

LUDWIG JÄGER, ERIKA LINZ, IRMELA SCHNEIDER (EDS.)
Media, Culture, and Mediality.
New Insights into the Current State of Research

[transcript]

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Finding Openings with Opening Credits

REMBERT HÜSER

The four main film registers—feature film, documentary film, animated film, and experimental or avant-garde film—die hard within film studies.

"When we set out to write an introduction to film in 1976, we could not have anticipated that it would have met with a welcome warm enough to carry it through five editions. [...] We have again tried to make the book [...] up to date. The book's approach to film form and technique remains constant from prior editions." (Bordwell and Thompson, "Preface" xi)

In 1997, still uncomfortable with their basic assumptions of 20 years earlier, David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson further differentiate the "basic types of films" as "Documentary vs. Fiction," "Animated Film," and "Experimental and Avant-Garde Film." "Yet these categories are not watertight; they often mix and combine. Before we see a film we nearly always have some sense whether it is a [xy] or a piece of [yz]" (*Film* 42).¹

The suppressed malaise regarding a general order that is not watertight has some consequences regarding the organization of its subject area. Thus, along with the arrival of the differentiation of the basic types, a series of secondary differentiations determines the opinion of how a film proceeds in detail "before we see it." Various spheres of authority are established. Roughly translated, the basic types differentiate into entertainment, society, youth, and art. And because we cannot really in all seriousness believe in art, in youth, or in society, what remains in the end for film is entertainment. And this can then be made more artistic, more relevant, and more youthful depending on one's taste. Film histories, which again could be divided into four areas—esthetic, technologic, economic, and social (see Allen and Gomery 37f)—as a rule select one single film register, simultaneously making the other registers invisible. To this day, film history is the history of feature films.

1 "As you might expect, filmmakers have sometimes sought to blur the lines separating documentary and fiction. A notorious example is [...]" (46).

Experimental film (avant-garde film) within the conventional histories of film is considered in an extremely limited way. For many authors, this genre seems to not even belong with film. Movies fundamentally limit themselves to the narrative feature film produced within the system of the commercial film industry; in some individual cases, works from the realm of the documentary film are grouped with it as well (see Gregor 9).

"Once the cinema was stabilized as a technology, it cut all references to its origins in artifice. [...] Twentieth-century animation became a depository for nineteenth-century moving-image techniques left behind by cinema. [...] [T]echniques that allowed filmmakers to construct and alter moving images, and thus could reveal that cinema was not really different from animation, were pushed to cinema's periphery by its practitioners, historians, and critics." (Manovich 298-9)

The main film registers have become cases of the "versus" and the "and." How can we extend the range of the "vs." (that in the latest version of *Film Art* we find dutifully inserted between "Documentary" and "Fiction") and the "and" (that we find between "Experimental" and "Avant-Garde Film") also to the other registers? How can the "vs." and the "and" finally come into their own in film analysis? How can we become more versatile in our writings about film? How can we replace the pitiless logic of the "either—or" with the logic of the "both—and?" That the four main film registers mainly obstruct selectivity in the analysis of a film is a "truism" (Odin 263) dating back long before the terminological distinctions had ultimately been set up in a way that commonly conceals their basic principle—they are strictly relational terms: "...a law of impurity or a principle of contamination" (Derrida 57). "The border between fiction and documentary is naturally a fluid one. The differentiating criteria fail. Within fictional films one can at most differentiate levels of permeation with documentary aspects" (Odin 276).

Seen from the perspective of a documentary film one could also say: "Every film is a fictional film" (Metz, *Imaginary* 44). But this is also true the other way around.

Why can't we put into practice what we've known for decades? Why do we have to repeat the same old 'same old' all over again? Is it really necessary to continue homogenizing our permanently shifting multiplicity of expectations over and over again? One of the main obstacles to finally get moving with moving images lies in the continued categorization of works as a whole also in this realm. The preface to the first edition of *Film Art* (which is still the actual one) unmistakably sets this into stone from the beginning: "Crucial to this approach is an emphasis on the *whole film*. Audiences experience entire films, not snippets" (ix). While this claim is difficult to

maintain the closer one looks at how spectatorship actually works, it also leads to a considerable loss of the abilities to differentiate what we are about to see and why we do so. Instead of proceeding with a guilty conscience, it seems about time to begin to think about moving images in constellations that are flexible enough to reflect on how the distinctions that we make about them come into being in the very first place.

"I was a little disappointed about the reaction to *Histoire(s) du cinéma*. [...] It was something like: 'The author wanted this or that... Great! Super!' but there wasn't a single one who would have said, 'This image shouldn't have been shown.'" (Rancière and Tesson 32)²

Of course films can be construed as feature films or as documentaries or as avant-garde films or as animation films; however, the mistake should not be made to ontologize an observational perspective into a basic register. And it should be kept in mind that because of the polyphonous organization of every form of filmic statement, the mode in which we watch a film *can* be switched at any moment. From one moment to the next,³ we can observe films from a fictitious perspective or from the perspective of a documentary or from still another perspective,⁴ and what this means is that of course one and the same sequence can always be conceptualized as simultaneously moving into different directions. But how should readings look that take this into account? Don't we need the basic film registers for pragmatic reasons alone? To have something to start with?

One can react to the pragmatist dilemma by describing film histories meta-discursively as effects of their respective decisions for a specific observational perspective. But one can also attempt to solve the problem with the help of a different material basis, a basis that no longer takes its point of departure from the ontological assumption

2 "Sinon, j'étais un peu chagriné par l'accueil qu'avaient reçu les *Histoire(s) du cinéma*. [...] Tandis qu'avec les autres non, c'était: 'L'auteur a voulu ci ou ça... Magnifique! Superbe!', mais il n'y en a pas un qui m'ait dit: 'Ce n'est pas cette image-là qu'il aurait fallu mettre'."

3 A lexicon of the enunciative inscriptions in the opening credits ("the book," "the curtain," etc.) would not make a lot of sense. "[C]inema does not have a closed list of enunciative signs, but it uses any sign (as in my example of the window) in an enunciative manner, so that the sign can be removed from the diegesis and immediately come back to it. The *construction* will have, for an instant, assumed an enunciative value" (Metz, "Impersonal" 754-5).

4 "Of course it is beyond debate claiming here that only two types of reading exist in the realm of cinematography" (Odin 277).

tions of the "whole work" but from scenes in the films,⁵ scenes capable of pulling out all the stops.⁶ I would like to suggest a perspective that initially takes its point of departure from the most intelligent part of a film, and I mean by that the structurally most intelligent scene. (Of course, in individual cases it may even be badly executed.) My main interest is in one basic film type, the only one that I

- 5 The genesis of the *Cinema Book* shows us that especially the concentration on filmic scenes and their sequencing inevitably leads to the loss of basic types: "The *Cinema Book* began life as a catalogue of the film study extract material held by the British Film Institute Film and Video Library, selected over the years by the BFI Educational Department to facilitate the teaching of film. The existing Extract Catalogue was in the form of an unwieldy set of duplicated documents dating back to the inception of the extract collection in the early 60s. The intention was to update these documents, expanding on the teaching categories which had informed extract selection, and showing how extracts could be used in the context of these categories. It soon became clear that this would entail the larger task of charting the history of the arguments covered in each category. Rather than a catalogue of extracts, the book became an account of the Education Department's involvement in the shifting terrain of Film Studies over a certain period" (Cook viii). Almost 15 years later the questions have shifted correspondingly: "Film History itself has a history. [...] The remarkable development of audio-visual technology in the last two decades explains how one important element in the first edition, with its five main parts reflecting five major directions of research and teaching in eighties' Britain, based on the BFI extract catalogue as primary source material, has been superseded by the far wider range of accessible primary material now available to teachers, students and the general reader" (Bernink vii).
- 6 See Godard 23: "I do have an idea of the method, but I don't have the means. [...] We have to be able to see the film, but not as a projection because once we have it projected, we have to talk, we have to say: 'Ah! Do you remember, 45 minutes ago we saw that ...' And that's not interesting. What's interesting is to see it and then later maybe another close-up—but I don't know films well enough to dare—that would have been like showing you a reel from *Fallen Angels* and then another from *A Bout de Souffle*. That would be somewhat arbitrary but it could be interesting to do this in small pieces." ("J'ai l'idée de la méthode mais je n'ai pas les moyens. [...] Il faut pouvoir passer le film, non pas en projection car une fois qu'on l'a en projection, il faut parler, il faut dire: 'Ah! vous vous souvenez, il y a trois quarts d'heure, on a vu que...' Or ce n'est pas ça qui est intéressant. Ce qui est intéressant, c'est de le voir et puis de voir après peut-être plus intéressant... - mais je ne connais pas assez bien les films pour oser le faire—cela aurait été de vous passer une bobine de *Fallen Angel* et puis ensuite une bobine d'*A Bout de Souffle*. C'est un peu arbitraire, mais il pourrait être intéressant de le faire en petit car on aurait peut-être vu qu'au bout de vingt minutes, il n'y a rien à en tirer; à ce moment-là, on monte et on va chercher un autre film.")

believe in: the documentary avant-garde-animation-feature film. And I maintain that this type of film exists in every film. In fact, already with the opening credits.

In 1984, Odin, in his text "Film documentaire et lecture documentarizante," defines opening credits as the only concrete internal mode of production of a documentarizing reading. The other more general internal mode of production mentioned in his book emerges from the respective combinatorics of a film, from its stylistic systems and its sub-ensembles:

"The difference between *external* and *internal* commands is [...] especially important: it specifically allows simultaneously explaining the intuition of the viewers who divide the cinematographic field into ensembles recognizing also the existence of a documentary ensemble, and the fact that every film can be read as a documentary." (275)

By way of the opening credits, the internal production to a certain extent takes counter-measures against the external production by the viewer or the institution because—against the extensive freedom of decision how one would at any moment like to view something—they "expressly demand [that the film] is viewed in this specific way" (264). This means that they program a specific form of reading. The opening credits, therefore, are able to suspend somewhat the fictivizing reading that "is the result of the commands of the ruling cinematographic institution" (271), to break apart, if you will, the internalized convention that also orders our film histories. And this, if nothing else, on its very own territory by fictivizing realms that we are not used to seeing displayed in a fictitious form. Now, of course the production of a reading is not a purely voluntaristic matter. "It can emerge in a completely unexpected and sudden manner, like a rupture the extent of which we can neither measure nor anticipate" (270). The opening credits at any rate raise an awareness of these ruptures in the film, awakening our intermedial attention. The first most intelligent scene leads us to further most intelligent scenes.

As for Odin's concrete definitions of opening credits as instructions for documentary readings: not a single one really convinces me. I do not believe that "the fact that the actors are named in the front credits impedes the possibility of constructing the characters as real enunciators" (270). This may be the case for the first two or three names mentioned (the stars, the names that one knows) but actually not even there; the names of the actors in the opening credits enumerate the contributors to a film; they are never marked as actors, and many documentaries name the members of the observed group in the opening credits, and casting is no less important here than there. I also no more share Odin's conviction that "titles like *Our Planet Earth* (Painlevé), *The Cooper*, *The Cartwright* (Roquier),

Manouane River Lumberjacks (Lamothe) unmistakably announce a documentary" (272) than I share Adorno's announcement of an unmistakable truth that "...true [...] is the judgment that the landscape of Tuscany is more beautiful than the surroundings of Gelsenkirchen" (Adorno 72). There is nothing more beautiful than the surroundings of Gelsenkirchen. It is no different with the "lack of the opening credits" in Odin's text. If "this sign marked by absence [...] attests to the weak elaboration of the filmic text presented that neither appears as a 'work' nor as a 'message' but as a simple document" (Odin 272), then films like *Apocalypse Now* and *Touch of Evil*, to name just a few, were also weakly worked out simple documents without any message.

Odin did consider counter examples of this type in his text. He ends his final enumeration of possible objections with three dots—quite a bit more could be added here. The semio-pragmatic calls himself a "theoretician without rear protection" stating that the relationship between film, reader, and institution in the course of a reading is anything but stable: "Sometimes the reader adapts to the demands of the film; sometimes he lets himself be carried away to all other definitions unless he does not simultaneously mobilize several ways of viewing..." (275). Yet again three dots—the text is uncertain in a quite pleasing manner. But maybe it is sufficient to simply state that opening credits demand that a film wants to be viewed in a certain manner.

The opening credits are made intelligent by specifically disclaiming any fixed definition and Odin's text demonstrates just this in his argumentation. Opening credits demand "switching," demand being read on different levels at the same time. By insisting on a mere documentary reading apart from a first fracture of the fictionalizing convention, nothing much is gained yet. With the opening credits at the beginning of a film, a reading guideline is established that demands some parallel observations. It keeps us aware that one single level will not be sufficient for the understanding of the film. With the help of the opening credits, films demand readings that rely on hybridity (cf. Stanitzek passim).

In 1970, in the opening credits of *Catch-22* the sun is slowly rising.

"And I loved the book. I knew the book. And Nichols called me in to take a look at it and ran the film, and he said, 'I shot some material for titles.' I said, 'Oh, let me see.' And what he had shot was a lot of film that he was trying to say that war destroyed nature, that it fouled the air, that it was really destructive, and I looked at it and the footage was ... okay. It wasn't great, but there was a lot of it and we might have been able to do it. But I said your talking about it destroys these things that are natural. And I said as soon as I put 'costumes by somebody' on top of it, I've destroyed the naturalness of it. It's never gonna

CATCH-22

CAMERA OPERATOR ALAN McCABE
FIRST ASSISTANT CAMERAMAN PETER EWENS
TECHNICAL ADVISOR MAJOR ALEXANDER GERRY
SPECIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC EFFECTS ALBERT WHITLOCK
MEN'S WARDROBE LAMBERT MARKS
TITLE LAYOUT WAYNE FITZGERALD
SECOND ASSISTANT DIRECTORS MARTIN COHAN
AND RON GROW

DIRECTED BY
MIKE NICHOLS

work. You can't get there from here, you know. We will destroy it just putting titles on it. [...] But I said you got one shot. That *is* this book. This book is surreal. And they had a time-lapse shot of the sunrise. And I said: 'That's it!' Just show the one shot. And then after that, [...] we ended up with three four-foot cuts. And there was a shot of a wheel going through, and some grass, there's a bird flies out of the dust, and an engine turns over and the exhaust follows the air, and in *sound*, while the sunrise is comin' up, the sound is destroyed by the cranking up of the engine. So with three cuts that lasted approximately eight seconds we told his story with the footage that he had. So we edited down this, you know, whatever, 6000 feet of film to twelve feet. But the timing also was wrong on the shot. He shot a certain way. That shot's doctored. To get that, that timing to be the timing we wanted it to be. And we played around with it a lot to get it. And also then was the question of when does the audience know they're seeing something. 'Cause what appears to be just titles on black. And then you hear a dog barking off in the distance. So you know there's something going on. So ... we were running a title one day over at Paramount. We went in and somebody was in there, sitting in the theater, and I said: 'Do you mind if we run this?' And they said: 'No, go ahead.' They didn't know what it was. So we ran it. It was quiet. And I'm sittin' behind them... . And finally, about half way through or two-thirds through he turns to the other person and says: 'Something's going on back there.' GOTCHA!' (Fitzgerald)

Something's been going on for a long time already. Feature film, documentary film, Hollywood film: Wayne Fitzgerald's opening credits catch us all off balance. His transcription of a filming technique ("fade in") in documentary material, or the static, single shot at the beginning of a war film precisely describes the situation of movie screening, describes the "When does the audience know they're seeing something"—and therefore themselves; describes it as the "procession rituelle" (Metz, "Pour" 8)—the zone that is responsible in film for the attunement, the first introduction and the staging of the copyright. The opening credits of *Catch-22* here are playing with the relationship of structure and content. The basic movement moves from the black image, seemingly from graphics, via the real film to the lit-up white image of the screen. The opening credits switch on the screening. The sun allowing the scene to emerge—at this point equally the setting of the film's shooting and the location of the unfolding diegesis: WW II—is only the material substitute of the projection beam illuminating dark space. The sound of the engine cranking up one time on the audio track closing off the sequence at this point does not allow clearly distinguishing between war machinery and filming technique. On another level, however, Fitzgerald's opening credits transcribe the first sentence of the literary original: "It was love at first sight" (Heller 5).

It is the opening credits that from the very beginning present us with something to see. They show the production of a film: on the set, in the theater, in our heads. And all of this with one single shot,

with three cuts ("a doctored sunrise"), and a few effects on the audio track. For this doctoring on foreign material, on the "stock footage" that had been made available by the director of the film as possible material for the opening credits ("just check whether you can use something there"), the title-director in the opening credits of *Catch-22*—and this does not happen so often in the history of opening credits sequences—gets an author's credit. Opening credits are concept-films. And likewise— "Gotcha!"—there is always the surprise that the film has already started long ago.

Opening credits and found-footage film have many things in common. Both accentuate montage; first and foremost these films are not shot, they are edited (cf. MacDonald 255). A primacy of the camera does not exist. Both opening credits and found-footage films work with associative cuts or polyvalent montage (in opening credits this becomes especially clear in the transition to filmic diegesis), where the associative connection between the images is continually and unexpectedly shifted (cf. Carroll 71ff), and both obtain their power from a distinctive meta-discursive level. In both cases we are dealing with filmic readings of film, differentiated mainly by two preferred connective techniques: a conceptual one relying on "thematic repetition or contrast of the images" that mainly uses the generation of metaphors, and a graphic one "based on the repetition of colors, forms, or movements in the images" (Petersen, "Found" 56). At first glance these films are not at all so simple.

"The compilation narrative draws little from the 'baseline' that would be so liberally represented in classical narratives and pulls a great deal of material from [...] metaphorical replacements. At the same time, it relies heavily on our ability to infer the metonymic links between represented events." (Peterson, "Bruce" 56f)

The classic of found-footage films, *A Movie* by Bruce Conner, consistently uses the rhetorics and procedures of opening credits.⁷ And actually it seems to state right from the start: 'I—*A Movie*—am actually the opening credits.' On the one hand, there are the multiple repetitions, the driving home of the title itself, its dismantling, its inversion—it is turned upside down—its self-denial (by other titles such as "Castle Film presents" and so on). And then there is the

7 "Segment 1. This segment does far more than give us the title and filmmaker's name, and for that reason we have numbered it as the first segment rather than separating it off as a credits sequence" (Bordwell and Thompson, *Film* 158). A sequence of opening credits also does a lot more than just giving the title and the name of the director.

playing with the length of the take of the director's slate.⁸ It reflects the valence of positioning and the anticipation of the narcissism of "possessory titles" ("a movie by"—originally a particular distinction but now being used in an inflationary way). The A of *A Movie*, however, is not only an indefinite article; it is itself a beginning (something that is stressed once more by its isolation). But we are waiting in vain for its B, its continuation. The specifically composed material of images introduces us into a film that does not proceed. What we are waiting for therefore becomes the rule. The film *A Movie* presents itself as a 'blueprint A' for most films.⁹ However, the B arrives later after all—off center: once also isolated, playing with the parenthesis BY (good-bye), underlined by THE END, separated by the same distance and in alternating rhythm, i.e., A X BY X THE END. A second time then on the image-level by using material from a Hopalong Cassidy Western with which the film starts: A Movie—B-Movie.¹⁰ But in contrast to the trailer, the sequencing of the story segments remains without a plot.

Found-footage films exist since the early movies; it was even a rather popular practice reacting to the early differentiation of a mass market:

"Towards the end of the 1910s it [...] often happened that cutters and producers rummaged through the meticulously established sequence catalogues in order to make their films more 'colorful.' In order to give more character to a film the filmic stock was used that every cutter simply had to have. [...] Thus those takes that had been eliminated or that had been already used could be included in another film in order to produce special effects." (Beauvais 5)

As a meta-discursive procedure, the found-footage film came into existence at the end of the 1920s or the beginning of the 1930s, in

8 "Then the words 'Bruce Conner' appear, remaining on the screen for many seconds. As we do not need that much time to read the name, we may begin to sense that this film will playfully thwart our expectations" (Bordwell and Thompson, *Film* 158). In 1998 the opening credits of *Buffalo '66*—opening credits by Vincent Gallo—quotes *A Movie* adding an ironical, narcissistic little sparkle to it with the over-dimensional typeface and the reversal of the black-and-white-contrast that suggests a change from negative to positive.

9 "Moreover, the flicker and leader markings stress the physical qualities of the film medium itself. The title *A Movie* reinforces this reference to the medium, cueing us to watch this assemblage of shots as bits of film. This segment also suggests the implicit meaning that this opening is mocking the opening portions of most films" (Bordwell and Thompson, *Film* 159).

10 "[T]he B movies and the B studios should always be remembered as the ultimate expression of that brief time when Hollywood was truly a movie factory" (Flynn and McCarthy 43).

the period of transition to the sound film. Specifically, cutters and specialists in title links experimented with found-footage film. The title directors of post-production in those years were predestined for these kinds of reflections on montage, since title links mainly depend on one element: avoiding a repetition of the image. "'John decides to go to Africa' is obviously hopeless as a title, unless perhaps there is a surprise or a contradiction in the scene that follows" (Brunel 114). On the one hand this proves Godard's thesis—"So what did the invention of the talkies consist in?... Ok, they just took out the one frame...the frame of the intertitles and they stuck together the other frames;"¹¹ on the other hand, however, it allows for the description of the two types of film—found-footage and opening credits—as silent film¹² by exploring the iconic contents of writing.¹³ Opening credits are late early movies.¹⁴

How precisely film is being observed in *A Movie* is shown through the appearance of a naked woman taking off her stockings in the filmed leader-countdown. It is the first moving image of *A Movie*, and it seems as if the film purposely sets forth with the climax: 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, "Nudie!" (Normally, women in films only undress later.)

11 Godard 106: "Alors ça consistait en quoi l'invention du parlant? ... bien, on a enlevé le plan... le plan des sous-titres et on a mis côte à côte le plan..."

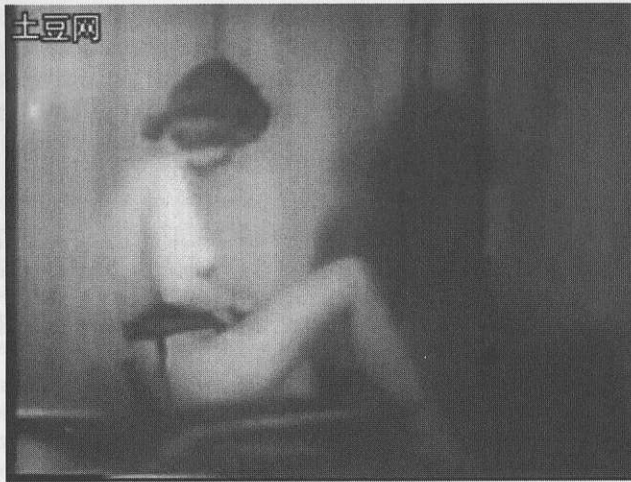
12 "I am the last of the silent movie directors. I've directed film for forty-five years, I never directed a frame of sound. Basically what we're doing is what I call 'tableaux'" (Fitzgerald).

13 "In the found-footage film, graphism—playing with letters—becomes more and more important, especially for the Lettrists who put it at the center of their creative work calling it 'chiseling.' Here, it was a matter of directly interfering with the film as material to be created, mainly by way of scraping off and scratching, stamping and chemical alterations. [...] Like Bruce Conner, [Maurice Lemaître] had a soft spot for opening-credit reels with technical recordings. During all stages of the production, he liked to include into his films all remarks and recordings of the laboratory-technicians (development, copying, color timer, synchronization). These graphic elements for the Lettrists of course are wonderful calligraphies, almost ready-mades, with whose so-called uselessness they are working" (Beauvais 9f).

14 See also "It seems that I have been guilty of a sort of trade union disloyalty—I have given the game away. I should have let the novice find out for himself. [...] I mean this to be a simple exposition of the technique of dialogue or silent pictures, but I have written, for the most part, from the point of view of the silent film-maker [...]. [T]he basis of talking-film production is—apart from the technique of recording—almost entirely the same as for silent films. [...] In fact, I think I might claim that a grasp of silent technique is more important than ever—even for the '100 per cent dialogue' subjects" (Brunel vii).

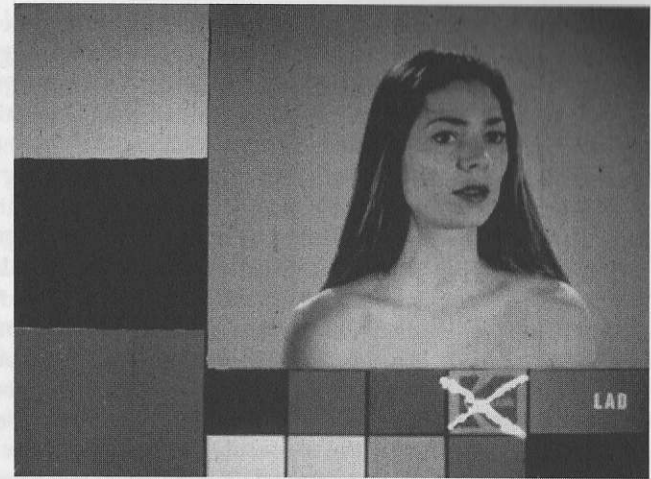
"Conner exposes this unscreened domain of the filmic materials utilized by the labs that manufacture the prints and by the projectionists who thread them onto projectors, focus, frame, and finally screen them. It is into this private part of the movie—cinema's 'secret area'—that he then introduces his first moving image: a single shot of a woman undressing, clipped from [a] purloined girlie movie." (Jenkins 190)

Girls in media. Secondary literature is embarrassed: "Here *A Movie* helps us to focus our expectations by suggesting that it will involve more 'found footage' of this type" (Bordwell and Thompson, *Film* 159).¹⁵ "Here he may well be commenting on one of the fundamental formulas of mainstream cinema—the familiar narrative trajectory that is completed when the hero gets the girl" (Jenkins 190).¹⁶ *A Movie* is much more precise here.



15 "After the nude shot, the countdown leader continues to '1,' then the words 'The End' appear. Another joke: This is the end of the leader, not of the film."—Nope, this is first of all the end of a 10-second silent film *Naked Woman Taking Off Her Stockings*. "Yet even this is untrue, since more leader appears" (Bordwell and Thompson, *Film* 159).

16 "Two taboos of standard practice are broken here: the inclusion of sexually suggestive footage and the insertion of purely functional graphic materials of projection into the body of the film. In immediately breaking the boundaries between the acceptable and the taboo, Conner concisely announces his intention to expose the persistent (but unseen) ideological filters and viewing procedures that shape the mainstream media. After this false ending, the film's title briefly reappears—this time upside down—[...]. We can now presume that in this 'movie' all rules may be turned on their heads" (Jenkins 190).



Gabi Horndasch's *versteckte cathrine* from 1999-2000, itself a variant of the found-footage film that at exactly the same place in the countdown leader—I count to three—does not add one but quite many shots of women, shows that Conner's film does a lot more than just marking the 'secret area' ("cinema's 'secret area'", whatever that may mean) of the film with a snippet of pornography. The woman displayed by Conner is, after all, an integral part of every filmic countdown. Here, the point is not the model "hero gets woman," the old nursery rhyme. With Conner's naked undressing woman, we are still on the level of the leader countdown. It is the current practice of the color coordination in the processing laboratory by way of the so-called "China Girls" that becomes thematic in the black and white film. A "China Girl" is a technical term.

"The processing laboratories have to master different variables in order to create consistently good copies of films, especially when creating multi-stage duplication. The different characteristics of the film, exposure of the original, exposure in the copier and development have to be coordinated. [...] What's missing [...] so far is a non-laborious, simply executed, and universally usable quality control for the production of master positives and duplicating-negatives from the original negatives [...] 3a). A VCA [Video Color Analyzer] can be adjusted either with the help of a China Girl test or with LAD-standards. If the China Girl is preferred, one puts a China Girl negative into the film carrier and a copy with the required density and color balance into the color coordinator. The buttons for color correction are then adjusted according to the specifications in 2c, 2d, and 2e. The coordination of the video image and the comparative image is done with the help of the trimmer potentiometer." (Knippel 6)

Conner makes explicit the implicit sexism of this part of the production on the filmstrip shortly before "the film," which no one but the

projectionist and the processing laboratory gets to see. And he parades it. By using more than 24 frames of the inserted moving image, which usually uses less than 5 frames of the leader strip, he hauls out the one who in every filmic image works in the background without pay from behind the scenes—the China Girl—and literally makes the most of it in his presentation. The decision for using this snippet from a voyeur film in this spot is proof for the fact that the real-image is purposely omitted. We are located at the outer edges of filmic representation; the structural sexism has long been installed.

If a China Girl were to be shown in the movies, one would not see it. It would be a short irritation of one's eye at best. With Conner however, to be suddenly confronted by something one might prefer to have simply pass by, something that maybe one might not really want to know so much about, creates—apart from desire—a feeling of malaise in the viewer. Fear.¹⁷ In the context of the American media discourse at the end of the 1950s, Conner's open-secret-seductress is at the same time an ironic commentary regarding the ice-cream-image-in-the-movies hysteria.

"The London *Sunday Times* front-paged a report in mid-1956 that certain United States advertisers were experimenting with 'subthreshold effects' in seeking to insinuate sale messages to people past their conscious guard. It cited the case of a cinema in New Jersey that it said was flashing ice-cream ads on to the screen during regular showings of film. These flashes of message were split-second, too short for people in the audience to recognize them consciously but still long enough to be absorbed unconsciously. A result, it reported, was a clear and otherwise unaccountable boost in ice-cream sales. [...] It speculated that political indoctrination might be possible without the subject being conscious of any influence being brought to bear on him. When I queried Dr. Smith about the alleged ice-cream experiment he said he had not heard of it before and expressed skepticism." (Packard, *Hidden* 41f)

17 "The discursive landscape of postwar America is exemplary of what Dana Polan has described as dialectics of power and paranoia. Against, and in response to, the emergence of nuclear weapons, Americanized psychoanalysis, social science, and consumer capitalism there developed parallel discourses of hysteria, paranoia, delinquency, sexual excess, and anxiety. The symbiotic structure of containment and excess becomes legible in the image bank of this period, as television and film were deeply implicated in the network of new technologies and fears. In fragmented archival form, the imagery from this period—including home movies made by the newly available eight-millimeter Kodak camera—constitutes a fictional document, or an allegory of history" (Russell 242).

Too late.¹⁸ (For quite some time, in honor of the China Girls, directly before the running of the film in the movie theater, the light used to go on and the audience was asked whether they want ice cream.)

In 1965/66, George Landow in *Film in Which There Appear Sprocket Holes, Edge Lettering, Dirt Particles, Etc.* defines the pre-projected image of the China Girls as frames for the take. By placing two filmstrips next to each other, the particular perforations, the letters and numbers on the edge suddenly become the moving image in the centre of the screen, the *true film*. The new frame—at the spot where the mechanics take hold (the new perforation is of course outside the image again)—will be the *old image*: four takes of a China Girl, seemingly four identical (static) photographs, but of which China Girl 3, clockwise the one on the bottom right, all of a sudden begins to wink at you—this old image becomes the new frame. It becomes individualized. Ironic (and at the same time standardized like a holiday 3-D postcard). Her colleague on the upper right joins and serializes everything again.

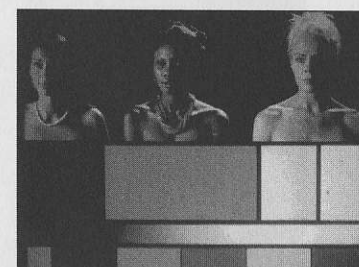
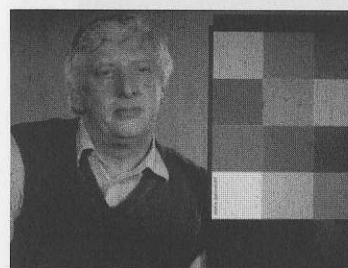


18 "In the original edition of this book, I devoted only a couple of pages to the technique known as subliminal stimulation. [...] *Time* has credited me with exposing the technique. Actually, this book was going to press, when I first got wind of it and I was able only to confirm that the technique had a substantial psychological base and was being tried. During the following months there was quite a hullabaloo in much of the Western world as evidence emerged that hidden messages were indeed being tucked into TV and radio messages and flashed on to motion picture screens. [...] A public uproar developed and this book, happily for me, was caught up in the uproar. The *New Yorker* magazine deplored the fact that minds were being 'broken and entered'. *Newsday* called it the most alarming invention since the atomic bomb. Bills to outlaw it were introduced in Congress, but nothing came of them. Broadcasters, however, did become nervous enough about the charge that they were up to Orwellian tricks to agree to a backing off. The National Association of Television and Radio Broadcasters, which includes most *but not all* stations, announced a ban" (Packard, "Epilogue" 232f).

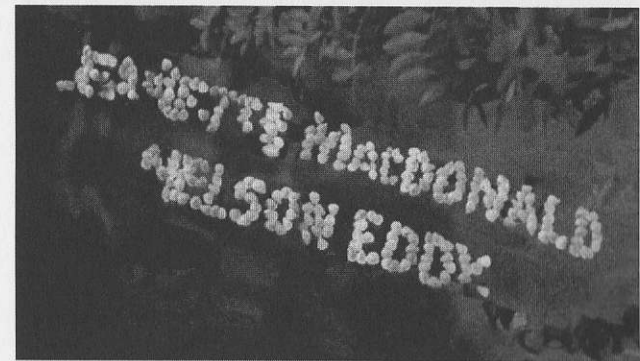
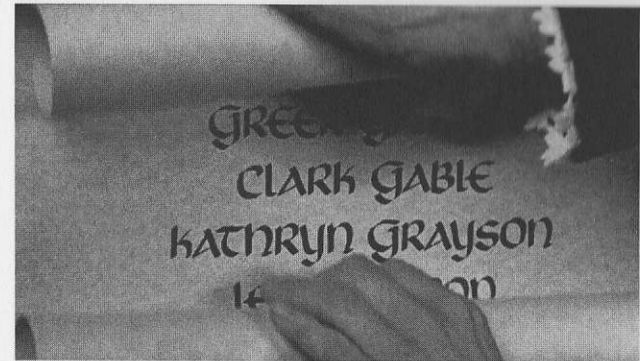
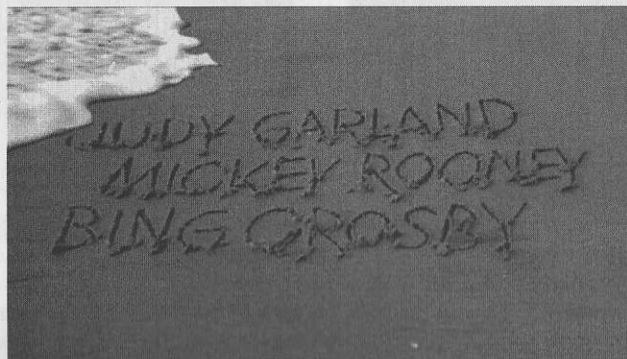
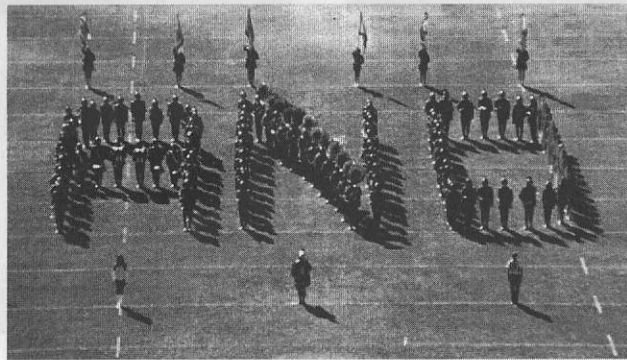
Horndasch's *versteckte cathrine*¹⁹ begins at another point. She represents the entire history of the China Girls with a collection of examples of different China Girls—a China Girl database, if you will.²⁰ The color-spectrum is all of a sudden supplemented by the spectrum of the coordinative images. A type-catalogue. The photographs are cut, presented like slides as if for a home presentation—an audio track of incomprehensible street conversation seemingly belonging to a different film begins later—in such a way that the “Girls” at the moment of their replays (and slight variations thereof) seem to communicate with each other in their frames. Small dialogues commence. In the succession of different China Girl realizations, the ideological construction of the China Girl models becomes evident: It is not only the gender representation (lab technicians wanna have fun) that is reduced to absurdity—suddenly a man appears among the series of girls (and he seems to feel uncomfortable and oddly enough, we notice it with him) and later, a heterosexual pair comes into view (the ‘film happy-end’ of the China Girl; she is not alone any more)—it is also the orientalism of the representation relating China and skin color and finally letting a China Girl dummy appear (because a color scale is not enough for color calibration) that finalizes the absurdity. Previously, the black-and-white China Girl had already appeared that was responsible for the grey-scale of Cukor's *The Women*, and also a subtitled China Girl exists in the film. *versteckte cathrine* closes with a bitter image of three women with bare shoulders next to each other, ordered by their specific color-value tones. Horndasch's film would also be excellently suited for the opening credits of a film. (Only, the film belonging to it would still have to be shot....)

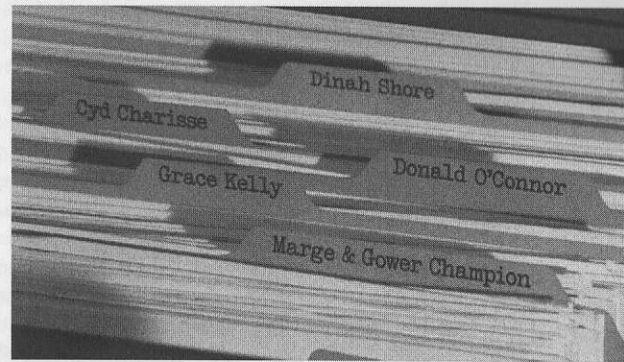
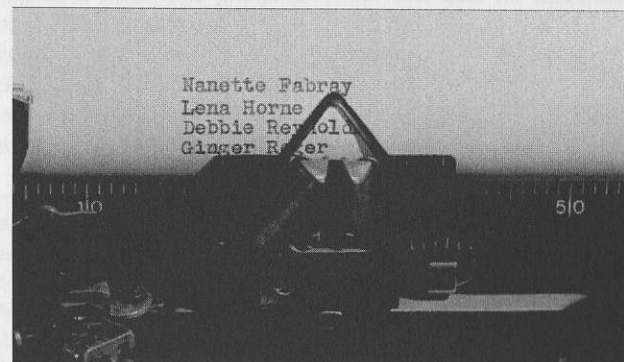
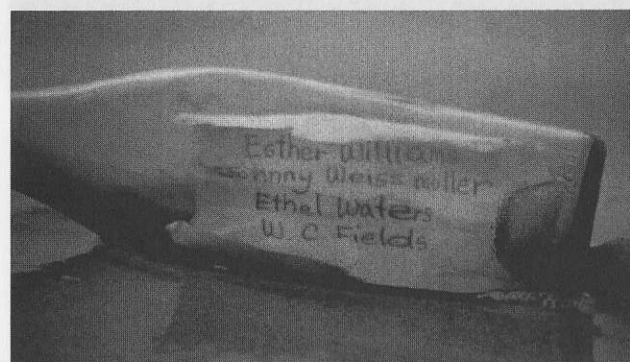
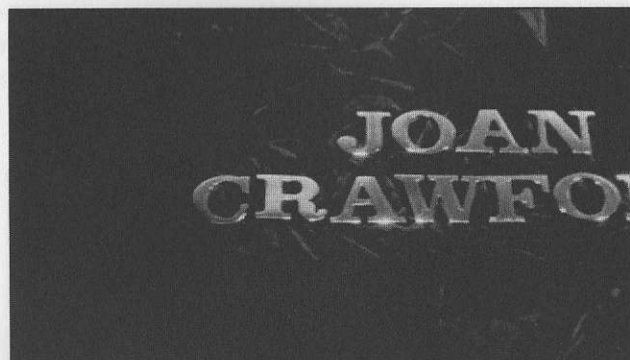
19 The name results from the film's inverting the relationship between hidden and exhibited portraits and then on its part hiding portraits from a filmic diegesis—shots of Catherine Deneuve and Pam Grier—in a series of China Girls. Hidden little friends. This makes the actresses into China Girls and the China Girls into *beautiful women*.

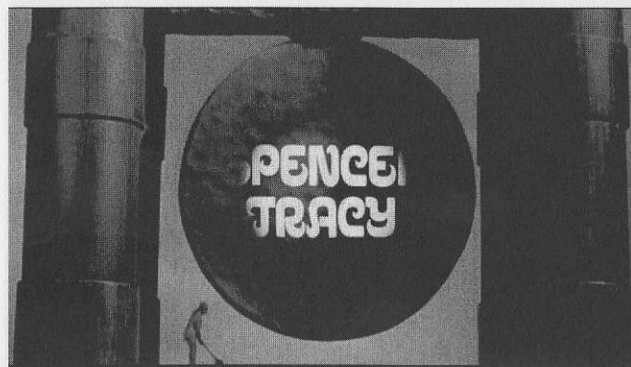
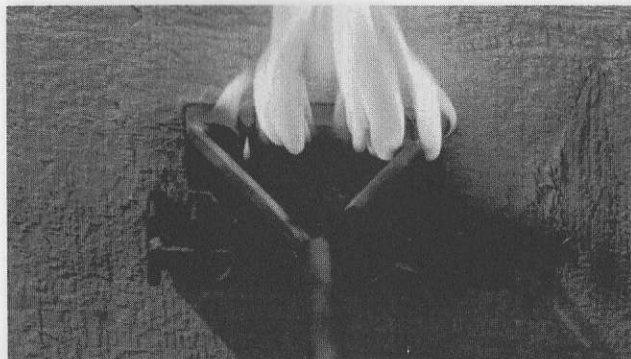
20 The films by Conner, Landow and Horndasch are examples for a self-reflexive Database-Cinema that offensively tackles the question “how to merge database and narrative into a new form” (Manovich 243).



In the history of the opening credits of a film, there is one that itself is dealing with the history of opening credits. The individual titles belonging to an MGM-anniversary compilation film (*That's Entertainment*) are staged in it as fake-found-opening-credits footage.







It looks as if Bass had dismantled the title into its individual components: "That's [it]," "Entertainment," and "Part 2." He is only concentrated on the star-credits, on the variations of an example. 16 individual images for the superstars. Problems such as in *Towering Inferno*²¹ are thereby avoided. The technical department is not mentioned.

21 "When the suspenseful film, 'The Towering Inferno,' was being produced last year, the real suspense on the set was whether Paul Newman or Steve McQueen would get top billing. After all, neither Mr. Newman nor Mr. McQueen had taken second billing in over a decade. Following months of negotiations that extended well into the filming, representatives of the two stars reached a compromise: On the screen and in ads for the film, Mr. McQueen's name would appear to the left, in the normal spot for the first-billed star. But Mr. Newman's name, to the right, would appear a half-line higher. In ads where likeness of the stars were to be used, Mr. McQueen's would also be to the left, but Mr. Newman's likeness would be slightly higher. Which star really came out on top? Well, if you sat through the entire three-hour movie and saw the final credits on the screen, you saw that the cast of characters listed Mr. McQueen's name first—the only clear indication of who apparently won the Hollywood game of one-upmanship. Who cares? The stars, that's who, and not just for reasons of ego inflation. Billings accorded by one studio are watched by other studios as an indication, for example, of a star's box-office value. [...] Mr. Allen [Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corp.] made use of a formula worked out by Mr. Lederer [vice president of Warner Bros. Inc.] the year before for the Warner Bros. film 'Freebie and the Bean,' starring Alan Arkin and James Caan. In that instance, Mr. Lederer drew a horizontal line through a vertical line, putting Mr. Arkin's name in the lower-left quadrant and Mr. Caan's in the upper right. While Mr. Caan technically got second billing, industry insiders say the studio obviously attached great value to the Caan name by its position on the screen and in ads developed for the picture. The 'quadrant' formula developed by Mr. Lederer has been used lately in a number of other films, including Columbia Pictures' 'The Fortune,' where Warren Beatty's name

"When I began doing titles, I started by re-inventing and translating the idea of openings into contemporary terms. On this picture I wound up re-creating our mythic memory of early titles. [...] I wanted to evoke the tone and feeling of the period from which the excerpts in the film came. At first I toyed with the idea of doing the whole title in one genre. In the end that seemed to me to be dull, because as much as we have loving memories of these things, they are memories that we have in flashes. [...] The object in this case was to take a deliberately fragmented approach to the title. After all, the film itself is composed of fragments. It's appropriate." ("Compleat" 290f)

It sketches what I would like to do myself one day. What did I do here now? Opening credits for another form of writing film history? No, unfortunately not yet.

Translated by Brigitte Pichon and Dorian Rudnytsky

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- comes first, but Jack Nicholson's is higher. [...] 'Very often, a star will give up money for billing, it's that important to him,' says Renee Valente, vice president in charge of talent for Columbia Pictures Industries. 'Unless he gets the billing prominence thought due him, he's afraid that other studios will think the less of him'" (Grover).
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The Reflexivity of Voice

ERIKA LINZ

We hear ourselves speak but we do not read ourselves write. Thus, everyday usage is making us aware of a difference between voice and script concerning the dissimilar links of the productive and the perceptive aspects of the two media. Although we can see ourselves write, in the concrete act of the movements of writing we do not simultaneously read what we are writing. Only when talking does hearing at the same time include a semanticizing listening. It seems to be only in speech that we simultaneously tie together speech production *generating meaning* and speech perception *withdrawing meaning*.

In the tradition of the philosophy of language, it has been this uniqueness of the "perceptive-productive double-sidedness" (Waldenfels 492)¹ of speech that has substantiated the long-term emphasized status of voice over script. Apart from the materiality of the temporal negativity of sound, i.e., its volatility and its linear successivity, it has been specifically the processual characteristic of coupling speech and hearing in the act of voicing through which the voice was awarded a special epistemological function since the advent of Idealism at the latest.

Against the backdrop of this tradition and its deconstruction by Derrida, I will ask the question to what extent, after phonocentric criticism, we can continue attaching epistemological relevance to voice regarding its processual reflexivity. Specifically from the perspective of theories of cognition and media, it might have been somewhat premature to put aside the discussion about possible epistemic effects. For many, within the discourse of philosophy and cultural theory, it has lost its legitimizing evidence with Derrida's critique, while in the discourse of theories of cognition and commu-

¹ This article was written in the context of the section "Mediality and Speech-signs" of the Research Center in Cultural Studies (SFB/FK 427) "Media and Cultural Communication" and in many ways refers back to joint discussions in the project with Ludwig Jäger, Gisela Fehrmann, Luise Springer, Meike Adam and Wiebke Iversen. I would like to thank them as I am also thanking Cornelia Epping-Jäger for her suggestions, criticism and support.