's really interesting is that you have auteur television if the director is the writer and there's real control of the material and the pacing of the material. Then I think there is no difference, I really don't see the difference. One is a longer form, one is shorter form, but that doesn't mean anything. Some films are three hours and some films are sixteen hours.

**Not even in terms of narrative? In terms of how to structure the scenes and episodes? This is what Fassbinder talked about.**

Yes, you're right, in the structure of it, yes, you have to do something that can fit into the hour episode or the half-hour episode, you need some arch that either is the overall arch of the entire show, or the dramatic arch within the episode that can be completed or at least can be articulated clearly. But I think that the trick is... You could do a television show that combines both, you could watch *The Decalogue* as one movie, easily, you could watch *Berlin Alexanderplatz* as one, and they screen it. So I think it is more in the traditional writer/showrunner model, in the network/commercial end of that scale, where you see the repetition come into play, and when you really can't screen it back to back because it gets very repetitive. But when you get towards more interesting traditional showrunner/writer models like *Homeland* or *The Killing* or *The Americans* it tends to move away from that repetition, and then when you continue on the scale and get to auteur TV, then I think you're really free. And I think the trick is: can you structure something that works in the thirty-minute or the hour but then can also point to one continuous piece? So I think of it just more like another dimension to the problem or to the puzzle. If you can solve that, which is slightly more complicated than just writing a feature, or just writing a TV show, if you can actually solve that so it can play as an episode but also play all together, then I think it's completely free. The advantage is that if you can raise money for a TV show, and you can get it off the ground, and it gets approved, then all of a sudden, you have thirteen episodes to work. And then you get a second season, or a third season, so in terms of the efficiency of creating a structure where you can actually go off and work consistently, is much more appeal. Because to raise money, you know, I work in the US, and the US there's no government money, so I only get financing on the marketplace in advance capitalism, that means I compete with *Star Wars* (J. J. Abrams, 2015) to get funding. So there's no public funding like in France, it doesn't exist. For me, it takes years to try to raise money to make a film, but if I can get a TV show going, then I could do that for a number of years.

**In fact, you are one of the few American independent filmmakers who can say they got a film produced by Marin Karmitz [laughs]. You've been on both sides...**

And he was such a supportive great producer, he was a great producer. It's true, I've done both sides.

**You seem to make a very clear separation between the traditional showrunner model of television and the auteur series. But we also think that, from a visual point of view, you've taken very bold decisions in some of the episodes you've directed, for example, in one you did for *The Killing*, the one that mainly takes place in a car: there is a very striking moment, when pastor Mike and Linden are in the parking lot, and it's almost dark, the screen is almost**



**completely black... It feels pretty bold to dare to darken the screen like that for several minutes, in something that will be screened for an audience of millions of people. Was that your decision, something that was on the script?**

It's a collective decision, a lot of credit goes to Veena Sud, who was the showrunner, and to Gregg Middleton, who was the cinematographer, and also to FOX, who was the studio, because in *The Killing* they never got a note that it was too dark, the studio never complained once that it was too dark. So that gave us a lot of freedom to really push it, Veena wanted things that were interesting, that were different, breathtaking, and she encouraged that. I think Gregg is a really gifted, technically proficient cinematographer, so we were able to go that dark, and still capture some reaction in the eyes, which I think is crucial. It works because everyone was on board, you know. In the traditional model, if you don't have support from above, it's very hard to make this kind of choices.

**Did you somehow shot that sequence, on location, thinking about *Clean Shaven*, unconsciously maybe? The car, the use of the mirror, the character's gaze...**

Honestly, I tend to... I kind of proud myself on not having a style. You know, like you can go in and see certain filmmakers and you know exactly their style. I actually proud myself that I can find the correct style for the material, so it's not about me, it's not about having a consistent launched career and auteur vision, I'm not interested in that. What I'm really interested in is how you film something, the *mise-en-scène*, how does the form reflect the content, and how do you find a way to marry each. The search to build a visual system or a visual world, however you want to call it. So, in that particular episode, I'm in a car, right? The detective, Sarah, can't look back, her only way of seeing is through the mirror, that's it. I mean, it's literally that simple. You know, it's not this big theory of referencing *Clean Shaven* or not. I'm really interpreting what's going on and then I have to find a really interesting way to show that. When is the right moment to show the reflection in the mirror? When is the right moment to show her objectively? When it's the right moment to show them together? When it's the right moment to separate the two? And then how do you create a sense that she feels particularly isolated from the outside world, so how do you create distance, visually, between the interior of the car and the exterior world. And then, at what point you want to modulate that and change that. Really that's what it becomes, it's pretty clear, it's not mysticism, there's no... I think a lot of times when people discuss auteur theory there's a certain believe in mysticism, some secret genius at work, and usually the people who are very good at what they do can tell you very clearly what they're doing it and for what reason, it's almost scientific. There's another element which you can't really control at all,

which is, the energy on set. There's another element that you can't really control at all, which is the energy on set. You know, if you cast really well and you have the right crew, then all of a sudden, maybe, hopefully, you have an energy that transcends something. Literally, you get out of the way. You try to guide it a little bit, but you can feel it, you feel when something really special is happening in a performance, in the filmmaking. Then you just kind of step out of the way and that's it. I think the really great great truly master-filmmakers are the ones who can create that energy on set. That specific energy.

**The last thing we want to do is to mystify, really, we didn't mean it that way. This project is about talking with the directors in order not-to-mystify. But every particular filmmaker has a set of skills, a way of doing the craft. We mean this in the sense of solving specific situations, bodies, relations of distance, composition in depth, very normal things, down to earth simple things that a professional has to do...**

It's true, there is an artistic vision, you can have a vision for how you want something to look, and you can see that. But that becomes very difficult to quantify, so for me, I tend not to discuss that very much. To me, what I really try to discuss more is the craft, because that's something that you can communicate very clearly to other people.

**There is another thing we are intrigued about. This is a question more about narrative; about how do you manage to solve certain storytelling requirements. For example, *The Killing* was a show where almost every chapter ended with a cliffhanger, you have to start a new chapter with a situation that was built by another director. So how do you manage to control the energy and deal with these climatic points?**

It's really modulation, and that's what directing is. Directing is so many things, but modulating the tension over an episode, and the pacing too, knowing when to relieve some tension and then when to rebuilt some tension. If it's a very well written script then it will be in the script, but you also deal with performance to add to that and interpret it. So when you start at a cliffhanger you can't keep it at a hundred and eighty miles an hour the whole time. I mean, you can, but the audience could get burnt out very quickly, so you have to understand how to modulate and then how to build it back up, and that is really the skills of everyone involved. You have to communicate that through the script, through the performances, through the coverage, through the editing. I think the more experience people have the less you have to articulate that, because people understand it. That's your job. And also... I was script consultant in the American version of *Funny Games* (2007) by Michael Haneke, and he said something that actually I believe it's very true: the

directors have to have an innate sense of timing, and he believes is innate and it's something that you can't teach. A sense of timing and a sense of pacing. So if you really understand the modulation, I think it's not only that, I think it's also emotional, in terms of the performance, and I think it's also interpreted in the script. So it has to happen on the script level, it has to happen on the performance level, and then it has to happen in the actual filming, in the performance, in the staging, in the editorial choices... So it all has to fit, and I think that is a really crucial part.

**You've brought up the importance of the tempo and the pacing of the performance, working with the actors. The energy, you said, which is a beautiful word that summarizes that. Without mystifying [laughs], we think that in a show like *Homeland*, for instance, in the way Damian Lewis moves in that series (the gestures, the bodily coping, the pauses, the silences) there is a lot of Keane, your movie. We don't think it's a coincidence that they asked you to direct him in a show whose main character, in a way, you contributed to create: Brody. We think there is a connection there...**

Thanks, I can't take credit for Brody, but that's very kind of you to suggest [laughs]. Regarding how to work with actors, the more you do it, the more it slows down. And then the more you can see it clearly: you can see the performance while it's happening clearly. It's much like sports. When you get off, and you're new to a sport, everything is going super fast, and you don't have court vision, you can't see the whole field. So the more experience you have, the director-actor, then the more you can see it clearly. Like it slows way way down, and time on set is very different than time in an editing room. When you're watching a live performance it goes much faster than when you watch dailies, in a room, on a computer, you know, with a cup of coffee and relaxing. The speed is much faster on set. So the more experience you have if you really focus... It's all about action/reaction for me, it's all about human psychology. So somebody does something, and another person reacts to it, and that reaction is an action in another self, so that causes yet another reaction. So it becomes a chain, and what you're trying to do is draw an audience attention to those reactions that you think are important, and that's the frame. The frame is how you're saying to an audience "this is what you should be looking at", you're dictating where the attention goes. And hopefully through that you see the psychology of the character because you're tracking the psychological changes and the reactions. So, I think what's important is to really focus on the reaction and that's what I tend to do, I really focus on the character's reactions specifically, and then, with experience, the timing, the performance it slows down. You can see it clearer. And then I'm able to go in and ask for certain changes, or ask for a certain detachment, if I thinking that it will be worth for the actor to

express it in a different way, have a different reaction. And then when you take the chain of actions and reactions that's what that character really is, you build the character on the set and later you bring all that to the editorial room.

**You mentioned that...**

One more element that's really important too, is just taste. I mean, at the end of the day, ninety per cent of it is taste. If you have the skill set you command the craft: I don't really want that color at all, I think it should be this color, I prefer that color, you know? Do you like a wide-angle lens? And I go "no, I don't really want that distortion, I prefer it to be a normal lens" or a telephoto lens, or whatever, you can interpret the drama that way. But ultimately, whether you like it or not, it's a question of your tastes and sensibilities, and that's who you are as a person, that you reflect all your choices and decisions over the course of your entire life. That's why when people say you make films for an audience; I think that I never ever make films for an audience. I really don't know what an audience is. And if I start to second-guess myself, then I have no reference point at all. I'm lost. So I make for me, that's what I do, whether it's television or anyone else, at the end of the day, I go "this is really interesting, this is what I think it's interesting". You work with other people and collaborate, but at the end of the day, I want to put a frame on this because this is what I like, this is what I think it's interesting. And if other people find it interesting, great, and if they don't, well, they can go and make a movie.

**That's the beauty of it, when other people think that they way you frame a character is interesting. There is, for instance, a beautiful sequence in one episode that you directed for *Homeland*, "State of Independence", when Brody approaches his wife and they start making love, but in a way that you feel there are a lot of things in between them, which reminded us of *Claire Dolan*, where just by looking at the actress you understand many things. So, now, this is bringing us to *The Girlfriend Experience*. We guess that it's very different to direct a single episode in a series that has been conceived by someone else, than to direct a pilot. A pilot gives you the chance to really set the tone, make certain aesthetic decisions. So, how did this work in the case of *The Girlfriend Experience*?**

Amy directed the pilot, but it's not really a pilot because it was straight-to-series, they ordered all of it. We created the whole world. When you do the pilot or you do the first two episodes, you're creating the entire world, you're literally filling the page on paper, the entire world, literally, you're making it a reality: you're casting, you're finding locations, you're dealing with the production designers, you're dealing with costume designers, you're creating that world. Emotionally, psychologically, and



visually, all three. And so, yeah, it's much more interesting to be in that decision than it is to come in and do only one episode. But, one episode can be fantastic. I think of directing as problem solving, that's how I think of it. So when I'm only directing one episode, I go in and I say, "fine, this are the aesthetic parameters" so I understand how they shoot. In that *Homeland* episode, for instance, except for the woods where Brody kills the tailor, they don't do a tremendous amount of hand-held work, we did it in the sex scene between Brody and his wife, some hand-held work, but they don't do excessive hand-held. So there are certain visual and aesthetic parameters; my job is then to make it interesting within those parameters, so that's my challenge, and I love that. That's interesting too, you know? I enjoy being able to create the world from scratch, but I still find going in and directing an episode very interesting, and I find it very interesting because it's your craft, it's your discipline, you know what tools you can use, you are operating in a smaller space. Sometimes you can have as much detail as you want within those parameters, you can make some contrast, but then, it's discipline. And I think all craft is discipline, you have to be disciplined.

**Something that also interests us is how the size of the screens used to watch TV shows is changing. Series are not only watched in a TV set, you can see it in your computer. How does that influence the way you direct an episode?**

Not at all.

**[Laughs] Not at all?**

Not at all, I couldn't care less. Doesn't even enter my mind. In fact, I actively reject it. For me that gets us back to the audience question: what's the correct frame if I'm filming it for an iPhone or a computer? I'm not doing that; my job is to interpret the content in the best way I know. Look, at the end of the day, how can I say this? The greatest films of all, the greatest art of all, is one that, for me, transforms how I view the world. So I come out... it's completely transformative. I remember when *Taxi Driver* (Martin Scorsese, 1976) came out, I was a teenager, and I went to see it, and I remember very clearly I saw it in a theater in the East Side in the seventies in New York city, and I came out and I had a hard time immediately reintegrating in this city. It totally changed how I viewed the world. That's what great cinema and great art can do. So I think that when you try as a filmmaker to achieve that, I'm not concerned about what the screen size is, I'm concerned about how do I use my craft to interpret the material in the best way so that an audience can be engaged, so that it's interesting.

**That expression (to change how an audience views the world) reminds us of the way Fassbinder explained the difference between his film and TV versions of *Berlin Alexanderplatz*. He says that films have more to do with a state of mind, with a certain shock that changes how you view the world, whereas his work for television had to do more with letting a larger audience identify with your characters.**

Yeah, I don't, I don't... Maybe... When I discuss filmmaking or I discuss art at all, I think everything his valid, everything, you shouldn't define anything. The minute you define something you make it smaller, and it shouldn't be smaller, it should be all-inclusive, right? So I think that's a completely valid point of view. For myself, when I write and make films, I'm not thinking of an audience, and I don't think of identifiable characters, I don't care about identifiable characters. I think at the end of the day the characters should be interesting, not identifiable. I don't care if they're identifiable; I care whether they're fascinating. So if I see somebody that's fascinating, the character could be a terrible, hideous person that does awful things, but if it's interesting it's interesting. I don't need the character to be my friend; I just need to experience the world in a different way.

**We think he didn't mean it that way, we think he meant it more in the sense of repetition. The episodic structure has to do with re-watching faces, repeating gestures...**

Yeah, you're right, I understand...

**We we're thinking about *The Girlfriend Experience*, you designing an episodic serial structure for your main lead actress. That's very different to the Sasha Grey film structure, we guess... The repetition of different episodes.**

Yeah, and I think we've talked about this a little earlier, I think the more commercial end of the world you get, the more repetition there is. Because then TV becomes almost like a radio for the viewers. They're watching, but how are they watching? They're on their phones, you know, the phone rings, they're talking, they may miss some things so it's got to be repeated, it's got to be easy, it can't be challenging on any level. The more commercial end of television, like network dramas, soap operas, like commercial comedies, all these areas in the most commercial end of the spectrum, I think are far more repetitive, in the structure, in the information and in the exposition.

**It's interesting the way we tend to think in a negative way about repetition. We're not going to ask you to cover this now; it's been a long interview already [laughs]. But we think repetition can also be a positive thing. We are looking forward to find the repetitions in the way you work with your actress in *The Girlfriend Experience*, to reencounter**

**her in different episodes. We feel this is different from a film experience in a theater... Anyway, too complex of a topic to end with!**

Repetition can be fascinating, I think it's always a question of why are you doing something, for what reason. If you're doing it just because you're afraid an audience won't get the information, they'll be distract so you have to repeat something, that's not for me a good enough reason to do it. But if you are doing it for a dramatic reason, with a purpose, then I think it's fantastic.

**Well, you mentioned the impact *Taxi Driver* had in you. To finish the interview we want to ask if there is a particular TV series that changed the way you see things, a show that struck you?**

I think *The Decalogue* is one of the greatest, a seminal piece of work, it's really a phenomenal piece of work. I mean, obviously *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, and then you talked about *The Kingdom*, which is a bit less important to me, although I do admire it. I think *The Knick* is very impressive, you know? I'm not big on lists, though, like naming lists.

**No, it's not about lists, it's about that moment when you were watching a TV show and maybe you sensed something more cinematic or you thought "I could do that kind of TV work" perhaps...**

I think *The Decalogue* it's the one that struck me, but I saw it as cinema, I didn't see it as TV. I saw most of it in a theater. Also, some other narrative (as opposed to documentary) television works that are important to me are Bergman's *Scenes From a Marriage* (*Scener ur ett äktenskap*, 1973) and the work of Alan Clarke.

**You're going all European on us!**

[Laughs] Sorry, that's when I realized that television is an interesting form and that it is very cinematic. But I don't make this delineations between forms, I really don't. I don't view it that way, that's why when you asked me about the screen size I don't really pay attention to that. I don't view it in terms of the big cinemascope on the screen versus the smaller TV, whatever, I think everything can be cinematic, and by cinematic I mean that is a unified vision and that you're interpreting the psychological drama in an interesting, visual way that the form reflects the content. I have no real interest just in seeing pretty pictures, or a nice frame, or a vista, or some beautiful landscape. It has to always be interpretive, that's why I think, for me at the end of the day, the face is the more interesting landscape of all. Because you're seeing emotionally and psychologically how people are reacting.

**We totally agree wit that, thanks for your time.**

Sure, it was fun!

---

\*This interview is part of a larger book project (*Imágenes en serie*) focused on the visual dimension of contemporary television series, a research mainly based on conversations with directors, cinematographers and producers.



# Ten founding filmmakers of serial television

---

Jordi Balló and Xavier Pérez

## ABSTRACT

This article offers an overview of the work of ten founding filmmakers of serial television (Hitchcock, Rossellini, Wiseman, Bergman, Godard, Fassbinder, Reitz, Kieslowski, Lynch y Lars von Trier), juxtaposing their key achievements with other television series that constitute a shared legacy.

## KEYWORDS

Cinema, serial television, audiovisual narrative, storytelling, Hitchcock, Rossellini, Wiseman, Bergman, Godard, Fassbinder, Reitz, Kieslowski, Lynch, Lars von Trier

### Hitchcock: the control of the audience

1955 is a key year for the history of television fiction: Alfred Hitchcock decides to occupy the universe of seriality with a weekly production that carries out his name in the title (*Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, CBS-NBC, 1955-1965) and that includes, at the beginning of each chapter, an introduction with the filmmaker addressing his audience directly. This *corporal* signature, already present in the form of cameo appearances since his first films, found an exceptional reaffirmation space on the weekly television recurrence. From being functionally known by the audience, Hitchcock (as a brand-image, enhanced by the complementary profile's caricature heading the credits, and by the accompaniment of Charles Gounod's catchy march) turns out to be an undeniable popular icon. The hidden objective is to use the small screen as a platform to radicalize one of the central strategies of Hitchcockian art: the control of the audience. Through the serial recurrence, Hitchcock could experiment, each week, the hypnosis persistence through the visible signature of the dominant Wizard.

Hitchcockian control of seriality comes from repeating as many times as necessary the same model of narration. Twenty minutes of maximum narrative concentration which insists on, with only a few changes and a recurring final twist, recreating all the possible shapes of a nightmare. There is a logical explanation (never supernatural), but the model of the narration takes into account the structural teachings of Poe, often invoked in plot motifs such as the perfect crime, the double, the revenge, the psychological madness or the premature burial.

The serial pattern is determined not only by the initial appearance of the Wizard, but also by the final salute which summons the following week: a subtle variation of *to be continued* that substitutes the prolongation of the tale *ad infinitum* with the circular persistence of the unavoidable serial device. Hitchcock finds a decisive strategy, later implemented by Rod Serling in *The Twilight Zone* (CBS, 1959-1964), which will constitute the first model of permanence of the author—and the control of his/her universe—within the framework of television-making.

### Rossellini: the encyclopedic dimension

The first intervention of Rossellini in television with the series *L'India vista da Rossellini* (RAI, 1959) does not spare the presence of the director in the opening of each chapter. But if Hitchcock threw himself in a self-sufficient way to reach the viewer, Rossellini is introduced by the journalist Marco Cesarini, and the vision's prelude turns into a dialogue that has a continuation when showing this carnet de notes of his voyage

to India. Over the images projected in the small cinema where Rossellini and his interviewer sit, an off-screen dialogue takes place that contributes to a clarification, more impressionistic than dogmatic, of the takes' content. This revolutionary format will be no longer present in the next one, *Letà del ferro* (RAI, 1965), where the presentation is done with the talking head of Rossellini addressing the viewer—but the television corpus of this filmmaker will not renounce to a democratizing, horizontal key.

History being a susceptible discipline to audiovisual recapitulation will constitute the thematic core idea to test the efficacy of the serial device. In *Letà del ferro*, the whole is framed to the technological evolution of humanity in regards to the production and use of iron through the centuries. In *La lotta dell'uomo per la sua sopravvivenza* (RAI, 1970) he proceeds to reconstruct the evolution of humanity, where every progress milestone makes a difference and a step from one episode to another. The overall television fictions based on Louis XIX, Socrates, Descartes, Augustine of Hippo, Blaise Pascal and the series *Atti degli apostoli* (RAI, 1969) and *Letà di Cosimo de Medici* (RAI, 1973) are examples of this encyclopedic will, sustained by a didactic method: the broad range of each historical setting invites to concentrate on the detail and on the scrupulous slowness of the tracking. Rossellini inverts the idea of the Hitchcockian control of the universe to trust in a spectator endowed with the right to be culturally nourished through a new technology understood, against all contextual odds, as a formative tool in the service of humanism.

### Wiseman: the exhaustive project

Frederick Wiseman's documentary films, if strung together, could be understood as elements of a single work, a serial work as a big human comedy. His objective is to question and portray, one by one, every US public institution and also some in Europe, showing their weaknesses but also their surviving capacity in difficult environments. This systematic work began with *Titicut Follies* (1967), where he entered a prison/asylum/hospital with unacceptable clinical practices, including prisoners' lobotomies, displayed in all their crudity in front of the camera. The result of this revealing work was its banning by the Massachusetts State for 30 years. At the time the PBS was able to release it, it already had become an American legend of independence.

Wiseman's works have gone through the State's structures and their effects: prisons (*Titicut Follies*), schools (*High School*, 1968), police stations (*Law and Order*, 1969), hospitals (*Hospital*, 1970; y *Near Death*, 1989), military academies (*Basic Training*, 1971), courts (*Juvenile Court*, 1973), animal

experimentation labs (*Primate*, 1974), social assistance (*Welfare*, 1975), theatres (*La Comédie Française*, 1996), public housings (*Public Housing*, 1997), domestic violence (*Domestic violence*, 2001; γ *Domestic Violence 2*, 2002), state universities (*At Berkeley*, 2013), museums (*National Gallery*, 2014) or neighbourhoods (*Belfast, Maine* (1999); γ *In Jackson Heights*, 2015). On Wiseman's filmmaking methodology, sound takes on a decisive significance, as it is the word, the shout or the silent gesture what eventually indicates the preponderance of what deserves to be filmed within a sequence. This issue explains the constructive character of his sense of editing, the relation between on and off-screen spaces that leads the way of his filming style and builds a direct cinema but only apparently.

But Wiseman's greatest influence in the world of seriality is the exhaustive conscience. David Simon also used this method in *The Wire* (HBO, 2002-2008), where each season addresses one conflict zone: police station, port, union, school, political elections, media... The resulting serial work establishes a network that achieves its maximum intensity when it considers society in its totality. It is the construction of a pointillist portrait of democracy's imperfect instruments.

### Ingmar Bergman: dialogues in time

The serial nature of Ingmar Bergman's audiovisual production, well established in his filmography since the so-called "Trilogy of Faith", takes a transparent significance in the television production *Scenes From a Marriage* (*Scener ur ett äktenskap*, TV2 Sverige, 1972). In several countries this material was released in the form of a feature film, an issue perfectly accepted by the filmmaker, who re-cut the material to create a forceful autonomous film. However, the cadence of these periodical marriage dialogues goes especially well with the television format, doubtlessly.

Bergman, a man of vast and complementary theatrical career, based his film work on the essentialist record of the word, with the close-up as the privileged device of expressive confirmation. And this word that becomes time finds in the television format an ideal space for the experimentation on perseverance and for the enjoyment (sweet and sour, given the drift of this plot) of repetition. The crisis of this couple, but also their continuous reaffirmation, the game of secrets and lies, the reproaches and forgiveness, the satisfactions and the withdrawals, get tangled up in a string of highly significant intimate moments which turn the television screen in a minimalistic laboratory for the observation of the human being in the ambivalent experience

of domestic confrontation. The masks of a happy everydayness, so typical of classic television, are contrasted with their dark mirror image by Ingmar Bergman's exploratory eye.

The fact that the main characters of *Scenes of a Marriage* found some extension in different theatre adaptations and especially in the film *Saraband* (2003), its epilogue, confirms this serial model capacity of spreading in time and space with a canonic shape open to new variations. And the foundational weight of this episodic micro-dramaturgy can be seen as a deposit in contemporary works such as the different versions of *Be Tipul* (HOT3, 2005-2008), and other series like *Mad Men* (AMC, 2007-2015) or *Masters of Sex* (Showtime, 2013-), which turn the confronting word and the confession that finally emerges into a unyielding therapeutic exercise.

### Jean-Luc Godard: the device revealed

*Six fois deux* (France 3, 1976) and *France/tour/detour/deux/enfants* (Antenne 2, 1977), the two television programs directed by Godard in his decade of retirement from conventional exhibition and the investigation of new video-graphics territories, are two peculiar enquiries around the 70's French society. Godard picks up Rossellini's hypothesis of television as an educational project, and focuses the interest on the function of the interview as serial pattern. The inquiry is, however, restrictive, reduced to a few characters and in a constant dialectic process with the interventionist presence of Godard himself. In the extreme and polemic case of *France/tour/detour...*, the interviewees are only a boy and a girl, sitting down, and driven by the director in a persisting, almost totalitarian way.

The operations that have to accompany the inquiry's constitution are identified by the evidence of the device, and by its derived critical detachment. For example, on each interview of *Six fois deux's* first chapter, Godard, badly framed at the left of the shot, in front of the table where he receives his interviewees, only lets us see his arm and the cigar going from the mouth to the ashtray, with a repetitive gesture that will pass through as a permanent recognition icon of the author in all his future work.

*Six fois deux's* other sign of serial identity is the opening title with a hand entering a video-cassette in a player, and the final image of the same hand bringing it out. Video's new possibilities create a new field of experimentation where images turn back and became reversible. Editing's *discontinuity* (accentuated by rewinds, imperfections, random jumps) becomes, paradoxically, a new sign of identity of serial *continuity*. And it



is here where Godard starts an idea that will be fully developed in his monumental *Histoire(s) du cinéma* (France 3, Canal +, ARTE, La Sept, TSR, 1988-1998): repetition and persistence of images and sounds, reminiscences based on a subtle variation, due to an omnipresent demiurge who, through the visible manipulation of the materials, continues to make evident, through the symphonic fragments' gathering, his boundless and incisive signature.

### Fassbinder: heterogeneous intensity

When R.W Fassbinder approached, in 1980, the adaptation of the novel *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, he immediately understood he could not do it in a normal feature film's temporality. The influence that Döblin's novel had had in his formation years pushed him to conceive this project as a titanic, absorbing work on which converges, already present on the original book, the shape of a visual and sound collage which was one of the director's main characteristics. It thus has been this way that he imagined an episodic proposal of 13 chapters and an epilogue, a unique work on which he builds the portrait of a city in the process of decomposing itself, where the sense of exploitation, violence, survival instinct, are expressed through a composition which combines baroque choreography with distancing techniques and behavioral analysis. Fassbinder saved for himself the narrator voice as the gesture of a presence that wants to understand, or analyze coldly, the attitude of his characters, the secrets of their desire and their passions. Fassbinder's empathy with the main character, Franz Biberkopf, his relationship with Reinhold, and with the women who love him but ended up being destroyed by him, makes more interesting the way in which his own implication is produced through voice, style and shooting speed.

Both Julia Lorenz, editor, and Xavier Schwarzenberger, DP, explained a revelatory detail: if Fassbinder did rehearse the scenes with his usual actors, he used to film almost every sequence in only one take. The film combines the caring for the framings with this temporal economy principle, in a manner of registering his usual way of conceiving and making films, with no pause, enchainé, like a serial filmmaker.

It is in the epilogue of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (WDR, 1980), actually a feature film in his own right, where Fassbinder goes a step forward, a decisive gesture in his freedom of conceiving a series. This apocalyptic, delirious epilogue concentrates the capacity of infernal description, with ambiguous angels, madhouses, rats, religious imagery, contradictory recuperation of previous plots and, very especially, with a *mise-en-scène* of the torture, with the dismembered bodies of Biberkopf, his partner Mieke, and other groups of young people piled on the

floor, in a crystal clear reference to the film which shocked Fassbinder the most, *Salò (Salò o le 120 giornate di Sodoma)*, 1975) by Pasolini, a referent in the way of broadening Evil's imagery. The epilogue of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* was a precursor of a category in contemporary seriality: a narration can present chapters with completely different styles thus making scenarios of exception.

### Reitz: the dynasty

One of the essential points which united the signers of the Oberhausen Manifesto was the fact of not feeling implicated or able to be held responsible by previous conventional cinema; the will to talk about Germany's current situation with a new language. But paradoxically, one of its signers, Edgar Reitz, centered his filmography on a single work which reviews past, understood as a public position of his mission as a filmmaker. This work that doesn't cease to grow, *Heimat* (1984-), started as a kind of sinuous feature film that needs to be divided in chapters in order to arrive to the audience. Most part of the filmmakers making television do not question the episodic system, but the case of *Heimat* is quite the contrary: it makes profit of the device of television segmentation in order to make possible the production of a complete work which overflows the logic of cinematographic exhibition.

The dramatic core of this expansion is family unity, and geographical location: the Simons family history, located in an imaginary place in Germany. But differently from paradisiacal seriality based on the dynasty tale, which used to hide or resolve conflicts on each episode, *Heimat* outlines the history flow as a succession of fractures, dilemmas, tragedies and mutations, through two World Wars and the different economic and social crisis. The idea that the collective crisis acts as the accelerator and trigger of the drama proposes a serial logic based in the appearances and disappearances of drama, with a rhythmic dynamism that connects the evolution of the saga with the historical, temporal and critical view of the spectator.

The epic dimension of Reitz's project is viewed as a great victory of experimental cinema. His logic is not that of family soap opera: in *Heimat* the force of the ellipsis imposes itself in front of the series based on the dramatized everyday. But its point of view is also experimental, confronting private history localized in a microcosm with the events that may happen off-screen, reconstructed by the viewer, as a real national tragedy. German homeland's life is not centered solely in the things Reitz is showing, but also in the citizen's responsibility facing some aspects of its hiding. It is because of all this that *Heimat*, which has produced in 2015 a feature film proposing a prequel to the family history, becomes a milestone in the way of

showing that the dynasty genre is a serial device which cinema can adopt when it creates complicity with the strategies of a public television.

### **Kieslowski: a vertical succession**

We often understand seriality as a sequence of episodes bound horizontally with a temporal continuity. The most unique contribution in *Dekalog* (1989-1990) is its vertically structured conception, as a building—a fiction architecture in which each episode is put on top of the prior, intertwined, establishing a fertile relation between variable elements and repetitions. *Dekalog*'s co-writer, Krzysztof Piesiewicz, expressed it indirectly, declaring to have been inspired by the Gothic retable in the conception of the continuity of each episode: the Ten Commandments, told independently, each one with a particularity, looking for a contemporary inversion of a general prohibition questioned in each of the works. The elements of repetition are light, but firm: Zbigniew Preisner's music, the fact that all the characters live in the same building in Warsaw, the recurrence of a quiet, observant character who appears mysteriously in almost every episode, and some operations of intertwining characters who can be the protagonists of one episode and mere extras in another one. There is also an exemplary case of meta-fiction when the moral dilemmas of *Dekalog 2* are presented as a subject of debate in a philosophy class in *Dekalog 8*.

This vertical structure allows a non-chronological view of the episodes, because it is not there where his strength can be found, but in the conscience that all of them form an indestructible grid recognized in the general atmosphere of the plots, in this application of the mechanics of suspense in the emotional behaviour.

If each one of the episodes could become an independent feature film—as it happened explicitly in *A Short Film About Killing* (Krótki film o zabijaniu, 1988) and *A Short Film About Love* (Krótki film o miłości, 1988), extending the plots in *Dekalog 5* and *Dekalog 6*—what makes *Dekalog* an essential milestone is having proved that the viewer's memory and his enjoyment of repetition is nourished by the familiarity of a formal and narrative universe, by the conscience that the crossed glances and the fictions also continue off-screen: while we see a particular history we never lose the general sense involving all the building's residents and, by extension, the whole community. As in a retable, as in a sort of fiction architecture that continues being one of the ideals of seriality: to progress dramatically in the cumulative mind of the viewer.

### **Lynch: the universe in each shot**

The so-called “new golden age of television” finds in *Twin Peaks* (Mark Frost and David Lynch, ABC, 1990-1991) the inescapable foundational gesture. That this revolution presents in its leading role a recognized cinema artist implies, above all, the redemption of the superficial, *standard* nature of television *découpage* in most of the previous fictions. Lynch bursts in the cathodic universe to convince us of the oracular value of each image. And, at the same time, to dismantle the idea of the television set as a comfortable piece of furniture in the trivialized interior of the domestic space. If the classical serial fiction had been the paradise of the family gathered in the living room, amazed by the friendly routines of their favorite characters, Lynch violates completely this ritual without surprises and explains us that hell can also take the shape of repetition.

In order to make this possible, the routine of domestic shooting must be hit by an image that manifests itself, orphic, with all its revealing powers. *Twin Peaks* is shot *as if it was* a film. The filmmaker transfers the unsettling conception of the shot in his previous feature films to the comfortable spaces of soap opera and, as an apocalypse herald, brings hell behind him. Agent Cooper's *catabasis* supposes in this way the vivisection of a community in lethargic state, in need of a perturbing compensation. Laura Palmer body's autopsy as recorded in the initial episode of the series is the clear narrative of this: a scalpel performing the functions of the editor who splits, analyzes and *makes visible*.

Lynch's prophetic proposal seemed, in the moment of its release, a precious pearl in a consumption universe directed towards different interests. Some years later it is clear for everybody that serial fiction does not admit a turning back nor allow suturing the wounds of a destructive time. On the contrary, this time is embodied in a corrosive malignity that takes control over all. This epidemic, constantly expanding, has fed this new millennium's serial imaginary, where the construction of the cathodic worlds can no longer neglect the performative power of the gaze or the unsettling complexity of each camera position.

### **Lars von Trier: the immoral space**

*The Kingdom*'s (Riget, DR1, 1994-1997) main contribution was to invert the sense of a dramatic space, the hospital, which in television seriality had been conceived as the paradigm of morality and positive resolution of conflicts. Coinciding in a similar strategy to the one used by Lynch, *Riget* supposed the emergency of a hellish space as a centripetal unity, a place we



can hardly escape, progressively attacked by the symptoms of decadence and destruction. The ghostly voices of the dead, the blood spilled by the air-conditioning tubes, the never-ending corridors, a mason corporative logic and a hierarchical tension between the members of the medical community offer a portrait which tells us that Evil occupies this sick building of Copenhagen.

In a moment of maximum visual experimentation in Lars Von Trier's career, *Riget* also supposes a crossing between the veristic devices to capture reality and the introduction of fantastic elements that question it. The fact of maximizing the unit treatment of colour offers the possibility to understand its appeal to seriality for the unity of style. In a certain way it means the incursion of a cinematographic way of shooting in the creation of a unique universe: the repetition is produced by the nature of image itself.

The fact that Lars Von Trier appears in the end of each chapter, discussing the episode and announcing the following, is a reverberation of Hitchcockian seriality, when the director should still notify his presence in a serial world that didn't seem a filmmaker's homeland. But this distancing presence of Von Trier, that set out the rules for each chapter and it is no longer essential, does not contradict the greatest contribution of this series: to have been able to draw an evil everydayness in the core of an apparently comfortable society. And to do it through the sick body, the presence of the cadaver understood as the expression of control, as a consumption object, as a metaphor for biopolitics.

Beyond its universal contribution, *Riget* created a road for the following fertility of Danish seriality: unit of style, darkness, unsettling dead bodies and a sense of corruption impregnating every structure of the State, even those who seemed sheltered from destruction.

---

## JORDI BALLÓ

Professor of Audiovisual Communication and director of the MA in Creative Documentary at Universitat Pompeu Fabra. He is the author of *Imágenes del silencio* (Anagrama), *Conèixer el cinema y Cinema català (1975-1986)* and frequently writes for the newspaper *La Vanguardia*. He was director of exhibitions at CCCB and curator of *El siglo del cine*, *Hammershoi y*

*Dreyer*, *Erice-Kiarostami o Pasolini Roma*. He was awarded the Prize Ciutat de Barcelona for the exhibition *Todas las cartas. Correspondencias fílmicas*. Along with Xavier Pérez, he has published a series of influential essays on cinema and serial narrative published by Anagrama: *La semilla inmortal*, *Yo ya he estado aquí* and *El mundo, un escenario*.

## XAVIER PÉREZ

Professor of audiovisual narrative at Universitat Pompeu Fabra and author of the books *El tiempo del héroe*, *El universo de «Los Vengadores»*, *El suspens cinematogràfic* and *Películas clave del cine de espías*. He developed a longstanding career as a theatre and film critic for the newspaper *Avui*, and more recently, for

magazines like *Caimán*. *Cuadrenos de Cine* or *Cultura/s*, the cultural revue of *La Vanguardia*. Along with Jordi Balló, he has published a series of influential essays on cinema and serial narrative published by Anagrama: *La semilla inmortal*, *Yo ya he estado aquí* and *El mundo, un escenario*.

# Sources of youth. Memories of a past future of television fiction.

---

Fran Benavente and Glòria Salvadó

## ABSTRACT

This article explores different specific projects for television by filmmakers who work in connection with previous founding forms of TV as a hybrid medium: theater in Jean Renoir, realist novel in Maurice Pialat, televisuality in David Lynch, and verbal discourse in Orson Welles. Thus the specificities of duration, repetition and seriality, plus other televisual traits such as simultaneity, intimacy and popular appeal, turn TV into a realm of infinite possibilities based on a certain “poorness” of its images, which can be hinted in the television projects of such filmmakers.

## KEYWORDS

Cinema, television, theatre, novel, radio, live, media, Renoir, Rossellini, Bergman, Pialat, Lynch, Welles.

We easily forget that in television, as in other fields of culture, Europe marked the pattern of modernization. Today, after celebrating a new golden age of television fiction (fundamentally American), talking about complex storylines and raising our glasses to celebrate the rise to power of the television “author,” we could ask ourselves, perhaps: What is the author in television? Or, better yet, who is the author in television? There is a movement that marks a change of arms in contemporary television fiction from the executive producer to the writer producer or the showrunner. However, this line is inscribed in an institutional story, the one of television fiction in the setting of entertainment logic.

But there is another story, which took place fundamentally in Europe, with another answer to that question. That story is about the remains of past television worlds, beautiful utopias without apparent progeny that marked a possible, and perhaps better, future for television. In that story the answer to the question about the author is: the television author is a filmmaker. In that story television fiction is an invention of cinema; or, at least, a consequence. The filmmaker as a television author sees a possible experimentation space and rehearses a way of adapting his writing on the basis of the specific strengths of the medium but without renouncing to the significant substance of his stroke. He glimpses a solid project, unique, but problematic for the medium and not always easy for its spectators. That is why it is usually utopic, because it is given up or does not leave offspring or traces in its environment, even if the seeds of its influence can be everlasting.

It is an almost sacred story, with its apostles, converters and illuminated, with its revealing moments. One of them, very well known, takes place in October of 1958, when the filmmakers’ television utopia becomes visible in a publication—*France Observateur*—in which a group of news reporters, amongst whom André Bazin can be found, interviews Jean Renoir and Roberto Rossellini; one about to embark in the television adventure, the other already immersed in it, in the prelude of what years later would be his great work for television (ROSSELLINI and RENOIR, 1958).

Bazin, Renoir, Rossellini in 1958. No one overlooks that here is where the “patrons” of cinematographic modernity gather to discuss about television, and its possibilities, at the cinema exit, and all of it in perfect synchrony with the birth of that cinematographic modernity they have incubated, preceded. Cinema and television, a then young couple that, nevertheless,

already looked alike. And we shouldn’t forget that the magazine *Cahiers du Cinéma* was, from its beginnings and during some years, a “*Revue du cinéma et du télécinéma*.”

For Bazin, Renoir and Rossellini, that “telecinema” was the possibility of a new origin, a fresh start full of possibilities with the addition of making true the dream of popular cinema: to reach a massive audience.

### **The old and the new: Renoir, television and theatre.**

In 1958 Renoir is preparing his entrance in television at the end of a decade that had seen his rebirth in the Indian waters of *The River* (1951) and that continued in the theatre of the world with a danger of mannerism winding in, however, beautiful films such as *Elena and Her Men* (*Elena et les homes*, 1956). In opposition, television offered the possibility of the return to immediate tension, the tremor of a live show, the cutting edge of the unrepeatable. What really interests us here is not so much that Renoir passes on to television but that he does it to raise a filmic program entirely constructed on television specifics, different strengths that mark a different type of fiction, new, thrilling.

Some of those specifics are connected with Renoir’s old dreams, such as the work in progress of the scene, without cuts that disturb the actor’s work. Renoir had already experimented with different cameras, but the multiple-camera setup of the television set allows him to predict a transparent way (without renouncing to the editing) but clear of interruptions. Renoir sees in television a way of working on a cinema focused on the scene and not the shot.

‘I am now going to try to take my beliefs farther and make the camera have only one right: to simply record what happens, nothing more. For that, evidently, we need a few cameras, because the camera cannot be everywhere. I don’t want the movement of the actors to be determined by the camera. I want the movement of the camera to be determined by the actor. Therefore, it’s about being a reporter’  
(RENOIR in ROSSELLINI, 2000; 152).

On the other hand, Renoir reads the transcendental principle of television in the immediacy of the live show; that which distinguishes it from cinema. In 1958 video tape recorders already existed for video recordings, but live broadcasting was still the dominant way, also in the production of “TV dramas”. A

1. This text would not have been possible without the generosity of Francisco Algarin Navarro and Lumière’s friends.

live show implied unique broadcasts and, for that, unrepeatable gestures. Renoir's aesthetics program is constructed on these principles: live show, continuity, scene. The touchstone was supposed to be *Experiment in Evil* (*Le Testament du docteur Cordelier*, RTF, 1961), a French adaptation of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

'I wanted to film this movie and television provides me with something appreciable in the sense of live television. Evidently, it won't be a live broadcast, because it will be prepared on film, but I would like to shoot it as if it were a live broadcast. I would like to shoot only once and that the actors imagine that every time we film them the public directly registers their dialogues and their gestures. The actors, like the technicians, will know that we will only film once and that, even if it goes wrong, we will not start over. Besides, we can only film once to not draw the attention of passers-by, who have to remain being pedestrians. It's about filming episodes of this movie in streets where people do not know we are filming. That is why, if I have to film again, it doesn't count. Therefore, this necessity must convince the actors and the technicians that every movement is definitive and remains recorded forever. I would like to break with the cinematographic production and build a great wall with small stones, with a lot of patience' (RENOIR in ROSSELLINI, 2000: 149-150).

In the beginning of the film, in a prologue with a "documentary" aspect, Renoir bursts in the television studios, where the editor Renée Lichtig receives him. A takeover of the television production studio as scenic space that evidences an affirmation of the world as a representation to find, amongst the breaches and the friction with reality—the actors' bodies, the immediate-instants of truth. That is where Renoir establishes himself, in a double perspective, between the ground level with the stage (television set), the characters' place, and a superior gaze. This axis of positions, between the control of the staging and the contiguity of reality, will be resumed in Opale's first appearance, when he threatens a girl before the eyes of the notary, maître Joly.

In the same way, in the first sequence—the one of the prologue—the relevance of the dialectics between the inferior (of the set) and the exterior (location shootings) is introduced, which rewrites in the centrifugal/centripetal axis the vertical/horizontal vector. It's a prevalent issue in the potential relief that television offers for the cinema of the time. Marcel L'Herbier, a then old filmmaker who had ended up in television sets, thought that television allowed articulating alchemy between

the theatrical and the cinematographic (L'HERBIER, 1954). The theatrical in the sense of the continuity and weight of the actors' work in a scenic space; and, in turn, the cinematographic prolongation of that scenic space in sequences filmed in location shootings, in 16mm, different to those interiors filmed in a multiple-camera setup. From that principle Renoir starts to link the prologue with the beginning of the story. From the world of the representation, the set, the opening to the exterior is produced. These types of frictions are what sustain and praise the project *Experiment in Evil* in relation to a possible fiction program for television.

In truth, it's about making the artificial and the natural clash to discern reality. This principle is also combined in the exterior scenes and in relation with the actors' work. The alchemy between theatre and cinema operated in television as a space of encounter also works between the control of the character by the actors—that come from theatre and work a body language and characterization that are in this line, from inside out—and their placement in a situation of immediacy of register and, in the case of the exterior scenes, of a more or less hazardous reality, with the necessity of improvising in their encounter with the world. These sequences were supposed to be filmed in one take, bringing theatre to the street and taking the world as a stage and the passers-by as extras. It's about, again, seeing what happens in the friction between mechanisms.

Between the surface and the depth is where the last of the dialectics is produced, in this specific case of the story. If what it is about is to see how a hidden and repressed inwardness—Opale—breaks the veil of a surface—Cordelier—, Renoir will work on the animal, hysteric, brusque (and burlesque) gesture that disrupts the delicate surface of the bourgeois mannerism. The interpretative register of this work is broad and varied. That work of surface and depth finds its eco in the scene of Opale's first appearance, when he is chased on the surface of the wall, in a sequence filmed in continuity, only to disappear through the door of Cordelier's house into an unknown interior.

*Experiment in Evil* is a more than notable film, synchronic and brother to the concerns of the Nouvelle Vague. As a television adventure, however, it is not more than a relative success, as it wasn't able to respond to the "radical" initial project. Ángel Quintana has explained the details of the story: the initial plan was to film in direct video, in real time, an hour and a half, preceded by three weeks of rehearsal with the actors and two days of technical rehearsals (QUINTANA, 1995). The make-up problems and the work in location shootings caused the idea to be abandoned for a movie prepared on film, shot in cinema with a live vocation. The rehearsal and filming days multiplied. Television became a financial source and favored a work system

in the rehearsals that hoped to also reconcile the theatrical and cinematographic logic, a kind of collective creation, and a logic of telefilmed dress rehearsals.

So Renoir, with an extreme program for the future of his fictions as television fictions, doesn't achieve the full realization of the utopia but instead leaves a beautiful example of cathodic fiction for history. However, the problems that emerge in Cordelier will be those that explode in Renoir's next work for television—*Picnic on the Grass* (*Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, 1959)—and that, in the end, will make him abandon television as utopia disenchanting, only to go back at the end of his career for a purely financial necessity (with *The Little Theatre of Jean Renoir* [*Le Petit Théâtre de Jean Renoir*, RAI-ORTF, 1969]).

Serge Daney said that television, since its birth, found itself between two simultaneous vocations: the opening to the exterior, the window to the live world; and the confinement and separation of the world in the set (SABOURAUD and TOUBIANA, 1988). The centripetal power of the TV play was imposed in fiction, its theatrical logic filmed. Instead, Renoir saw clearly that beauty was starting from that artifice to open all its breaches to an outside, towards the other, towards the truth. And, in that trance, to offer an image of the world (starting from the question on technique and dehumanization).

From Renoir we can inflect this idea of the filmmaker who starts in television, by choice or by need, confronts the medium, tries to delve into its specificities, to generate an adaptation work of his own style that becomes profitable, that marks a fertile moment in the history of television fiction (frequently not well known). For example, a filmmaker like Ingmar Bergman considers television as the prolongation of a *kammerspiele* theatre filmed and elongated for hours. His real television project consists in detecting in television fiction the possibility of accentuating the intimate aspect inherited from theatre, and insisting on it in the long duration of the story that the medium permits, from serialization. In this way *Scenes from a marriage* (*Scener ur ett äktenskap*, TV2 Sverige, 1972) is born, a study about the decomposition of a couple, very much in line with Bergman's style, but that reaches levels of clear emotion and dazzling freedom from the restrictions imposed by the medium and the highlighting of the idea of theatre: long scenic segments on set, face and body of the actors as the center of the story, supremacy of the word, dramatic concentration and big ellipsis, etc. With these aspects, Bergman will achieve one of the biggest works of his filmography and a great public success in Sweden, with direct involvement in social topics such as abortion, adultery, etc.

### **The language of experience: Pialat, the *feuilleton* and the realistic novel.**

We find another brilliant moment in the history of French television fiction toward 1970, not much after the year '68 and in full peak of another cinematographic movement, the so-called post-nouvelle vague that would run in parallel and in close relation with the things that were happening in television. We will now talk about Maurice Pialat's stunning passing through television. If Bergman had worked by taking to the extreme the theatrical accent of television fiction, Pialat will choose to explore the parallels of television fiction and a certain tradition of the realistic novel.

Yves Laumet, who in those times worked as an artistic consultant for co-productions in Antenne 2, the second channel of the French public television, had seen *Naked Childhood* (*L'enfance nue*, 1969), Maurice Pialat's debut, a severe and sharp reflection of a non-reconciled childhood and the need of love that had supposed the debut of a singular filmmaker, unaffiliated to any particular school. Pialat had other projects, but Laumet thinks he is the suitable person to film the script for a *feuilleton* written by Renée Wheeler that talks about the life of the family of a French forest ranger who, during World War I, takes in children whose parents have gone to fight at the front.

Laumet presents the project of *La Maison des Bois* (ORTF, 1971) to Pialat and he accepts (MÉRIGEAU, 2003). The economic reason is not the most important one, rather, a double possibility that the television format offers: the long duration and, again, the possibility of reaching a broad public. We must remember that Pialat always aspired to be a popular filmmaker—not a director for initiates—and this was the opportunity to secure a work in this sense.

We have here an unusual utopia as we find ourselves facing a one-time passing. Pialat will never work in television again but, nonetheless, his adventuring will remain as an unknown masterpiece (until relatively soon) and as one of the filmmaker's favorite works. A relevant case, and without a doubt transcendent, in the history of television made by filmmakers.

As we have said before, for Pialat it's about making the most of the advantages that the medium offers—specifically the extension—to work on a Flaubertian form of realism, dissolving the story in the air of the everydayness, bringing the rhythm of the events closer to the passing of life and working the broadcasting, in an apparently calm environment, of the echoes and traces of a tragedy happening in the background, history, the events of World War I. It's about seeing the lives and the details drawn on that conflict, and also see the customs and life in the country, the image of a France that transforms slowly and gets lost. The story of a maturation, a death and a change.



Pialat rewrites the script completely with the help of Arlette Langman, and sees in the story of these children taken in during World War I a projection of his experience during World War II. Of the six episodes initially planned, the series will include seven, which shows the importance of time and the breathing it allows. Joining the coral panoply of characters typical of the *feuilleton*, Pialat is able to compose a community portrait taking his time to pause in gestures, actions and quotidian faces; to abandon the central line and get lost in the ins and outs of the story; to follow the calm pulse of the life pierced, suddenly, by the darts of the melodrama. This is the Pialat system in *La Maison des Bois*, to linger in the flowing of daily life to better break it in certain, and terrible, moments of drama. That form of observation of a light life on a dramatic background takes form in a light cinema, in which the filmed material goes beyond any formal logic. Pialat uses long shots, indistinctly fixed or in movement, traversed by corrections that allow, even, the use of the zoom. Everything very far-off from the gravity of *Naked Childhood*.

The first dramatically charged event in the series, the death of the marquise (the wife of the place's landowner), bursts in through a messenger who brings the news to the schoolteacher (Pialat himself). The news appears after a long class sequence where the teacher Pialat makes the children recite while they live the tension and nervousness combined of the question in class and the filmed scene. Pialat, as usual, looks for the surprise, the unexpected natural detail and, for that, directs the scene from the inside. Shortly after, at the marquise's funeral in the church, Pialat chooses to privilege the anecdote of the children, who act as altar servers, in their relationship with the old sacristan and how they all sneakily drink the ceremony wine. It is a jubilant scene, which settles a childhood experience, provincial, with no importance for history but decisive for the memories of life. It is a scene filmed in long careless shots, attentive to the luminous faces and tentative gestures. In one moment, the sacristan loses his hat and it falls on the wine, which spills. It looks like one of the accidents that Pialat incorporates in his fictions. In any case, this trivial scene of long duration, filmed in an unnoticed and almost careless way in its naturalness, contrasts with the stiffness of the tracking shot that comes in by cut and walks, in the middle of the church aisle and the symmetry of the frame, towards the encounter of the marquise's coffin.

Pialat works the Flaubertian realism (although he prefers Dickens, of whom there is something in the portrait of these children who live their small joys in the midst of a life of misfortunes) in the sense of a composition of daily reality seen in a prismatic way, as a conglomerate of disperse fragments, and fixed in an almost photographic way, linking details to draw an approach to the full shot of history and life. The psychological

portrait isn't as important as the sketching of sensations and experiences, their links. That Flaubertian realism has its correspondence in something like Courbet's evolution of pictorial realism to the impressionist stroke, pictorial moment that, as we know, is synchronic to the writer's narrative.

The scene that could finally summarize all of this would be the very long fragment of the third episode that corresponds to an escape of the story and an escape of the characters to rehearse that clearly identifiable motif of the "luncheon on the grass." Indeed, the ranger's family dedicates the Sunday to a picnic near the lake, a moment of joy about to disappear. There they eat, rest, they talk about trivialities, the boys play, ride the boat, the ranger's daughter talks about love and Albert, the natural son, announces that he will join the army. This part of the episode invokes, as the whole series, Renoir's spirit, it tastes the form and taste of a universe about to be broken, it fixes the trivial experiences, the moments of suspense, that will remain in the memory of the people of a France that will never again see itself in that way. The pleasure of the everydayness and the sensitive connection with the world. The fascination for the ordinary, and its pleasures, seen as an isle of joy.

The discovery of death and disenchantment will be the resulting movement of the dissolution of that paradise about to become lost. The chain of events will be read as the son's death, Albert; the main character's return to Paris, Hervé, to reencounter the father and a "new" mother; and, finally, the ranger's wife's death, Maman Jeanne, the "great mother" of the woods and the children. This is the learning and the climax of the drama that Pialat presents as the ending of all that was lived at length in previous episodes.

Maurice Pialat has found a television form for the *feuilleton* that exalts and squeezes it in its possible opening to the world and its secret rhythms. A way of reconnecting popular television with the novelistic formula, but not dedicated to unlikely and bookish events, but in the descriptive plurality of the details of everyday life. That has nothing to do with the marginal or the experimental. Pialat works with popular actors, in a time, a context and a landscape recognizable by the French. He even connects with the Buttes Chaumont studios (the traditional school of TV drama within French television) and with the literary tradition of French cinema previous to the Nouvelle Vague. He is demanding, though, and respects the medium and his spectators. That is why his "series" has the beauty, the length and the aspect of great works.



**Television on the air: David Lynch and the live broadcast.**

We can also find examples on the American side. David Lynch is the most known paradigm of what a filmmaker can do in television fiction when a good review of its limitations in relation to cinema is made (“in cinema one can interpret a symphony but in television one is limited to a screech” he will say) and, however, one works with its specific advantages (“the only advantage, the screeching can be continuous” LYNCH in RODLEY, 2005).

Beyond *Twin Peaks* (David Lynch and Mark Frost, ABC, 1990-1991), Lynch still wanted to continue exploring the medium in search of new challenges and frontiers. From his association with Mark Frost, he faced ABC’s assignment to conceive a new series. The strong gesture consists here in trying to abound in another television specific and, more specifically, in taking television as an object of comical experimentation. The result is a comedy of a strange situation, impossible and largely ahead of its time. Of *On the air* (David Lynch and Mark Frost, ABC, 1992) only three episodes were broadcasted and four more were filmed. Its pilot deserves to appear amongst the most noteworthy reinventions of burlesque in recent history.

So David Lynch, in this case, carries out television fiction from the own television reference and the identified paradigms, from its origins, with “televisuality”. From the very title, the project focuses on the idea of the live show (“On the air”) that was the catalytic idea of the television specific in the early times. Here there is a complex game of references and a return to the origins. The series takes a television broadcaster in the 50’s as setting. The ZBC (Zoblotnick Broadcast Company) kicks off a broadcast of live variety acts with which Lester Guy, a run-down movie star, hopes to revitalize his career. It’s about going back to Lynch’s favorite decade and continuing his work of deepening and cracking of the imaginary tissue manufactured in those times of innocence and superficiality. The project is summarized in the initial generic. Lynch’s intention is clear, to explode, from its origins, the naturalized flux of television broadcasting, to break its continuity, to show the holes that mark the inconsistency of that imaginary and imagined surface, investigate how that screen of joy shows, amongst its breaches, the emergency of the absurdity it constitutes. It’s an operation of satiric critique that uses the tools of the burlesque comedy, with all its display of gestural hysterics, corporal violence and its work of unproductive reduction and language anarchy. That means to not only take television against the grain, but to break all the rules of the sitcom constructed on the chained exchange of witty dialogues. We can see how cinema, the filmmaker, revolutionizes a traditional form of television fiction by shaking the principles of the own television (taken at the moment of its genesis) and making them enter a complex circuit with cinema.

*On the Air* can be understood as an image of reality (an image of American society) consumed by the rupture of its foundations: continuity, simplicity, innocence. It is television and what it signifies, what constitutes its space, what will be disassembled, saturated, destroyed.

The use of language corresponds to this disassembly of the space (or the image of the space), of a clearly burlesque root. As we said before, the series bases its idea of dialogue in misunderstandings, the difficulty of communication and the absence of fluidity. The key is the character Gotchck, Zoblotnick’s central European nephew who directs the program. The problems with English of this character, a poor devil working there by nepotism, generate an unsolvable and comical short-circuit in the transmission chain of responses. An example of the rupture of the dialogue chain and its *reductio ad absurdum* clearly appears when Gotchck and Ruth, the production assistant, find the program’s producer and Betty, the feminine star that will accompany Lester Guy in the new *The Lester Guy Show*. The dialogue becomes impossible and absurd, like a defective game of Chinese whispers in which one always translates wrongly. On another hand, Gotchck’s English reaches, in its incomprehensible guttural, the pure interjection. Moreover, Lynch rehearses an abrupt tempo of the response exchange, not fluent at all, as if in every one there were a skipping or an interruption. This idea of breach and rupture of the naturalized flux spreads everywhere and it is not easy to digest for the common spectator.

Lester Guy, a decadent actor, acts like a star in the new frame of television and considers everyone that surrounds him to be an idiot. In the reversal logic typical of the burlesque, the one who turns out to be an idiot and ridiculous will be, mostly, the very own Lester Guy. In a way, it’s a transplanted version of the character that the same actor, Ian Buchanan, played in *Twin Peaks*. So is the character that Miguel Ferrer plays, the executive Bud Budwaller. In Budwaller’s appearance and his pep talk to the employees the short-circuit of the word is reproduced, constantly interrupted by the unnoticed sound effects activated by mistake by Blinky, the blind sound technician. This chain of comical interruptions and sonorous startling, that break the discourse, anticipates the relevant role that the sonorous asynchrony (and, therefore, the work on sound) is going to play in the decomposition of the television world.

With this layout the pilot finds its natural structure in the dichotomy rehearsal/live show, staging and broadcast. We see the rehearsal of the initial program of *The Lester Guy Show* from the staged distance, from the screen or the frontal shot, more or less distant, and everything flows naturally in its original innocence. A typical romantic fiction sponsored by a brand of

dog food, sustained by the music and the sound effects. Versus this staging of the television image in its original construction, a broadcasting full of accidents, sabotaged until the absurdity, the nothingness and the void.

At first, the rebellion of the space comes, in the best comical tradition. This will be one of the principles applied by Lynch, the progressive conflict of the set and the bodies that inhabit it will be extended to a generalized asynchrony and difference, which will find its main trigger in the lack of coherence between sound and image. That's how it goes, facing the initial disaster, Gotchck loses control spiking up the nerves. The red phone gag, with Zoblotnick on the other end, symbolized by a tongue of shining fire, points to the exaggeration of the destructive cartoon, tradition to which Lynch appeals with pleasure.

In the confusion of the moment, Budwaller presses a red button of warning. That button will provoke a movement of the sound effects' control panel that Blinky cannot notice. The light movement of the control panel will be enough to move any effect and, therefore, to break with the synchrony of the world of the images and the soundtrack that sustains it. From there the guiding principle will be that of excess and saturation. Where in rehearsal there was only surface observed from a distance, in the live show the step to the interior of the scene reveals all its incoherence and disconnections, indescribable comical dislocations that destroy any sense and throw, in a chain of accidents, blows and falls—always driven by ludicrous sound effects—that show the inconsistency of a broken and totally inverted world.

Finally, the scene, insane, is saturated from all the visual elements and, above all, all the superposed effects activated by Blinky in total desperation. It's the rule of the Marx brothers' anarchism reinterpreted by Lynch with sound. Wear out the scene by excess, disturb it, let the noise show itself as unbearable texture of the image.

This rigorous burlesque work on the disconnection of figure and ground, surface and depth, image and sound, will end up turning a normal variety show in a singular success. This will be the series' premise that will develop in the remaining episodes. Nevertheless, it was foreseeable that this absurd vision of television's foundations was not going to find an audience. Let's say it could not find it yet in a decade in which *Seinfeld* (Larry David y Jerry Seinfeld, NBC, 1989-1998) was barely finding its way.

The consequences of Lynch's work in the conjunction of time and editing to construct a humor based in the absurdity, the incommodity and the lack of linking and understanding

between the characters and the images, the body and the television situation, are seen much later. Today's most advanced comic series, *Louie* (Louis C. K., FX, 2010-), articulates in three episodes of the third season the revival of this survival, agitates the postponed legacy bringing up, as it could not be any other way, the creative body of David Lynch.

In a thematic arch that goes from the 10th to the 12th episode of the series, *Louie* runs for the substitution of David Letterman at the front of NBC's *Late Show*. His opponent will be none less than Jerry Seinfeld (the maker of the revolutionary sitcom that triumphed in a synchronic way as *On the air's* failure). *Louie* faces with disgust and lack of harmony his entrance to the world of the great television business. Unaccustomed, he will be sent by the network to undertake a training with a private coach, Jack Dull, played by Lynch. The latter appears in two scenes of episode 11, both stellar moments of contemporary television.

In the first scene, *Louie* arrives at Dull's office, Dull being as deaf as the character that Lynch plays in *Twin Peaks* (and keeps a gun in the drawer). The issue of the first encounter is, nevertheless, the question of time. Lynch makes *Louie* read an anachronistic joke about Nixon while he times him. The joke's displacement, its non-humorous nature, the delay in time, the lack of fluidity and speed, and the insinuation of the void as a center mark the new points of interest of the comic scene seen from the transmission of the master to the disciple. This coaching doesn't come from *Twin Peaks*, but from *On the Air*. This is confirmed in the second scene where Dull and *Louie* meet. It's about a camera test in which *Louie* must interpret the *Late Night's* welcome in an empty set, and tell a joke, also anachronistic, addressing an inexistent audience. *Louie*, uncomfortable by the absurdity of the situation and the lack of adaptation to the space, is victim of the interruption and lack of fluidity. Dull-Lynch bursts in the set and acts the scene while *Louie* watches him from the camera. What happens is a comical effect derived from the absurdity of the scene seen from the inside, with Dull waving toward the emptiness, and what *Louie* sees (and hears, as a spectator), amazed, through the camera: the same scene but mixed with music and applause from "impossible" spectators. It is the dialect between the essential void of the medium and the fluid entertainment that emerges on screen. In that breach, that *On the Air* delved into deeply, *Louie* lives his adventure as a possible substitute to Letterman. To remind us about the nature of that field opened in the sitcom, the body of the filmmaker that started bringing it up many years ago appears, the one of the mentor-master David Lynch.

**Sketches for the ear: Orson Welles, from radio to television.**

We have seen different specific projects made for television by filmmakers working in the orbit of some of their original sources: theatre in Renoir or Bergman, realistic novel in Piatat, televisuality in Lynch. We can complete this approach with another filmmaker that approached television with a clear idea of how to explore it in a specific way also from one of its sources of origin.

Orson Welles was interested by it as an extension and amplifier of the power of radio, another of the mass mediums in which he had already triumphed. With this premise, Welles burst in television in a revolutionary way. His revolution would take form, mostly, in the development of a form of audiovisual essay, as a piece to reflect on and think about founded in the editing, the mixture of fiction and documentary and the inscription of the reflexive voice in the tissue of the piece. Working from the portrait (*Portrait of Gina*, ABC, 1958) or the travelogue (*Around the World with Orson Welles*, ITV, 1955; Orson's Bags, CBS, 1968), it was about showing Welles's thinking in movement, forming itself, about a particular topic or place (as frivolous as it were), making a story by constructing the truth from the power of fakeness. This entire television laboratory will lead to that film beacon of modernity that is *F for Fake* (1973), truly influenced by Welles's work for television.

Welles's relationship with television began in his European period, after the failure of *Macbeth* (1948) and before his return to the U.S., in 1956. It will be in London where, supported by the BBC, Welles will find the first spaces to investigate in his idea of television. The result will be six broadcasts titled *Orson Welles Sketchbook* (BBC, 1955), of barely fifteen minutes each. It is a simple mechanism, Orson Welles, sitting in a chair, sketches different drawings while he explains stories of different nature to the spectator. It's about conceiving television as a conversational device similar to radio, in which the narrator takes advantage of the intimacy of the medium to whisper in the ear of his interlocutors, in all familiarity, and to sketch vague images (conscious of the visual poverty of the medium in opposition to cinema) to elaborate a story of experiences that refers to the figure of the ancestral narrator, the wizard, the magician. The objective is to densify the enchantment of fiction from the power of the voice and the word, and make it (this is the great seed that Welles plants) from the sketched form, interrupted. Significantly, the first story that Welles tells is about

a personal experience (Welles always talks about himself) in which he is telling a story to his friends in a restaurant in Los Angeles. The story is interesting but Welles does not remember the ending or does not know how to finish it. On the threshold of the disaster of the story, an earthquake appears as *Deus ex machina* and saves the narrator. The ideas of the fascinating but inconclusive story, the story that stands on its own feet, and that is about the very idea of storytelling, signals the entrance figurehead of Welles in television.

The fact of him being the narrator does not surprise, such as his all-embracing figure acting as a perfect middleman, absolute voice, between the spectator and the narrated experience. Welles addresses the camera, looks the spectator in the eye, questions him. This dialogic form (or monological, it doesn't matter) of television has an impact on forms of what is sometimes named "paleotelevision" (the same way people talk about primitive cinema) that in the end founds strictly revolutionary projects that open new ways, for example, for cinema. Here Alexander Kluge's project, based on conversation and the editing process with drafts and fragments of images is not, actually, that far away.

The small fragmentary form, notebook, essay draft, will be more defined in *Around the World with Orson Welles*, the series of journeys he started immediately after for the ITV. But we are interested in pausing, to finish, in the way that Welles conceives his only strictly fictitious piece for television: *The Fountain of Youth* (NBC, 1958)<sup>1</sup>. The piece is a half-an-hour long drama requested by the producer Desilu as a pilot for a possible anthological program made with adaptations of short stories. Nevertheless, the singular formalization of this piece resulted in the non-production of the series and the broadcasting of the pilot years later in the setting of the Palmolive Colgate Theatre, one of the many anthological spaces of television adaptations of theatrical dramas or current literary works.

What Welles suggests in *The Fountain of Youth* is a distillation in the terrain of fiction of his ideas about television. He takes control and the center of the story, unfurls stripped settings, retro-projections and mixes the dialogues with narrated photographs and illustrations. He rehearses set changes on camera and investigates about the sound form and the voices of the story to construct a reflection about the vanity of appearances, the fear of growing old and the passing of time.

1. We are conscious of the vagueness of this statement as the fictitious work fragments for television can be taken from many points. On another hand, a film such as *The Immortal Story* (*Une histoire immortelle*, Orson Welles, ORTF, 1968) can be considered a work of television fiction. Nevertheless,

in its plan and methodology, besides of the funding source, the difference between a conception of cinema (where the film has usually been screened) and television cannot be seen.

The emission narrates the story of a scientist who falls in love and expects to marry Caroline Coates, a young actress with no talent, vain and banal, but with great physical beauty and much younger than him. The scientist, Humphrey Baxter, must leave Europe for some years to research. When he comes back, he finds out that the young actress is about to marry a tennis star. Baxter spreads the word, then, about having synthesized a serum for eternal youth. The scientist offers the serum to the couple as a wedding gift, but there is only one dose that they cannot share. The serum, which is false, will act as a revealer of the vanity of the presumed lovers.

Amongst the things that we should highlight of Welles's "program" of television fiction is the author's omnipresence. As he did in his radio fictions, Welles talks in first person singular, he narrates, he bursts into the story and he even says the characters' dialogues. He is the great imaginator and, actually, the main character, of this chain of vanity and falseness. But the affirmation of the voice and the presence relapses into already explored resources in radio and that will reappear in his cinematographic essays.

Welles manages the characters at his will and finds his first representative figure in Baxter, the scientist who also creates a plot to manipulate the characters at his will. Welles shows, plays, marks transitions and, of course, addresses the spectator directly. The story and its construction ways are again the center of the story, and television, as a radio with images, reinforces the function of enchantment of what is narrated, story for the ear. In this sense Welles assumes the poverty of the image, constructed from the note or the evocation (let us remember the concept "sketch"): transparencies, simple sets, few significant objects, centrality of the word and density of certain sounds. In this sense the presence of microphones or the enormous phonograph of Baxter's laboratory confirm that the image is offered to the ear, that it speaks to the eye. In the same way, the sound of a clock's ticking during the scene of the encounter of the three main characters defines the temporal texture that constitutes the background of the story. Welles's aesthetic program is about reinforcing the oral aspect and insisting on the sound texture.

At the image level, to the fascination of the narrator and that which is narrated as a veiled plot to conceal the temporal angst, corresponds the field of the magician and magic, the illusion of eternal life and the image in the mirror. In this way, the reflection, the mirrored, but also the transparent, the evanescent, the dissolved, the changeable, are the ways of fragile image that correspond to that powerful sound tissue. Welles strengthens, from fiction, as he will strengthen in his television or cinematographic essays, another important figure

in television: the talking man that questions the spectator in a frontal and direct way. This figure, naturalized by television, will also be important in modern cinema. For Welles, as we have seen, it founds the possibility of any work for television: the direct confrontation with the audience.

### Past future

We have wandered through some experiences that reinforce the idea of a television fiction, of a television, driven by filmmakers. It has been like so throughout history. The specifics of the length, the repetition, the seriality; plus other coordinates related to television such as simultaneity, intimacy or the popular reach of the medium, have turned television into a territory of infinite possibilities to explore starting from assuming a certain poverty of the image.

Today, when television, largely, has chosen to enrich its image to defeat cinema with its own weapons, we must remember that the future of television once went through singular and extraordinary works that elaborated an aesthetic program for television fiction as a space of prolongation and renovation of cinema's possibilities from the sources that nurtured the medium, searching a specificity, a different articulation, a way of writing the world that would use other tools and would transport the experiences in another way. The future has not been written in that way, but the works that remained were possible roads which paths remain unfathomed. •

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

L'HERBIER, Marcel (1954). "Téle-Shaw" in *Cahiers du Cinéma* n° 31.

QUINTANA, Àngel (1995). "La televisión como instrumento para un cine de la escena" in *Nosferatu* n° 17-18.

MÉRIGEAU, Pascal (2003). *Maurice Pialat, l'imprécauteur*. Paris. Grasset.

RENOIR, Jean and ROSSELLINI, Roberto (1958). "Cinéma et television" in *France Observateur*, n° 442, October 1958. Propos recueillis par André Bazin, Jean Herman, Claude Choublier.

## FRAN BENAVENTE

Professor and director of the degree in Audiovisual Communication at Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Fran Benavente lectures on the history of audiovisual genres and television narratives. As a film and television critic, he writes for periodicals

## GLÒRIA SALVADÓ

Glòria Salvadó is a professor of Audiovisual Communication at Universitat Pompeu Fabra, where she lectures on audiovisual narratives and the relations between film and television. She also lectures for Universitat Oberta de Catalunya. As a cinema

RODLEY, Chris (2005). *Lynch on Lynch*. Londres. Faber & Faber.

ROSSELLINI, Roberto (2000). *El cine revelado*. Barcelona. Paidós.

SABOURAUD, Frédéric and TOUBIANA, Serge (1988). "Zappeur et cinéfile. Entretien avec Serge Daney" in *Cahiers du Cinéma* n° 406.

such as *Caimán / Cuadernos de Cine* or *Cultura/s*, the cultural revue of *La Vanguardia*. He has published numerous academic articles and collaborated in a number of books on cinema and serial fiction.

and television critic, she writes for magazines such as *Caimán / Cuadernos de Cine* and *Cultura/s*, the cultural revue of *La Vanguardia*. She has published numerous academic articles and collaborated in a number of books on cinema and serial fiction.



# Television series by Sonimage: Audiovisual practices as theoretical inquiry

---

Carolina Sourdis

## ABSTRACT

Through the notion of creation as laboratory and the conception of montage developed by Godard throughout his works, this article analyses Godard's thought projected from television to cinema based on the television series produced by Sonimage in the late seventies (*Six fois deux* and *France tour détour deux enfants*), and the uncompleted project developed in Mozambique for the foundation of the first television network. Related to other contemporary films made by Sonimage such as *Ici et ailleurs* (1974), *Numéro deux* (1975) and *Comment ça va* (1975), the television series are proposed both as a vehicle and a base to question aspects of cinema from its margins, reflecting about the theoretical dimension of the audiovisual practices and deepening into the intersection between the political work and the lyrical component that Godard settles within the televisual instrument. Finally, doubt as a motor for creation is questioned based on the interrogative structure of both series.

## KEYWORDS

Sonimage, Jean-Luc Godard, television series, Research, Reflection, Laboratory, Montage, *Six Fois Deux/Sur et sous la communication*, *France tour détour deux enfants*, Sonimage in Mozambique.



‘What must be discovered in an image is a method’  
*Le Gai Savoir*, Jean-Luc Godard

In 1976, the public television network France 3 broadcasts *Six Times Two/On and Under Communication* (*Six Fois Deux/Sur et sous la communication*)<sup>1</sup>, the first television series made by Jean-Luc Godard and Anne-Marie Miéville within their recently founded company Soinmage based in Grenoble. Two years later, Sonimage produces *France tour détour deux enfants*<sup>2</sup> (Jean-Luc Godard and Anne-Marie Miéville, 1978) commissioned by Atenne 2 and with the support of The National Audiovisual Institute, consisting on a “loose” adaptation of the canonical pedagogical text of the III Republic *Le tour de la France par deux enfants* by G. Bruno. In this case, opposite to what is settled with the programmers, the series is broadcasted only until 1980 in 4-chapter blocks, and alternatively is premiered at The Venice Film Festival in 1979. Simultaneously, in 1977, the duo begins a two-year project in Mozambique to collaborate with the National Institute of Cinematography—a governmental entity constituted to foster the development of a local cinematographic industry in the midst of the decolonization process after their independence in 1975<sup>3</sup>—with the foundation of the first television station in the history of that country. The project is not concluded. In 1979, a series of photographs commented by Godard as summary of the experience are published in the 300th issue of *Cahiers du cinéma*.<sup>4</sup>

Besides including details of the daily routine in Mozambique, as a shooting diary, the document explains how the content of the series was conceived, its structure and film formats. Five films shot both in video and cinema, 8mm and 16mm, and several photographic montages, where ‘the relations and the story of those (historic) relations, between a country that still has no television and a little team of television from a country that has a lot’ (GODARD, 1979: 75) would be approached. The first

and the fifth film would be devoted to the relationship between the producer and the announcer to frame the other three films which were planned as ‘drafts, note pads, routes of thought, desires and impressions’ (GODARD, 1979: 74) to express the points of view of each member of the team: the producer, the business man and the announcer-photographer. Thus, with this thread, the other fundamental purpose of the project would be developed: ‘To study television before it exists, before it floods (even barely in 20 years) all the social and geographical corpus of Mozambique [...] to study the image, the desire for those images, show a memory, make a mark, on arrival or departure, a line of contact, a moral/political guide, with just one purpose: the independence’ (GODARD, 1979: 74).

In this way the project was intended as a research on images based on the experience of creating them: ‘Two or three on the margins of television to *think*—and here is very important to point out that the idea of thought implicitly carries the act of creation itself—television with thirteen million still on the margins of the world. Both margins together to fill a blank page or the dark night’ (GODARD, 1979: 76). Thus, the photographs that compose the brief diary of Godard’s experience are mostly of Mozambican women, men and children in an observational act, looking through the camera or at images in the monitors: the logic of shooting and editing, of making images to view them later again. These images work as an evidence of the invention of “the possibility to see that reality and reflect over it [...] to research not only with words but with living matter” (GODARD, 1979: 101).

One decade before, in one of the dialogues of *The Joy of Learning* (*Le Gai Savoir*, Jean-Luc Godard, 1968) the couple discusses the method for obtaining truthful cinematographic and televisual images and sounds. They propose in first place, a stage of registration and experimentation, followed by a critical one—‘We will decompose, reduce and recompose’—and a final

1. *Six Fois Deux/Sur et sous la communication* is constituted by 6 chapters of two segments each, organized in fragments A/B, just as Godard would structure his *Histoires(s) du cinéma*. The first segment always reflects about an element regarding the image production: production, the author, photography, screenplay, sound and montage. In the second segment, one character is interviewed to reflect on different topics: a peasant, Godard himself, an amateur filmmaker, several women, the mathematician René Thom and a couple.

2. *France tour détour deux enfants* has 12 chapters named ‘Movements’. They are structured with interrogatories to two children: Camille and Arnaud. Godard interrogates them individually with different complex question about the existence, the world, work, money, images and sound. The chapters are structured as follows: 1. Obscur/Chimie, 2. Lumière/Physique, 3. Connu/Géométrie/Géographie, 4. Iconnu/Technique, 5. Impression/Dictée, 6. Expression/Francias, 7. Violence/Grammaire, 8. Desordre/Calcul, 9. Pouvoir/Musique, 10. Roman/Économie, 11. Réalite/Logique, 12. Reve/Morale.

3. Before 1975 some documentaries had been made about the independence processes of Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau and Angola, although they were all directed by foreign filmmakers. With the independence of Mozambique and the establishment of the National Film Institute, several programmes started to be encouraged in order to foster the local cinematographic development. For a perspective on the cinematographic situation of Mozambique see: Pasley, Victoria, *Kuxa kanema: Third Cinema and its transatlantic Crossings, en Rethinking third Cinema*, ed, Ekotto Frieda, Koh Adeline, 2009.

4. The whole issue is available online at <http://diagonalthoughts.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/300.pdf>: *Le dernière reve d’une productore*, pg. 70-129.

stage to formulate a model of image and sound. Very close to this logic would turn to be Sonimage's journey to Mozambique and, in a general outline, it could be read as the synthesis of one of the deepest concerns throughout Godard's trajectory after May 68: the possibility to link the theoretical and the practical dimension in cinema, conceiving creative methods much more related to those scientific. Cinema—images, sounds and the countless relations between each other—as a laboratory where one searches, thinks and creates *just a form* to materialize ideas based on a sensitive medium: audiovisual images.

Attempting to formulate Godard's purely platonic thought regarding television could be limited to define the edges between cinema and television based on the specificities of the formats, its exhibition mechanisms and its logics of production, considering Godard always discovers a power of sense in these, and probably, it would conclude with the undeniable supremacy of cinema over television. Nevertheless, linked to his practices, related to a certain working methodology—creation as laboratory—and to other transverse inquiries of his thought—the complex conception of montage—his television series are still a vehicle and a base to question aspects of cinema from its margins: of cinema transformed into the audiovisual. Is from that peripheral zone where Godard generates a space to question notions such as communication and the transmission and reception of information related to the dominant ideological powers, on (and under) televisual images.

The film theorist Philippe Dubois proposes *Six Times Two* as Godard's last political film and *France tour detour* as his first lyrical work towards his rebirth in cinema. Although, in general, the last one is more studied, mostly in relation to its plastic and lyrical dimension regarding Godard's movement experiments with the speed later continued in *Slow Motion (Sauvi qui peut (la vie la vie))* (1979) and *Histoire(s) du cinema* (1988 -1998), it results significant to deepen into the intersection between the political work and the “lyrical, artistically dense” (DUBOIS, 1992: 174) component that Godard settles within the televisual instrument.

In his diary of Mozambique he writes: ‘shooting rehearsal in video at the market. Not much conclusive. The material is not sophisticated at all to register the beauty of the colours. Very annoying for filming the living’; some pages later: ‘second shooting at the multicolour market. Better and more calmed shots. Anne-Marie was right and Jean-Luc Godard fails. Better to shoot with super-8mm and transfer to video if necessary’ (GODARD, 1979: 116). Parallel to the quest for the nascent image that pursues independence, there is a search for the light, the colour, for that “living matter” of cinema.

In the segment entitled *6A: Before and After (6A: Avant et Après)* in *Six Times Two*, the presenter comments retrospectively what has been intended with the series, how it is structured and the relation of the segments regarding the image production and consumption chain. He goes back over several shots that have been part of the series and reflects on the technical procedures the images have been subjected to in order to be transmitted: all images are codified, “spoiled”, “like the image of this little boy under the brilliant sunlight [...] if it was beautiful, can you imagine?” We are allowed to see the “rough” take. For the first time, the image stops being subjected to the voice of the narrator-announcer, the original soundtrack is restored.

In order to see the ‘thought’ Godard projects from television to cinema, it is necessary to study both series as a whole, with the unconcluded experience of Mozambique in between, and related to the other works made by Sonimage during the time: *Here and Elsewhere (Ici et ailleurs)*, 1974) which is simultaneously a conclusion and a point of departure, closing on the one hand Godard's period of political militancy and opening, on the other, a period of critical reflection from and towards images and sounds; *Number Two* (1975), where an evident search for a technical dispositive to show the relations between images is exposed (hence the 35mm registration of multiple deployments of the monitors, of an image on top, below, aside one another); and finally *How is it going? (Comment ça va)*, 1975), which essentially is a study on the idea of the photographic image as ‘atom’, whose frictions and interactions, properly observed, are able to create another image by comparison.

As Michael Witt argues in *Godard Cinema Historian*, what the filmmaker is looking for with the television series is to ‘carve out a critical, oppositional space within the framework of broadcast television, simultaneously foregrounding the limitations and distortions arising from what he considers its widespread misuses’ (WITT, 2013:169) through a ‘complete turning of television conventions against themselves’ (DUBOIS, 1990: 174). In this way it becomes fundamental to be based on the codes of television: the seriality of the broadcasts can be thought as a montage structure, the dynamic of the interview can be transformed into an expression tool or the intrusion of the presenters can be established as reflexive commentary. The work in television continues (from cinema?) as an introspective critique, from within and with image itself. Inside an image that is reflected and which discovers its own reflection. ‘Always 2 for 1 image’, (GODARD, 1979: 88) Godard writes. The image will always be, at least, the combination of its reflection and itself.

This exposition of the images is what Godard conceives as the filmmaker's political work, making films “politically” rather than making political films. Godard commented on *La*

*Chinoise* (1967), already a film posed as a rupture at the edge of May 68: 'I only destroy certain idea of image, certain way of conceiving what is ought to be. But I have never thought about it in terms of destruction, what I wanted was to go *inside* the image.' (AIDELMAN and DE LUCAS, 2010: 80). From that point forward, his cinematographic work during his political militancy would consist on 'politically question oneself about the images and sounds and their relations (...), on not saying anymore 'is a just image' but rather 'its just an image' (2010: 90), 'beautiful formula' from *Winds from the East* (*Vent de l'est*, Dziga Vertov Group, 1969) that would be brought up by Gilles Deleuze to define, precisely, those ideas he had 'seen' in *Six Fois Deux*:

Just ideas are always those that conform to accepted meanings or established precepts, they're always ideas that confirm something, even if it's something in the future, even if it's the future of the revolution. While "just ideas" is a becoming-present, a stammering of ideas, and can only be expressed in the form of questions that tend to confound any answers (DELEUZE, 1976).

Closed the way for answers, questions, 'even the simplest interrogation 'How is it going?' transforms itself into a concrete problem' (BRENEZ, 2003: 165). Both Godard's series for television are generated and structured through continued interrogations to different characters. In *Six Fois Deux* more according to an interview and in *France tour détour* more related to an interrogatory. If in the first one, the modelling of the discourse is given mostly by the particular knowledge of the speaker—Luison as a peasant thinks and experiences the production and labour relations in certain way, different from Marcel who as a watchmaker and an amateur filmmaker thinks and experiences others—, in the second the modelling is given by the filmmaker, the questions seem to have a common thread and lead to something that the speakers have not yet discovered. According to Deleuze's reflections on *Six Fois Deux* this persistence on the interrogation is identified as a stammering, both creative and creator, which exposes doubt as the motor of creation, field that Godard will widely explore afterwards in works such as *Letter to Fredy Bauche* (*Lettre à Freddy Bauche*, 1981) *Scénario du film passion* (1982), *Changer d'image* (1982) or even later in *In Praise for Love* (*Eloge de l'amour*, 2001).

In *Letter to Fredy Bauche* (*Lettre à Freddy Bauche*, 1981) the camera repeatedly explores the landscape with random movements while the filmmaker explains in off that he is only searching for three shots with the video: the green, the blue and the step from the green to the blue, something in between. The floating movements, nevertheless, remain undefined, as

if an image of a transience state. The blue does not exist, nor does the green, it is not even necessary to create them; on the contrary, the power of the work is rooted in the creation of a certain itinerary, a 'route of thought' (GODARD, 1979: 74) that becomes visible bringing to the fore the value of the interval, the movements of the camera as a thinking trace. 'When you look you track the image. If what your head does could be seen it would be like a drawing. Well, short time after your hands are no longer making a drawing because they always go in the same sense [...] you forget the movements of the look, you don't rely on them to think', claims Miéville in *Comment ça va*.

Although the series constitute liminal works in his trajectory, the work by Sonimage for Television deepens the experimentation about the possible relations between sound and images, not only from an ideological perspective but questioning and thinking theoretically over the images. Why a shot comes after another? What is there between images? How to decompose their constituting parts? The linearity of the logic of language that Miéville accuses as a blind's work in *How is it going?* (*Comment ça va*) finds in this stammering its first principle of rupture. Separate to better join. Maybe Godard and Miéville's television practices could be considered as the first drafts for *Histoire(s) du cinema*, the first studies where montage started to operate as a creative tool of a virtual and poetic image, an image 'as a pure creation of the spirit'. •

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- AIDELMAN, Nuria and DE LUCAS, Gonzalo (2010). *Pensar entre imágenes*. Barcelona. Intermedio.
- BERGALA, Alan (2003). *Nadie como Godard*. Barcelona. Paidós.
- BRENEZ, Nicole (2004). "The Forms of the Question" in TEMPLE, Michael, WILLIAMS James and WITT, Michael. *Forever Godard*. Londres. Black Dog Publishing. Pages 160-177.
- DELEUZE, Gilles (1997). *Negotiations 1972 -1990*. Interview by Jean Narboni and Pascal Bonitzer, originally published in *Cahiers du Cinéma*, No. 271.
- DIAWARA, Manthia (1992). *African Cinema*. Bloomington. Indiana University Press.
- DUBOIS, Philippe (1992). "Video thinks what cinema creates" in BELLOUR, Raymond, *SON + IMAGE 1974-1991*. Nueva York. The Museum of Modern Art. Pages 167-182
- EKOTTO Frieda and KOH Adeline (2009). *Rethinking Third Cinema: The Role of Anti-colonial Media and Aesthetics in Postmodernity*. Berlin. LIT Verlag.
- FAIRFAX, Daniel (2010). "Birth (of the image) of a Nation: Jean-Luc Godard in Mozambique" in *Acta Univ. Sapientiae, Film and Media Studies* No. 3. Pages 55-67.
- GODARD, Jean-Luc (1979). *Le dernière reve d'une producteur*. *Cahiers du Cinéma*, No. 300. Pages 70-129.
- WITT, Michael (2013). *Godard Cinema Historian*. Bloomington. Indiana University Press.

**CAROLINA SOURDIS**

Filmmaker and audiovisual researcher raised in Bogotá and Barcelona. Her visual work has been exhibited in festivals in Spain, Colombia and Iran. As a researcher she has studied editing related to found-footage practices, through a grant

awarded by the Colombian Ministry of Culture. She is a PhD candidate at the Communication Department of Universitat Pompeu Fabra. Her lines of research are European film essays and their convergence with cinematic theory and practice.

# The televisual practices of Iván Zulueta

---

Miguel Fernández-Labayen

## ABSTRACT

This article explores the liaisons of Iván Zulueta with television. The first part focuses on his work for the TV program *Último grito* (Pedro Olea, Iván Zulueta y Ramón Gómez Redondo, TVE, 1968-1970), researching primary and secondary sources from a historiographic standpoint in order to study the context in which this musical show was produced, while linking it with various cultural synergies of its time. *Último grito* is therefore studied both as a key example of national television and as a juxtaposition of international cultural influences. The last part of the article studies the role of television in the cinematic works of Zulueta throughout the 70's. Thus the goal of this research is to problematize canonic separations between TV and cinema as mediums, focusing on the trajectory of Zulueta as an example of the growth of Spanish audiovisual culture. A culture in which design, music videos and advertisement merged with experimental cinema and television entertainment, giving birth to a complex net of aesthetic, economic and cultural correspondences.

## KEYWORDS

Iván Zulueta, Ramón Gómez Redondo, Pedro Olea, Valerio Lazarov, *Último grito*, Televisión Española, experimental television, youth cultures, experimental cinema.



Marta's aunt: Are you fond of TV?  
 José Sirgado: I only watch the pictures  
 Dialogue from *Arrebato* (Iván Zulueta, 1979)

## Introduction

'Various times with different shades.' That's what can be read in a handwritten note in the *storyboard* of the opening credits of *Último grito* (TVE, 1968-1970). Those words could very well summarize Iván Zulueta's relationship with television. On the one hand, they grasp the formal and aesthetic diversity of his collaborations for TV, which range from the creation of a cultural magazine as *Último grito* to the direction of one of the episodes of the fantasy serial *Crónicas del mal* (Ramón Gómez Redondo, TVE, 1992). On the other, the sentence plays around with notions of repetition and change, much beloved concepts in the pop culture of that time (Warhol serigraphies come to mind). Moreover, the tensions between repetition and change lie deep in the core of Zulueta's oeuvre as a visual artist, whose theoretical inquiries on the nature of cinematic rhythm, pause and arrest blossom in *Arrebato* (1979) and his late series of Polaroids.

Overall, the trajectory of Zulueta is shaped by the use of TV as a modernizing entity: since his formative years as a director in *Último grito*, when he was still a pupil of the Escuela Oficial de Cinematografía, until the shooting of *Ritesti* (TVE, 1992), his last audiovisual piece. Zulueta's work *for* and *with* television allows for a reassessment of the importance of television within film and visual studies, not only as a culturally significant agent, but also as a breeding ground for transgressive aesthetic forms. This text will explore Zulueta's experience in television focusing on *Último grito* and his works of the 70's as televisual practice, where *televisual* means

'the structures of the imaginary and/or epistemological that have taken shape around television over its history [...] a set of critical discourses that define and attribute properties to the medium –for instance, as one of liveness, presence, flow, coverage, or remote control' (PARKS, 2005: 12).

It could be argued that the televisual practices of Iván Zulueta connect with the industrial modernization of Spain while embodying a certain cultural conception of what being *moderno* meant at the time, thus bridging the radical and elitist qualities of the avant-garde with the popular appeal of mass TV entertainment.

Consequently, this text offers an account of Zulueta's duties as a director working within the limits of Spanish public television at the end of the 60's, and as an experimental filmmaker in the 70's. From that point of view, I will highlight the key role

of television for any study of Zulueta's oeuvre, not in order to antagonize cinema and TV but in order to reconsider the transmedia approach of his creative career. Under that scope, the career of the Basque artist should be understood in continuous dialogue with the growing postmodern visual culture of Spain throughout the 60's, when filmmakers and television directors were part of a social network that included admen, visual artists, architects, graphic designers, musicians and other cultural agents. Therefore, this text is related to previous works that have studied the tensions between cinema and television in Spain during that period (CAMPONESI, 1999) as well as the forms of audiovisual and artistic experimentation in both media beyond our borders (CONNOLLY, 2014; JOSELIT, 2007; MULVEY and SEXTON, 2007; WYVER, 2007). The analysis of such connections is not rooted on a celebration of Zulueta's televisual work based on his cinematic authorship; conversely, the goal is to open a new path to study the pleasures caused by the juxtaposition of entertainment, art and daily life originated in the second half of the XXth century (SPIGEL, 2008).

## *Último grito* and modernity in Spain: contextual matters and historiographic issues

*Último grito* stands as the first professional work of Iván Zulueta. Pedro Olea, writer and director as well as former student of the Escuela Oficial de Cinematografía, who had been working in television for some time, facilitated Zulueta's debut as director in the show. Olea defined the project –that was to be named *A todo color*– as a 'weekly *revue* for those who want to keep up with the times' and it included up to seven sections encompassing interviews, film reviews and reports about fashion, cinema and music (GALÁN, 1993: 32). The show, already with its final title, ended up being structured in four sections: "Ataque a", "Reportajes", "Cinelandia" and "33/45", of which the former one, introduced by Nacho Arttime, disappeared in the first season. The show was hosted by Judy Stephen, a Texan who had already appeared in *Escala en HiFi* (Fernando García de la Vega, TVE, 1961-1967), and José María Ñiño, in what became his first appearance as a television host.

In Wednesday May 22nd 1968, between 22:45 and 23:15 hours, *Último grito* premiered in the second channel of Televisión Española. Originally, the show came right after *Tiempo para creer* (Ángel García Dorronsoro, TVE, 1967-) and before *Cuestión urgente* (Esteve Duran, TVE, 1967-1970), which closed the UHF broadcast signal. Nevertheless, its schedule changed several times through the first season between 22:02 and 00:00 hours, even moving to other weekdays. For starters, a round of 36 episodes was broadcasted –Christmas break included– until Wednesday February 19th 1969. The show finished one year later, after a second season of nine episodes broadcasted between December 9th 1969 and January 22nd 1970, usually in the 23:45 hours time slot.



There's one main obstacle when it comes to studying Iván Zulueta's work in *Último grito*: from a total of 45 episodes of the show that were actually broadcasted –as stated in the TV schedules of *TeleRadio*– only five remain available inside the archives of Televisión Española, along with a recap of almost 50 minutes that mixes excerpts of those same episodes<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, any remark about the content of the program today remains necessarily partial.

Besides, it is inexcusable to keep in mind that we are talking about a television show made collectively, as most TV productions. So on Tuesday May 22nd 1968, *TeleRadio* published a TV grid announcing that the premiere of *Último grito* was directed by Iván Zulueta and written-directed by Pedro Olea. Although Olea ceased directorial duties in the second episode, due to other film commitments, he remained close to the show. Also, contributions by other directors such as Ramón Gómez Redondo and Antonio Drove were instrumental during the show's second season, to the extent that the former was in charge of directing several episodes and the latter created many of the sketches that still survive today (ALBERICH, 2002: 44-45). Gómez Redondo himself underlines certain key aspects about the production of *Último grito*: 'the show had three directors, Zulueta, Drove and me, the system was perfect: every three-week period, one was used for prep, another one for shooting and the last for editing, so there was always a team in the works' (FARRÉ BRUFAU, 1989: 351).

On the other hand, as the erratic programming of the show proves, it is rather clear that *Último grito* did not become a massive hit. The late broadcasting schedule in a weekday definitely limited its scope, not to mention the far from popular ratings of TVE's second channel at the end of the 60's, only two years after its creation in 1966<sup>2</sup>. While the total amount of television sets in the country raised from 30.000 in 1957 to almost three millions in 1968, *Último grito*'s debut year, and kept augmenting until four millions and an aggregated daily audience of fifteen-million in 1970, right when the show was cancelled (RUEDA LAFFOND and CHICHARRO MERAYO, 2006: 86-92), we should keep in mind that the UHF signal would still need fifteen more years to reach the total Spanish territory and the second channel had a minority audience in its early years.

And yet, the impact of UHF in a country like Spain was huge for those sectors of the population with an interest in culture as a whole. Even more so, among the authorities of the regime there was a clear notion that TVE's second channel would allow for newer grounds in terms of cultural and educational programs (PALACIO, 2001: 125). As Manuel Palacio has pointed out, the debuts of several former students of the Escuela Oficial de Cinematografía at TVE's second channel, as well as the search for innovative forms among its different shows, set the ground for a Golden Age of television in Spain to blossom. Moreover, the artistic and pedagogical values of several shows broadcasted during the early years of TVE-2 are key in order to understand the relationship of a minority television like this and the quality television standard shared by most second-channel emissions all over Europe (PALACIO, 2001: 123-142). Overall, the placement of *Último grito* in TVE's second channel helps us to better grasp why the work of Zulueta, Drove, Gómez Redondo and Olea wasn't an anomaly in Francoist television, instead, it proves a connection with wider tendencies of programming and consumption generally neglected by historians.

*TeleRadio*, the official magazine of Televisión Española, defined the show as 'features and stylish music in a happy, young and very *in format*' (TELERADIO, 1968: 55). And no doubt, that was the show's main logic: to be *in*. At that time in Spain "being *in*" or "staying *in*" meant following the latest artistic movements, being up to date with new developments in art or design, and expressing that modern way of understanding life with a casual use of English vocabulary and a touch of irony when discussing mass culture and film-music references. Consequently, *Último grito* fantasized with the ideal of progress that TV promised while showcasing a casual cosmopolitanism.

The fact that such an internationalization, embodied in the Anglo-Saxon experiences of Zulueta and Íñigo, was only at reach for a certain cultural and economical elite that could afford to travel to London or New York and keep up with the musical and artistic scene, turned the show into something even more fascinating for the Spanish youth. As José María Íñigo remembers: 'in mid-July and August, during the peak of summer, I would host the show wearing a scarf and a coat, just in order to upset, to draw attention, it was a way of representing a different culture, a way of saying here-we-are and this-is-our-thing' (ÍÑIGO, 2006).

1. The abovementioned recap is available for free at RTVE's website: <http://www.rtve.es/alcarta/videos/programas-y-concursos-en-el-archivo-de-rtve/ultimo-grito-recopilacion/1829851/>. It is also possible to watch one complete episode that TVE-50 broadcasted during the fifty-anniversary celebrations of the channel. That episode was originally broadcasted in TVE-2 on a Tuesday, December 30th 1969, between 23:45 and 00:15 hours, and can be browsed in: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SI-pS8k74k8>

2. In a review of *Último grito*, del Corral explained: 'the ratings of *Último Grito* must be scarce because of the temporal coincidence with *The Avengers* (ITV, 1961-1969) at the VHF channel' (DEL CORRAL, 1968c: 71).

That will to *épater* turned *Último grito* into a counter-space, where the iconoclastic appeal of pop worked as an escape mechanism as well as a social and cultural trademark for the young urbanites that formed the show's ideal audience.

On the other hand, programs like *Último grito* brought the television viewers closer to the growing internationalization of the country, present as well in the spread of pop music sung in English and its celebration in films such as *Dame un poco de amooooor...!* (José María Forqué, 1968). The international team of *Último grito*, with Judy Stephen, José María Íñigo and Iván Zulueta on the top, allowed for contents in which American and English pop culture were vital to construct a different type of sentimental education, a new role-modeling process for younger audiences. As Manuel Palacio has explained, 'that is the first attempt to connect with the 60's youth from an Anglo-Saxon cultural approach, where political struggle evolves through very different channels than those of traditional Marxism (Frank Zappa being its paradigm)' (PALACIO, 2006: 36).

Along those lines, the show of Zulueta, Íñigo and Stephen was one among several TV initiatives in which international entertainment brought a breath of fresh air to Spanish visual culture, while making audiences familiar with international celebrities. In the 70's, television directors like Chicho Ibáñez Serrador or Valerio Lazarov joined the ranks of Televisión Española, and by means of their shows reshaped televisual language and refurnished the cultural references of the Spanish average viewer, advocating for a certain cultural capital and a sort of transnational aesthetic sensibility (BINIMELIS, CERDÁN and FERNÁNDEZ LABAYEN, 2013). So the agenda of *Último grito* was significant as far as the cultural distinction of younger viewers was concerned, setting apart from the master lines of the regime; something that the press already understood when labeling it as 'a program of true international scope' (DEL CORRAL, 1968b: 77), an exception against the traditional classicism of first channel shows such as *Estudio 1* (TVE, 1965-1985; 2000-) or *Novela* (TVE, 1962-1979), directed by professionals like Pilar Miró, Fernando García de la Vega or Gustavo Pérez Puig among others.

3. Enrique del Corral, critic of the newspaper *ABC*, was –among other things– the person who, according to Valerio Lazarov, introduced him to Juan José Rosón and Adolfo Suárez, both TVE top executives in 1966 (CORTELL HUOT SORDOT y PALACIO, 2006: 39). Later on, that meeting proved to be instrumental towards Lazarov's arrival to Spain.

4. In an original interview with Pedro Olea in February 13th 2013, the writer explained how the opening credits changed throughout time, so the ones available now at the archives of TVE are slightly different to the ones

A closer look at *Último grito*'s content can be useful to understand Enrique del Corral's quote<sup>3</sup>. In aesthetic terms, the use of optical effects, the intermittence of black and white backgrounds as well as the search for a psychedelic visual saturation by means of superimpositions and unconventional camera angles created an unprecedented type of show in Spain. The opening credits, designed by Zulueta, already announce an eclectic disposition and operate as a storm of cultural referents. A visual dialogue between portraits of Tarzan and Sean Connery as James Bond, while the jungle man's scream fades with the melody of 007 interrupted by a shot, with an illustration of a comic-strip "BANG". Frames of *Barbarella* follow (Roger Vadim, 1968), mixed with images of Popeye, Little Lulu and Snoopy among other cartoon idols. Such a rapid-fire succession of figures, edited in sync with Tony Newman's "Let the good times roll" as the opening tune, ends with a frame of Lon Chaney from *The Phantom of the Opera* (Rupert Julian, 1925). The music sets the tone for the title credits and the entire show, a retroprojection over the bodies of two female figures who dance to the song. Finally, a montage of rock-band images closes the program's opening credits<sup>4</sup>.

The available version of the credits is surprising for at least three reasons. First, the show is in fact proud of being fashionable, premiering images previously unknown to Spanish cultural consumers. For instance, the quote to *Barbarella* is ahead of its time, since Vadim's film wasn't released in Spain until 1974. On the other hand, the type of cultural references evoked create an eclectic juxtaposition where ironic naïf quotes of cartoon characters share time and space with the pantheon of rock music, a taste for pop icons and the cultivated reference to Chaney. Finally, the prominence of the female body and the sexy dreamy choreographies of the two girls dancing in the credits, with the title projected as *body art* over their skins, enhance the sex appeal of the show and connect with similar strategies deployed by Valerio Lazarov in the first channel of TVE.

The show was shot in 16 mm and ended up being structured in three main blocks: "Reportajes", reports on trendy cultural topics (such as surf, comic books or pop art); "Cinelandia", a

broadcasted in the first episodes. For instance, the single "Let the good times roll" that works as title song in the available version of *Último grito* was released in January 28th 1968, and by that time, the show had already been on for more than a month. On the other hand, as Diego Galán points out, among the final sketches of the project presented by Olea to TVE there was a mention to a title 'that could be *El último grito*, preceded by a drawing of Tarzan, in zoom, and the sound of his unmistakable scream (and a shot)' (GALÁN, 1993: 32).

revisionist approach to Hollywood's cinema and Spanish films of the time, and "33/45", where the latest music albums were reviewed, often using original designs by the show's creative team to illustrate every specific song.

The reports combine an informative voice-over with explanatory images related to any given topic. On location interviews are added on, in order to offer a casual commentary on the different news. Sometimes the section includes excerpts of the show's hosts where they make use of their unique creativity, especially by using a set of rhetoric and ironic strategies of their own, far less traditional than the norm.

"Cinelandia" also plays around that tension between information and expression. On the one hand, the classic cinephilia of the show's directors is widely exhibited thanks to the reports on Hollywood's iconic celebrities. On the other, that traditional approach is enriched by a set of pop references, by means of a series of movie parodies and spoofs of recently released films such as *La madriguera* (Carlos Saura, 1969) turned into *La marrullera*, directed by Santos Maura; or *Winning* (James Goldstone, 1969) turned into *500 Prix*. The use of 16mm allowed for a type of aesthetic based on location shooting, making the best of budget constraints by referencing them in a series of self-reflective *camp* exercises. Parody and exaggeration are used to underline some of the existentialist ambitions of Saura's symbolic cinema as well as other Spanish authors, or the blatant exploitation of melodrama and epics in American films.

Ultimately, *Último grito* became an appealing show thanks to its innovative design and the creativity of Zulueta and the rest of the directors working in the program. In section "33/45", for instance, with a limited budget and without being able to reach directly any of the music bands mentioned in the show, the filmmakers had to generate their own graphic material and footage to accompany those band's music.

Therefore, the most common strategies were the reappropriation of previously existing footage from live concerts and the collage of still images of each group, from Frank Zappa & The Mothers of Invention to Long John Baldry, Carla Thomas or T Rex. Other times, the show would create new footage *ex novo*, by recording images on location (as in the shooting of Ismael's "La Tarara" by Pedro Olea) or by generating animated stop motion pictures.

On such occasions, Zulueta's inventiveness and formal training as a painter, designer and filmmaker was key in order to explore that fertile juxtaposition between animation and music. Zulueta created a series of takes of pop songs of the

period, from which remain available his visions of The Beatles' "Something" and "Get Back". The visual strategies are similar in both cases: Zulueta tries out a multiplication of curves and dots painted on the film itself, which appear on screen to complete footage of a sunset on the beach or oriental-style portraits. Furthermore, in the case of "Get Back", Zulueta super-imposes such modulations over a series of portraits of the four Beatles in their early years, thus following the rhythm of the song to add a number of written messages (Apple, Strawberry Fields Forever, Let It Be) over the musician's faces, so their silhouettes are stretched and supplemented with all sorts of props like sunglasses, beards, moustaches or even Yoko Ono in Lennon's case. Zulueta tames the *Fab Four* for a Spanish audience while he explores the metamorphic possibilities of animation to create comical nuances and to stress the Beatles' style changes and appearance. For instance, he introduces the four Liverpool musicians using brief title cards that blink for less than a second. From right to left, the sentence "Pablito es limpio" is suddenly transformed into the pun "Pablito es impío". The piece plays around the band's imagery with a high degree of self-conscious irony, mixing appraisal and distance, as proven in the later title cards devoted to George Harrison ("Jorge es guru") and John Lennon ("Juanito es sucio, muy sucio, ¡sí!"). At the same time, the piece stands as a useful example to understand the controversy on what was considered acceptable in terms of musical representation and foster debate between abstraction and figuration, art and mass consumption.

As Carlos F. Heredero (1989) and Manuel Palacio (2006) have noted, the final result connects with Norman McLaren's experiments and the practice of visual music so dear to avant-garde cinema. The connection with McLaren is double-layered, since on the one hand, and beyond the shared Basque origin underlined by Heredero when he mentions other Spanish experimental animators of that time (José Antonio Sistiaga and Rafael Ruiz Balerdi), it confirms the transnational connection of those artists, because the three of them had a considerable international experience thanks to their travels and therefore acted as mediators between foreign innovations and their late arrival to Spain. On the other hand, as William Moritz pointed out, Norman McLaren's career stands as a challenge to the modernist experimental tradition (MORITZ, 1997). His stylistic eclecticism and his interest in working with anthropomorphic forms placed his oeuvre in a sort of no man's land, hardly embraceable by the followers of neither abstract cinema nor absolute film. That's why Moritz labels McLaren as a post-modernist, something that could very well be said of Zulueta's own career.

In the case of his work for *Último grito* and the animation of "Get Back", it is worth underlining his refusal both of the

abstract tradition (with the quintessential *Ere erera baleibu icik subua aruaren* painted by Sistiaga in 1970) and the figurative one (exemplified by the 1971 *Homenaje a Tarzán* by Rafael Ruiz Balerdi). So the boldness of Zulueta's piece praised by Carlos F. Heredero shouldn't be used to contrast the artistic value of cinema against television during Franco's dictatorship, but to suggest a different genealogy, a transnational pop visual culture the integration of which in the Spanish public sphere was possible thanks to the connections between filmmakers, designers, photographers, visual artists, musicians, architects and, also, television directors and producers.

In that context, Zulueta's work for *Último grito* stands in a hybrid territory between, let's say, the proposals of the abovementioned Norman McLaren and the experiments of Valerio Lazarov, who came to Televisión Española precisely in the same year of *Último grito*'s original release, 1968. It is worth mentioning that both McLaren and Lazarov were part of Televisión Española's programming in 1968. So, on Saturday September 14th 1968, curious viewers could enjoy a 90-minute special devoted to McLaren at 22:30 in the show *Cine-Club*. As far as Lazarov is concerned, his 1968 debut *Nada se destruye, todo se transforma* was a musical program with live performances of female singers, where abstraction and all sorts of optical effects were exploited in order to create an avant-garde imagery and offer dynamic solutions to the rhythm of pop songs. Although Lazarov's approach arguably diluted the visual *tour-de-forces* of avant-garde cinema, deactivating their counter-cultural strength, it is worth noting that even the first channel of Televisión Española participated in spreading a new aesthetic which became dominant in television. *Mr. Zoom*, the nickname later applied to Lazarov, popularized the same style that Zulueta linked to counterculture by using it to ironically mock the devotion of Real Madrid fans. Both Zulueta and Lazarov should then be considered as catalyzing-agents of a Spanish (post)modernity that, in spite of remaining a minority in the case of Zulueta, proved to be instrumental towards aesthetic and cultural regeneration in Spain.

Be that as it may, the show had a warm reception among critics such as Enrique del Corral, who praised the release of *Último grito* in his television column in ABC:

"The great spectrum of "new youth" was abandoned by Televisión Española. At most they would get music, as if music was the only effective tranquilizer for their legitimate concerns. Because that new youth has concerns. Deep ones. Now Televisión Española 2 has started a show tailored for the tastes and concerns of those young audiences. Congratulations. What I saw seemed agile, lively, modern. Finally, modern! Iván Zulueta directs a script by Pedro Olea; a nimble script, very

straight and televisual, that Zulueta translated into informative and pertinent images, well edited by Luis Peláez [...] "Moncho Street" with its drugstores and its posters, the music, the vibe, the happiness of that emerging youth, everything that matters was there in *Último grito*, which from starters, grabs attention. And that's something... The agility and novelty of the show's host, Judy Stephen; the boldness of the questions and the sincerity of the answers of the young interviewees; everything in *Último grito* breaths coolness, nerve, absence of clichés and conventionalisms. Let's hope that the fruitful findings of that first show will blossom week after week, and the growing mass of "new" youngsters finds in Televisión Española the space they lacked and so much deserved' (DEL CORRAL, 1968a: 83).

Del Corral became a fearless advocate of the show. It is worth recovering another of his reviews, this time written on November 24th 1968 (that is, with the show already well established) to shed some light on the cliché about the reception of certain programs in conservative media such as the newspaper ABC:

'*Último grito* is the most thorough, enjoyable, efficient and bright expression of modern television in Televisión Española. From the marking system, which could be an example of montage and graphic intention, until the goodbye section, *Último grito* is a roller coaster of dynamism, joy and excitement, and most of all, a show full of nuances that has been improving itself more and more' (DEL CORRAL, 1968c: 71).

The arrival in Spain of what Frederic Jameson called the cultural logic of late capitalism that identifies postmodernity as a historical process, has a lot to do with the spread of media messages in shows like *Último grito*. Over the years, *Último grito* has become an example of progressive visions related to Anglo-Saxon popular culture. The mixture of psychedelia, youth culture and fashion stresses the tensions between the official identity based on traditional National-Catholicism and an open mind to the influence of foreign cultural affairs. From the type of music bands featured in every program to the aesthetic of each section, where the editing, lightning, art design and *mise en scène* all transmitted values clearly opposed to those of the traditional regime as far as their goals and their way to address the audience. Similar to what happened in other countries like the UK, those apparently harmless music shows would end up becoming key in order to grasp the national struggles of cultural identity and aesthetic canons, even more so in such an airtight environment as Spain (SEXTON, 2007). On the other hand, Zulueta himself would develop a fruitful relationship with the perceptual distortions of psychedelia, the use of hallucinogens and visual experimentation in short films like *A Mal Gam A* (1976), where the noisy and symphonic ending of the Beatles' "A day in the life" finds a visual equivalent



in a series of fast motion shots of San Sebastián's La Concha's bay and Paseo Nuevo, layered with innumerable visions of other people and objects, all in fast motion, thanks to Zulueta's use of the camera.

In the context of such audiovisual experiments, Zulueta would later talk about certain problems with censorship. Specifically, in an interview with Juan Bufill, the artist recalls how TVE's next assignment after *Último grito* ended up being cancelled:

'They asked me to illustrate songs of the top radio-charts, one per week. I didn't make it past the first one ("Ride like a swan" by T. Rex) because, according to them, the result was "drug-like" or something like that. All because of a close shot of a girl with her eyes closed and a steady attitude, over whom shiny and watery images were projected...' (BUFILL, 1980: 41).

The acceptance of such proposals within Spanish television had certain boundaries, ambiguous ones, which fluctuated between the tolerance of a certain rule-breaking aesthetic and the head-on refusal of the countercultural implications of such an aesthetic.

### **Conclusions: the presence of television in the cinematic work of Zulueta**

*Último grito* was ultimately cancelled in early 1970. Zulueta used the show as a launch pad for his first feature film *Un, dos, tres... al escondite inglés* (1969). The program had worked visually as a sort of window display, linked to a guerrilla mode of production that allowed testing the possibilities of aesthetic experimentation and the viability of certain cultural products before releasing them. Viewers like José Luis Borau, former teacher of Zulueta at the Escuela Oficial de Cinematografía and producer of *Un, dos, tres... al escondite inglés*, were pleasantly surprised. In Zulueta's words:

'I remember that Borau found the style of *Último grito* very modern, young, pop and cheap. He intended to make the best of José María Íñigo's ability to connect with trendy audiences in order to market the film (*Un, dos, tres...*) to those same audiences in a new marketing strategy' (HEREDERO, 1989: 92).

After all, as Zulueta himself recalls, *Último grito* was 'an extraordinary useful school of images' (HEREDERO, 1989: 136).

The televisual motif became a constant in the work of Zulueta after *Último grito*. Of course, television holds a major role in *Un, dos, tres...*, the main plot of which focuses on a boycott

of the Eurovision contest. Moreover, the television set in a wide sense (as furniture and as disseminating screen) has a significant presence in short films like *Kinkón* (1971), *Frank Stein* (1972), *Masaje* (1972), *Te veo* (1973) and *Aquarium* (1975), or in *Arrebato* (1979). Therefore, after his formative years in television, it is interesting to observe how Zulueta continued to explore the relationship with TV in his cinematic practice from another perspective, the aesthetic correspondences with avant-garde cinema of which have been carefully underlined by Alberte Pagán (2006). The role of Zulueta as user and re-producer of television images in his films during the 70's rises important questions about the materiality of film and television images as well as about the socio-technological dimensions of television as a medium, in the line of previous research carried out within television studies (McCARTHY, 2001).

Zulueta used television in his films during the 70's in two main ways: as a social and aesthetic escape mechanism, but also as an object capable of abducting the mind and the body of anyone watching in front of the screen. In the first case, Zulueta works on the reappropriation of television images. Thanks to the use of re-shooting techniques, TV becomes not only an object of transmission but also a space of desire and breakout, as seen in the revivals of classical Hollywood films in *Kinkón*, *Frank Stein* and *Arrebato*, the acceleration of a Día de la Victoria television coverage in *Masaje*, or the daily shutdown of the broadcast signal in *Arrebato*, during the first image time-continuum break due to the encounter of Pedro and José, the film's protagonists, when only the arrest a dizzy flux orchestrated by Zulueta make it possible to understand what's going on. Those interferences connect with certain video art practices of the 60's, obsessed with decomposing the television signal. Furthermore, they can be traced back to a genealogy of 'electronic noise' where the double-layered images and the ghosts created by such distortions are part of the everyday consumption of electronic media, thus generating fantastic visions of the medium as an entity capable of communicating with other worlds (SCONCE, 2007).

In the second case, re-shooting techniques are substituted by the direct, eerie presence of television as a screen. That option becomes material in a graphic form in *Aquarium*, where a bored Will More ends up literally hooked to the television monitor, which shows WB cartoons and captures the hand of the protagonist, incapable of removing himself from the screen, victim of an embodied frenzy.

In both cases lies a fundamental tension between the possibilities to alter the flux of images and the autonomy of the television set as an entity capable of transforming the viewer's physical willingness. Belén Vidal has described some

of those approaches by Zulueta as traces of a 'possessive spectator', following the categories proposed by Laura Mulvey in her texts on cinephilia. According to Vidal, the obsession of *Arrebato's* characters with rhythm, present as well in short films like *Kinkón* or even –as seen at the beginning of this article– in his televisual practices, point out 'a quest for control over the cinephilic experience' (VIDAL, 2012). The concept of a 'possessive spectator', obsessed with specific moments of films –sequences, shots or frames as meaningful entities– that expand towards the temporality of the spectator, would be further enriched with the concept of 'pensive spectator', initially theorized by Raymond Bellour and readapted by Laura Mulvey as that viewer who, thanks to technology, can freeze the cinematic image, stop it and think about it (BELLOUR, 1987; MULVEY, 2006). Thus Zulueta would exemplify a sort of halfway spectator in-between those two models, driven by a cinephilic fetishism but also by a clear awareness of the tensions between the pause and the flux of images.

I find it appealing to link those approaches to the type of film spectator that Zulueta would represent in the 70's with the theoretical perspectives of television as a traditional medium. In that context, the work of Mimi White on the concept of televisual fluxes explains how 'flow represents the mediations between television technology (the flow of the broadcast signal), institutional terms of programming, and, ultimately of most significance, television textuality and viewer experience thereof' (WHITE, 2001: 2). Although it seems rather troubling to think of Spanish television of the 70's in terms of *flow* (the broadcast did not cover 24 straight hours, only two channels existed, etc.), the cinematic works of Zulueta during that period insistently draw upon television as a source of images, something almost neglected in the existing literature on the Basque director. After all, one of the founding grounds of Zulueta's movies in the 70's is the use of the television screen as a fountain of images, which go through a mediated process by means of their exhibition in the television set and their manipulation by the filmmaker. In those movies a distortion of the time-space continuum is possible thanks to television images, which Zulueta uses in order to carry the viewer away into a realm of fascination and alienation that ultimately poses a challenge: how to think about the material aspects of film and television both in terms of their reception and their inner belonging to a cultural history.

Therefore, it is only natural that in some of the Polaroids of his last years, television remains alive (switched on) and surrounded by tones of garbage. As a weird door to another dimension, Zulueta captures in those images the imbalance between experimentation and cathodic signal so intimate to his career as a whole. Television, as well as other referents explored in Zulueta's Polaroids to express a fascination with images (trading cards, comic books, photos), becomes a remembrance of the durability of popular culture, the last thing standing in this apocalyptic photographs, the only thing capable of connecting the already retired and cloistered-away filmmaker with the rest of the world. The 'phantom of television in the avant-garde machine', as Paul Arthur expressed in an important essay published in 1987 on *Millenium Film Journal*, had the potential to become a strong ally in the battle of experimental cinema against commercial cinema (ARTHUR, 2005: 90-91)<sup>5</sup>. In that crossroad of television and experimental film, Arthur underlined 'an attitude concerning the availability of popular entertainment, or rather its languages' (ARTHUR, 2005: 75) as the most important trait of American experimental filmmakers in the 80's. Iván Zulueta's work *for* and *with* television becomes then a vindication of the entertainment flow tied to TV. In his films, the medium becomes a physical presence, something that, according to the filmmaker's obsession with the rapport between cinematic pause and rhythm, never ceases to be. In Zulueta's hands, television becomes a catalyst of thoughts, visions and experiences. In an alienated and decomposing world, TV keeps a central role as the archive of popular culture, especially Anglo-Saxon popular culture, represented in some of the Polaroids by no less than the arrival of men to the surface of the moon. Once more, television becomes a sinister medium out of control, capable of activating the past independently and representing it as an anachronic pop myth. To sum up, the televisual practices of Zulueta juxtapose his interest on contemporary art, visual culture of the XXst century and daily life as possibilities of self-fulfillment. Under his wing, television becomes the true *objet trouvé* of experimental art: a medium not only to be taken advantage of, but to be transformed into the real agent and the ultimate subject of contemporary histories of audiovisual experimentation. •

5. The original article is ARTHUR, Paul (1987). *The Last of the Last Machine? Avant-Garde Film Since 1966. Millennium Film Journal* 15/16/17 (Fall-Winter 1986-87), pages 69-93. It is hereby quoted according to its re-edition in ARTHUR, 2005.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This article was possible thanks to the help of Adela Hervá, from the Documental Archive of TVE, and Raúl Pedraz, whose help in the documentation process of *Último grito* has been instrumental. Pedro Olea was kind enough to answer to

my questions and share his memories about the show. Manuel Palacio, Josetxo Cerdán, Miguel Zozaya and Antón López have also been key for reconstructing the puzzle of *Último grito*.

## REFERÈNCIES BIBLIOGRÀFIQUES

- ALBERICH, Ferran (2002). *Antonio Drove. La razón del sueño*. Alcalá de Henares: Festival de Alcalá de Henares.
- ARTHUR, Paul (2005). *A Line of Sight. American Avant-Garde Film since 1965*. Minneapolis. University of Minnesota Press, pp. 74-91.
- BELLOUR, Raymond (1987). *The Pensive Spectator, Wide Angle*, vol. 9. 1, pp. 6-10.
- BINIMELIS, Mar; CERDÁN, Josetxo and FERNÁNDEZ LABAYEN, Miguel (2013). *From Puppets to Puppeteers: Modernising Spain through Entertainment Television*.
- GODDARD, Peter (ed.), *Popular Television in Authoritarian Europe* (pp. 36-52). Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- BORAU, José Luis (producer) and ZULUETA, Iván (director). (1969). *Un, dos, tres... al escondite inglés*. España: El Imán.
- BUFILL, Juan (1980). *Entrevista con Iván Zulueta. Dirigido por...*, n. 75, August/September, pp. 38-41.
- CAMPORESI, Valeria (1999). *Imágenes de la televisión en el cine español de los sesenta. Fragmentos de una historia de la representación*. *Archivos de la Filmoteca*, n. 32, pp. 149-162.
- CONNOLLY, Maeve (2014). *TV Museum*. Bristol. Intellect.
- CORTELL HUOT SORDOT, Guido y PALACIO, Manuel (2006). *El Irreal Madrid*.
- PALACIO, Manuel (ed.), *Las cosas que hemos visto. 50 años y más de TVE* (pp. 38-39). Madrid: IRTVE.
- DE LAURENTIIS, Dino (producer) and VADIM, Roger (director). (1968). *Barbarella*. Italia: Dino de Laurentiis Cinematografica.
- DEL CORRAL, Enrique (1968a). *Juventud*. ABC, 26 de mayo, p. 83.
- DEL CORRAL, Enrique (1968b). *Último grito*. ABC, 23 de junio, p. 77.
- DEL CORRAL, Enrique (1968c). «IN». ABC, 24 de noviembre, p. 71.
- FARRÉ BRUFAU, María Soledad (1989). *La Escuela de Argüelles. Una aportación al cine español*. Tesis doctoral inédita. Universidad de Salamanca, 531 páginas.
- FOREMAN, John (producer) and GOLDSTONE, James (director). (1969). *Winning*. USA: Universal.
- GALÁN, Diego (1993). *Del Parque de juegos a Un mundo diferente*. ANGULO, Jesús; HEREDERO, Carlos F. and REBORDINOS, José Luis (eds.), *Un cineasta llamado Pedro Olea* (pp. 27-36). Donostia: Filmoteca Vasca.
- GARCÍA DE LA VEGA, Fernando (1961-1967). *Escala en HiFi*. España: TVE.
- GÓMEZ REDONDO, Ramón (1992). *Crónicas del mal*. España: Mabuse para TVE.
- HEREDERO, Carlos F. (1989). *Iván Zulueta. La vanguardia frente al espejo*. Alcalá de Henares. Festival de Cine de Alcalá de Henares.
- ÍÑIGO, José María (2006). *Programa especial 50 años de TVE: José María Íñigo*. España: TVE.
- JOSELIT, David (2007). *Feedback: Television Against Democracy*. Cambridge, MA. MIT Press.
- LAEMMLE, Carl (producer) and JULIAN, Rupert (director). (1925). *The Phantom of the Opera*. USA: Universal Pictures.
- MCCARTHY, Anna (2001). *From Screen to Site: Television's Material Culture, and Its Place*. *October*, n. 98, pp. 93-111.
- MORITZ, William (1997). *Norman McLaren and Jules Engel: Post-modernists*.
- PILLING, Jayne (ed.), *A reader in animation studies* (pp. 104-111). Sydney: John Libbey.
- MULVEY, Laura (2006). *Death 24x a Second. Stillness and the Moving Image*. Londres. Reaktion Books.
- OLEA, Pedro; ZULUETA, Iván and GÓMEZ REDONDO, Ramón (1968-1970). *Último grito*. España: TVE.
- PAGÁN, Alberte (2006). *Residuos experimentales en Arrebato*. CUETO, Roberto (ed.). *Arrebato... 25 años después* (pp. 113-140). Valencia: Filmoteca de Valencia.
- PALACIO, Manuel (2001). *Historia de la televisión en España*. Barcelona. Gedisa.
- PALACIO, Manuel (2006). *Último Grito*. PALACIO, Manuel (ed.), *Las cosas que hemos visto. 50 años and más de TVE* (p. 36). Madrid: IRTVE.

PARKS, Lisa (2005). *Cultures in orbit: satellites and the televisual*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

QUEREJETA, Elías (productor) and SAURA, Carlos (director). (1969). *La madriguera*. España: Elías Querejeta P.C.

RUEDA LAFFOND, José Carlos y CHICHARRO MERAYO, María del Mar (2006). *La televisión en España (1956-2006). Política, consumo y cultura televisiva*. Madrid. Fragua.

SCONCE, Jeffrey (2007). *Haunted Media. Electronic Presence from Telegraphy to Television*. Durham. Duke University Press.

SEXTON, Jamie (2007). *From art to avant-garde? Television, formalism and the arts documentary in 1960s Britain*.

MULVEY, Laura y SEXTON, Jamie (eds.), *Experimental British Television* (pp. 88-105). Manchester: Manchester University Press.

SPIGEL, Lynn (2008). *TV by Design: Modern Art and the Rise of Network Television*. Chicago. University of Chicago Press.

TELERADIO (1968). *Programas TVE. TeleRadio* n. 543, p. 55.

VIDAL, Belén (2012). *Cinephilia and the lost moment: Arrebato (Iván Zulueta, 1979) in/out the Spanish transition*. Ponencia inédita presentada en el Congreso Internacional Hispanic Cinemas: En Transición, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, 7-9 de noviembre.

WHITE, Mimi (2001). *Flows and other close encounters with television*. Fecha de consulta: 24 de septiembre de 2015. Recuperada de <<http://cmsw.mit.edu/mit2/Abstracts/MimiWhite.pdf>>

WYVER, John (2007). *Vision on. Film, television and the arts in Britain*. London. Wallflower.

### MIGUEL FERNÁNDEZ LABAYEN

Visiting professor at the Department of Journalism and Audiovisual Communication of Carlos III University in Madrid, and member of the research group TECMERIN. His work on experimental film, documentary and transnational cinema has been published in academic journals such as

*Studies in European Cinema*, *Transnational Cinemas* or *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* and in edited volumes such as *Sampling Media* (Oxford University Press) or *No se está quieto. Nuevas formas documentales en el audiovisual hispánico* (Iberoamericana/Vervuert, 2015).



# JACOBS, Jason and PEACOCK, Steven (eds.), *Television Aesthetics and Style*

Bloomsbury, New York, 2013, 352 pages.

---

Raquel Crisóstomo

Bryan Fuller's decision to bet on a pictorial approach to image in *Hannibal* (NBC, 2013-2015) is not a petty choice. It is an essential part, which turns this piece of fiction into what it really is: the poisonous narration of a seductive cannibal. The way in which the ice cubes fall into the glass of whisky that Roger Sterling prepares for Don Draper after the "It's toasted" moment in *Mad Men* (AMC, 2007-2015) is not something fortuitous, in fact it makes the viewer a part of that victory to the point of feeling as a co-creator of that idea. The fact that the animation style in *Archer* (FX, 2010-) has a direct impact on the complexity of its comedy sequences is not a result of circumstances, on the contrary, it is precisely what allows to set off funny scenarios in a live action sit-com rhythm.

These are some examples of the nuclear importance of aesthetics and style in television series. Although critical film literature has been immensely concerned about the importance of style in film—an element which doubtlessly shapes one of the precious sides of some of the most important gems of the history of the seventh art—in most academic studies concerning this Third Golden Age series we miss this kind of approach. If certainly some of the most important series of our time stand out because of their dramatic complexity or the elaboration of the authorial concept they carry on (among other aspects of vital interest), style issues are not one of the most written about, and when they are tackled it is always from a strictly formalistic point of view.

Jason Jacobs y Steven Peacock, acknowledging this lack, present us in *Television Aesthetics and Style* a collection of essays concerning this subject, reflections around different contemporary television fictions focusing on aesthetics—an element they doubtlessly see as fundamental. The editors of this text articulate in four parts the almost thirty interventions and the different questions set out by the notion of style on television, based on the different television genres—something specially valuable since it permits readers to have a complete panorama.

In the first part, conceptual issues are tackled, from stylistic analysis and what lies within it, including the dangers of letting these kind of issues aside, to the most suitable use of the fittest nomenclature to use in television aesthetic analysis—what do we mean with *cinematic*? Is it legitimate to talk about *aesthetics* in television?—in texts as interesting as those by Jason Mittell and Sarah Cardwell. This first section is especially interesting because it is where important questions around starting concepts for the study of this area are discussed, basic approaches to legitimize the research and to generate an interesting academic debate.

In the second segment several texts devoted to the role of style in television sit-coms, such as *Arrested Development* (FOX, 2003-2006) or the above-named animation series *Archer*, are gathered. On the other hand, the third part focuses on drama. Some case studies stand out, such as the use of the *flashforward* device in *Breaking Bad* (AMC, 2008-2013) or the utilization of aesthetics in *Boardwalk Empire* (HBO, 2010-2014). Finally the fourth section presents some reflections around historical series and non-fiction, with the analysis of diverse titles such as realities focused in dance or post-war documentaries in British television, by Ieuan Frankin.

The approach of this volume stands out for its choice of not working exclusively with American-produced big hits, but also with British TV. This book also presents an important corpus of chapters signed by some of the most renowned contemporary researchers on television studies, and we must underline the passion for the subject sensed in each text, judiciously analyzing and justifying their statements from a formal view and an academic rigour.

In conclusion it is a very necessary book for the study of television fiction works, outlined from a respectful stand towards the formalistic tradition of previous studies but openly working in a line of research—television aesthetics—that has been already accused in several occasions of being a *pre-structuralist danger*. The good work practices of the editors and participating

writers solve every doubt in an arena, the aesthetics and its use in television series, still precariously explored by media scholars –an already not-so-emerging field which furthermore is in full transformation. Jacobs and Peacock set out a very intertextual and fluid standpoint on series as artistic pieces of work, moving away from confined formalism and with an open perspective towards different ways of tackling aesthetics, creating a text from academia with a clear democratic desire to reach television lovers. •

# Michael Witt. *Jean-Luc Godard. Cinema Historian*'

Bloomington, Indianapolis, Indiana University Press. 2013, 288 pages.

---

Carolina Sourdis

Jean-Luc Godard is, probably, the filmmaker who has deeper and most thoughtfully studied the relation between cinema and history. He is, certainly, one of the 'historians' who has developed this inquiry in the most radically cinematic way. Through the experimentation with montage, both in its dimension as a tool for creation and as a conceptual thinking category, Godard has opened a horizon and settled a territory to think and 'historize' cinema (and images) through its own matters and mechanisms. This, at least, should imply a renewal (if not revolt) in the way in which theoretical and historical approaches to images are conceived, and a mandatory reassessment of the researching methods in the field of arts; a place to reflect not only about how we know cinema –and images– but rather how cinema is a source of knowledge itself.

It is thrilling, therefore, to discover the genealogy, development and potentials of this sort of *laboratory* through the entire work of Godard, composed by such a number of different formats as cinema, video, television and collages, and which is in a certain respect was condensed in his series *Histoire(s) du cinema*. This is precisely Michael Witt's quest in *Jean-Luc Godard. Cinema Historian*. Witt, also co-editor of other books devoted to the work of the artist such as *Forever Godard* (Black Dog Publishing, 2004) and *Jean-Luc Godard: Documents* (Editions du Centre Pompidou, 2006), makes an in-depth and detailed analysis of the filmmaker's work and thinking, to illuminate the Godardian theorem, according to which cinema, in particular cinematic montage, reconstitutes the concept, the experience and the form of history: "The central tenet of his theorem – is the proposal and demonstration of a cinematically inspired method of fabricating history based on the principle of montage of disparate phenomena in poetic imaginary." (Witt, 2013: 2).

What this theorem seems to be insisting in, and which remains as a constant idea through Witt's pages, is demonstrating that cinema provided images a tongue, a form to expressing themselves; hence, the concept of cinema as an epistemological tool and a thorough element to formulate ideas. *A form that thinks*, as expressed by Godard in the chapter 3A. In this fall of the tyranny of word –in "the idea of drawing as a more direct, less prescriptive means of expression than writing"(2013:192),

for instance, the quest for a historiographical methodology alternative to linear, chronological and totalitarian historical discourses arises. A quest that Godard himself solves at the *Moviola*, bringing to the fore the tension, the possibility of combination and comparison implied in the movement of montage, to formulate a nuclear, anachronistic and subjective thinking regarding history.

The structure of the book is similar to that of *Histoire(s) du cinema*. Despite it is divided in seven chapters, each with a clear body of work and a thesis, some key referents such as Malraux, Langlois or Daney, and some Godardian motives such as the notion of 'montage', 'projection' or the 'Orphic' nature of the concept of history, are transversal to the study and developed through various sections creating certain resonances. The first chapter exposes a detailed genealogy of the series based on the integral work of Godard, shedding lights on his quest for a method that not always had the means to be expressed; the second and third chapter, probably the central and most interesting body of the study, focus on the one hand, in the exploration and foundation of the videographic device and on the other, in the concept of history that audiovisual experimentation brings about. The fourth section studies the relation between cinema and the concentration camps based in the Godardian reproach regarding the absence of cinematographic images about it, to explore in the fifth chapter the notion of nationhood in the postwar cinemas and cinephilia as territory. The sixth chapter questions the influence of television on cinema, and finally, in the seventh chapter the author reflects on the sound design of Godard's work, opening a perspective to approach the filmmaker as a multimedial artist.

The biggest gain in *Jean-Luc Godard. Cinema Historian* lays on the fact that, besides incorporating Godard's ideas within the French cinematographic tradition (Vigo, Cocteau, Bresson, Epstein, Renoir) and settling a number of filmic references as precedents of *Histoire(s) du cinema* (*Film sur le Montage* de Jean Mitry in 1965 or *La machine a refaire la vie* de Julian Duvivier in 1934), Witt actually accomplishes to point out – almost as if it was evident– the links between the Godardian theorem, formulated from cinema, and an anti-positivist quest



already founded from the field of history and art philosophy (Charles Peguy, Walter Benjamin, André Malraux). Witt quotes an excerpt of *Clio, dialogue de l'histoire et de l'âme païenne*, postumos work of Peguy:

'I was given a name, History, and a first name, Clio. What would it have been if it had had nothing at all to do with text, but with movement itself, with an idea, with reality, with life (...) Or simply if it had still had something to do with a text, but had had nothing to do with determining it on the basis of words, but on an idea, for example, or on an intention, or on a movement.' (2013:79)

Cinema, therefore, would become the way of materializing a certain way of knowing, of experiencing time, that would be far removed from that founded by the word, and which was being conceived even before the world knew the invention of the cinematograph. As Witt shows, Godard articulated it through montage: way beyond its potential to provide plasticity to the for or continuity to a narrative, for Godard, montage is conceived and practiced as a writing tool to establish a plastic thinking with images; with an idea, an intention, a movement. •

# BRADATAN, Costica and UNGUREANU, Camil (eds.), *Religion in Contemporary European Cinema: The Postsecular Constellation.*

Routledge, New York, 2014, 226 pages.

---

Alexandra Popartan

'One must recover words like 'grace', 'holiness', for the profane world; we should not simply grant organized religion a monopoly over this language' (DUMONT in SMITH, 2010). These suggestive words by the French director Bruno Dumont could be an apt motto for Costica Bradatan's and Camil Ungureanu's new book. The book explores the relationship between European cinema, philosophy, and religion after *the death of God* (Nietzsche) and beyond the conventional delimitation of religion. The volume brings together the contributions of important scholars in film studies and philosophy so as to reflect on *religion without religion* (Derrida) as expressed through the cinematic works such as *Mamma Roma* (Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1962), *Caché* (Michael Haneke, 2005), *Habemus Papam* (Nanni Moretti, 2011), *The life of Jesus (La vie de Jesus)*, Bruno Dumont, 1997), *Blind Chance (Przypadek)*, Krzysztof Kieślowski, 1987) or the *Trilogy of Yusuf* from Semih Kaplanoğlu<sup>1</sup>. The result of the interdisciplinary enterprise is original, and is part of a cinematic and philosophical trend that is likely to develop in the near future. This *postsecular* trend challenges the old-age secularist vision proclaiming the inevitable decline of religion and of the belief in God in modernity. Different chapters in the book contribute as well to the recent philosophical turn in film studies by making use of postsecular theoretical reflections of Derrida, Taylor or Nancy (see, for instance, Richard Sinnerbrink's, Catherine Wheatley's, Paul Coates's, Camil Ungureanu's and John Caruana's contributions).

But what exactly is postsecularism? And does this philosophical and socio-theoretical concept have any use in cinema studies? The scholars included in this volume understand and relate to

*postsecularism* differently. Divergences apart, the argument is that the postsecular trend pertains to the very development of modernity; it emerges as a reaction of dissatisfaction with the influential tradition of militant atheism and rationalist secularism built on the Manichean opposition between reason and faith, emancipation and religion. The secularist creed has turned out to be implausible: for better or worse, spirituality, religion and religion-related phenomena—from experiences of transcendence and faith to fundamentalist violence—maintain their salience. In contrast to secularism, postsecularism regards the relation between religion and modernity as one of tension and, at once, as a positive-sum game of mutual interaction and transformation; from this perspective, experiences of transcendence, conversion, faith, transfiguration and sacrifice are not seen as the monopoly of Church or other religious institutions, but can be vital for heterodox believers and even atheists as well<sup>2</sup>.

The volume illustrates, in the broader context of the crisis of the secularist paradigm, the view that there is a growing *postsecular* cinematic that takes seriously religious practice and tradition as a wellspring of values and experiences even independently of the belief in God. Various chapters of this book support the view that there is a current wave of outstanding European directors who, from their position as self-declared atheists (Dumont, Haneke, Moretti) or unconventional believers (Sokurov, Kaplanoğlu), make innovative films dealing with religious experience without celebrating an official religious discourse or dogma. Disparities between these directors notwithstanding, they express by cinematographic means the conviction that it can be a powerful source of values and experiences (of

1. Composed of *Egg (Yumurta – Avgo)*, Semih Kaplanoğlu, 2007), *Milk (Süt)*, Semih Kaplanoğlu, 2008) and *Honey* (Bal, Semih Kaplanoğlu, 2010).

2. For useful reflections on the concept of postsecularism, see as well UNGUREANU, Camil and THOMASSEN, Lasse (2015). "The Post-Secular Debate: Introductory Remarks", in *The European Legacy*, 20(2); UNGUREANU, Camil (2014). *Uses and Abuses of Postsecularism*, in REQUEJO, Ferran and UNGUREANU, Camil. *Democracy, Law and Religious Pluralism in the New Europe. Secularism and Postsecularism*, Routledge.

faith, forgiveness, responsibility, guilt, solidarity, gift-giving, sacrifice, transcendence, mystical insight and conversion) that a secularism focused exclusively on an immanent reason is unable to account for.

Three questions can be raised with respect to this volume. First, while the definition of postsecularism is suggestive, it remains controversial whether we can detect a *novel* postsecular trend in the European cinema. The choice of the cases seems at points eclectic; the volume includes films from different historical periods, and does not clarify how the nexus religion-film is played out in these periods. Second, the contributions are not always coherent in methodological terms: not all chapters reach a balance between filmic and philosophical analysis; and some analyses give relevance to historical contexts, while others overlook it completely. Third, whereas the volume makes a laudable effort not to focus only on the usual suspects (Von Trier, Pasolini), the category of *European* cinema is need of more questioning and problematization in the age of global cinema.

In sum, the phenomenon of religion after the death of God and the decline of the dogmas of old-style secularism is likely to remain central in contemporary societies. The *crisis of religion* is itself a form of spiritual-religious life. A sense of complex, subterranean interaction between religious, heterodox, secular and atheistic experiences has thus emerged, which makes the phenomenon all the more fascinating to study. This is what *Religion in Contemporary European Cinema* does so well by focusing on the death of God not as the symptom of the decline of the religious, but as a transformation of the relation to the sacred and the divine.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

SMITH, Damon (2010). «Bruno Dumont, 'Hadewijch'». *Filmmaker* (Dec. 22, 2010). Retrieved from: [www.filmmakermagazine.com/news/2010/12/bruno-dumont-hadewijch/](http://www.filmmakermagazine.com/news/2010/12/bruno-dumont-hadewijch/)