

The Spectator of Modernity

A practice-based investigation into the process of film reception  
in the context of the modern era

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

Jose Emilio Suazo Zepeda

School of Arts  
Brunel University

June 2011

For my Mother, my Brother and Sister

## **Abstract**

*The Spectator of Modernity* is a practice based thesis that investigates the process of Film Reception from the perspective of the film as experienced by the individual and her/his apprehension of the interaction between the fictional world on screen and the everyday world. The written component of the project positions the historical context and explores the theoretical notions for the understanding of film-viewing as a decidedly modern activity of special significance for the individual's permanent quest for meaning.

Accompanying the written element, an original audiovisual piece amalgamates the real life testimonials of memorable film experiences which form the qualitative analysis of the research, with the story of a fictional character wandering in the location of the city. The activity of the character, driven to investigate the memorable film experience and in permanent search for a way to reengage in a meaningful relationship with everyday reality, is argued that is analogous to the activity of film-viewing.

Following the considerations of the theory and the findings of the qualitative analysis of the project, the audiovisual piece suggests that watching a film is as a form of *flanerie* carried out inside the cinema, through which the individual seeks to assign meaning to the transient and fragmented events of modern life.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank the Mexican institutions “Universidad Autonoma del Estado de Mexico” and “Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnologia” for granting me the scholarships which made this work possible. My sincere and deepest gratitude is to my first supervisor, Mike Wayne, for his invaluable guidance and encouragement throughout all the research. Thanks also go to other members of staff of the School of Arts, who at different points in the work, provided me with advice and support; Alisa Lebow and Julian Savage. Would also like to thank for their participation in this work to Matt Davies, Jimena, Timothy, Matthew, Nikhil, Steve, Chris, Edward, Polis, and Kevin.

## Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b>	i
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	ii
<b>Table of Contents</b>	iii
<b>Chapter 1. The Experience of Modernity, The Metropolis and Film</b>	1
1.1 The sensing of a world in transformation	1
1.2 Georg Simmel and the rupture in the process of culture	4
1.3 The metropolis and the emergence of a new mentality	7
1.4 Walter Benjamin and the phantasmagory of the city	10
1.5 The <i>flaneur</i> in the search of meaning in the fragments of modernity	13
1.6 From the sensibility of the <i>flaneur</i> to the transformative potential of cinema	16
1.7 Siegfried Kracauer, film and the return to reality	17
1.8 The case of <i>Berlin</i> and the paradox of modernity	19
<b>Chapter 2. A Phenomenological understanding of Film</b>	25
2.1 The transformative power of film	25
2.2 Phenomenology, the crisis of man's existence and the life-world	26
2.3 Phenomenology and Film	32
2.4 George Linden's <i>Reflections on the screen</i>	35
2.5 The body as the centre of perception, the aesthetic experience and film	37
2.6 Psychic distance. The incongruity of the ordinary world and the screen and the phenomenological attitude	43
<b>Chapter 3. Phenomenological Analysis of the film experience</b>	46
3.1 Studying the social viewers	46
3.2 Methodology for the study of the viewers' response to film	51
3.2.1 Film and the representation of the world	56
3.2.2 Film as a reminder of a personal life experience	57
3.2.3 Film as revelation about the material of the world	62
3.2.4 Film as reflection of the world	68
3.3 Film and its appeal to the senses	71
3.4 The viewers' responses and the power of film	75
3.5 The viewers' responses and the forces of modernity	78
	iii

3.5.1 Concerns for the individual and her/his interaction with modern society	78
3.5.2 Film and the search for ontological security	86
<b>Chapter 4. Analysis of the practical component: <i>The Spectator of Modernity</i></b>	91
4.1 <i>The Spectator of Modernity</i> and the city film	92
4.2 The journey device and <i>The Spectator of Modernity</i>	101
4.3 <i>The Spectator of Modernity</i> , <i>flanerie</i> and spectatorship	106
4.4 The character's excursions in the city	111
4.5 <i>The Spectator of Modernity</i> and realist aesthetics	117
4.5.1 Long takes, wide shots and deep focus photography	118
4.5.2 Static tripod mounted shots	120
4.5.3 Editing	121
4.6 Summary: <i>The Spectator of Modernity</i>	122
<b>Appendices</b>	124
Appendix 1. Transcripts of Interviews	124
Appendix 2. Units of General Meaning in Interviews	143
<b>Bibliography</b>	162

## Chapter 1

### The Experience of Modernity, The Metropolis and Film

#### 1.1 The sensing of a world in transformation

With numerous and varied conceptions in social theory of the phenomenon of modernity, from the origins of the term in the Nineteenth Century to its latest manifestation in postmodernity, the reality this concept alludes to is a complex and controversial one which has determined the way in which we live in the world today. In this chapter I examine the work of some selected authors on the notion of modernity, who have developed a critical line of thought on the origins, features and prospects of this cardinal stage in the history of humanity. From the consideration of their view emerges a basic characterisation of the modern experience and other two key notions for this research: the motif of the *flaneur* as a representation of living in metropolitan modernity, and of the significance of film in the exploration of modern reality.

Dana Brand has observed (1991:2) that modernity is an important and pervasive historical moment that has been analysed from a wide variety of ideological perspectives, in which it is possible to identify a basic understanding which they share, as authors like Habermas, Berman, and Frisby have pointed out. A common vision uniting the discourse on modernity, starting from the work of Baudelaire and developed throughout the work of other figures like Benjamin, Simmel, Marx, Nietzsche, Foucault, de Man, and others, is the understanding that unlike in earlier historical periods, Brand says, '[...]the phenomenological character of experience is less unified, coherent or continuous[...]' (1991:2) That is, among the wide spectrum of visions, there is an agreement that what changes with the advent of modernity is the way in which the individuals relate to their environment and the difficulties that assigning meaning to the objects of the world and to our interactions with others represent, in a world that experiences a continuing process of transformation.

Marshall Berman explains that such difficulties in making sense of the world in the modern era arose from the transformations in the social and philosophical structures that were associated with the weakening medieval economic and political forms of organisation that preceded modernity. From the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the feudal ways of understanding the world had declined with a series of transformations in different spheres of life, including, a new understanding of the relationship between man and the universe in the discoveries in physical sciences, the subordination of knowledge to the development of technology in the process of industrialisation, the rapid concentration of people in the cities that brought about new forms of interaction, mass social movements and an increasingly important national state, to the development of a system of mass

communication reducing the barriers of space and time. (Berman, 1983:15) And above these transformations, Berman says, 'driving it all' was the force of the capitalist market.

Berman, as other authors, argues that modernity, as much as it transformed material life, it affected the individual's sensibility in her/his experiencing of the surroundings. After the material transformations of the surroundings in modernity, the world appeared less meaningful to the individual and it became harder to be oriented within it, when events would appear disconnected with one another (1983:15). This feel of disconnectedness says Berman is what characterises the experiences of all men and women of our time, all across the world, irrespectively of geographic location, ethnicity, nationality, and social class; which leads him to view modernity as a paradoxical phenomenon uniting all mankind, in what he calls a 'unity of disunity' (1983:15). It referers to a generalised feeling that the world as we experience it lacks meaning and has become a source of anguish for the individual.

If on the one hand, as he explains, the transformations brought about by capitalism, represented the liberation of the individual from the oppressive feudal world and allowed the display of her/his ability and drive to improve her/his relationship with the environment through the development of technology and organised human production, capitalism on the other hand also represented a deterioration of humanity's quality of life, giving place to 'the trauma of modernization' (Berman, 1983:35) Following Marx, in this view, although capitalism displayed a potential for human development, it closed itself off from any further possibilities of a true development of humanity by reducing all material development to the opportunity of an economic profit, regardless of its contribution to the improvement of human life.

Berman condenses his view on the experience of modernity in an image which he invokes from the *Communist Manifesto*, referring to the modern era as a period in which 'all that is solid melts into air' (1983). According to it, none of the materials that compose our daily life in modernity, can carry at all any weight since as much as capitalism was a creative force in its origins, the logic of capital also represents a destructive force. Having the ultimate aim of generating a quick profit, capitalism's production is not meant to last but to carry out once again the production process from which the economic gain is obtained. So all we utilise, from the clothes that we wear to the buildings that we inhabit, are made for a temporary use and to be soon destroyed and built again, keeping the production process forever active. Hence the image from the *Manifesto*, indicating that the material world that allows our interaction with others loses its solidity and turns into a permanently evanescent entity.

The understanding of modernity as this distinctive form of experiencing the world in the face of the material transformations introduced by capitalism was an idea formulated early on in the



writing of authors belonging to what Marshall Berman defines as the second phase of modernity (1983:16), which he characterises as a period during which people experienced the sense of living in two worlds simultaneously, the traditional and the modern. Consequently, their work can be observed as an expression on the emergence of the modern, as a phenomenon with contradictions, with both liberating and oppressive qualities, and its effect on mankind's experience of the world. Among these authors we find a complex understanding of the modern as that result of the interaction between the structural processes and the material transformations of life, as they were taking place, and the effects on the mind of the individuals living through them.

The first of these authors is the literary figure of Charles Baudelaire, the founder of this critical tradition of thought on modernity and whom introduced the term as it is currently understood (Frisby, 1985:14) His vision was the result of his experience of the topographical and social changes that Paris of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century had gone through in its process of modernisation. As Berman points out '[...]as Baudelaire worked in Paris, the work of its modernization was going on alongside him and over his head and under his feet.' (1983:147) In this context of transformation of Paris, Baudelaire used the term to refer to 'the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable' (Baudelaire, 1964:13).

We can observe that Baudelaire's early conception of modernity centred on the physical quality of things, which in the new era become increasingly elusive in the individual's attempt to grasp them, thus calling for a deliberate effort to capture what is eternal from the materially increasingly ephemeral, in order to make sense of the world. The modern individual, as Baudelaire's modern artist that has the responsibility of representing this new form of modern experience and seek the truth and the human values behind it, must engage in an interpretative effort to make sense of humanity's own creations, which have become unintelligible.

In Baudelaire we can recognise an expression of the sensibility which the modern individual must possess to move through ordinary life, "in the daily metamorphosis of external things" (Baudelaire, 1964:4); that is, a capacity of seeing through the appearance of things to endow them with life and beauty. The raw materials for the perceptiveness of modern man can be found among others in the landscapes of the city, horse-drawn carriages, walking men, women and children, during daytime or at night, in all trivial things which s/he may encounter in the 'river of life' (Baudelaire, 1964:11) S/he should have the ability to make all this harmonious, ordered and extract sense from whatever ordinary element presents itself in the rapidity of movement in modern life.

According to Frisby (1985:15), even though Baudelaire's presentation does not constitute a systematic analysis of modernity, his vision of this phenomenon as a dialectic of the transitory and the eternal shaping people's everyday lives, would become central for the debate of the experience

of the modern. Baudelaire sensed a world in transformation and its 'spiritual' effects, what the modernisation of the city did to people, and anticipated the theoretical work of other authors, who like him explored the sense of discontinuity of experiences and took his vision as a point of departure.

Beyond coining the term, his work reflects the preoccupation for the effects of the process of modernisation, with his interest in the city subject matter, the crowd, melancholy, the experience of shock and the oppressiveness of life, among other themes. His preoccupation is for the emerging transformations in late Nineteenth Century Paris manifested in ordinary life, such as it is exemplified by his often cited poem *To a Passer-by* (Baudelaire, 1909:58), where the author mourns that he will never again see a woman who he came across by chance on the street and greatly captivated him. As other of his work, it explores the sense of heightening of stimulation represented by all which may address the individual in the city such as people from among the crowd and the noises on the street, with a sudden appearance, vanishment and effect – the ephemeral – for the individual to try to make sense of and incorporate into her/his collection of experiences. According to Benjamin (1939:165), this sensibility guides Baudelaire's prose poems of *Paris Spleen*, exploring the city crowd, the fragmented, and the heightening of stimulation in the city. Paris in transformation became the subject of his poetry, marked by a sense of profound alienation.

For this reason Berman recognises him as the first author to understand the unity between the material and human consciousness of modern life, and to present modern individual as a distinctive personality who is the result of her/his civilisation (1983:134). Having lived through the new possibilities of experience in the city that resulted from the economic and cultural transformations of modernity, he would be acknowledged as the first to give expression through his work to the modern experience (Smart, 1994:160).

## **1.2 Georg Simmel and the rupture in the process of culture**

As Baudelaire, the German sociologist Georg Simmel, also in the Nineteenth Century worked on examining the phenomenon of the modern from a critical perspective. He wrote on the transformation of culture in the face of the development of capitalism, and conceived like the French poet of modern reality as composed by fragments of experience. According to David Frisby – who has worked extensively on the phenomenon of modern urban experience and on reevaluating Simmel's sociological work – the importance of his vision is that Simmel 'more than any of his contemporary sociologists [...] came closest to expressing and analysing the modes of experiencing the "new" and "modern" life-world.' (1985:39)

For Simmel the world of modernity was characterised by an increasingly fragmented reality which did not seem to have an overarching idea, a unifying principle for all the activities and objects that it was composed of. Notably advanced in respect to the development of material culture with 'extremely refined' things like means of transport, science and technology, but impoverished in respect to the cultivation of man and woman as individuals and as a community. As Simmel saw it, 'the disharmony of modern life, in particular the intensification of technology in every sphere combined with deep dissatisfaction with it, arises largely from the fact that things become more and more cultivated but people are capable only to a lesser degree of deriving from the improvement of objects an improvement of their subjective lives' (1908:45). A disjunction in the development of two spheres which according to Simmel was the result of the advance of capitalism.

In his economic grounding of the effective causes of modernity in the advance of capitalism, as Frisby indicates (1985:91), Simmel echoes at some points Marx's account of the transformation of the production process in *Capital*, which according to the same author was a known source for the Berlin figure. The similarity would lead Rudolf Goldscheid (1985:61) to define Simmel's insight as 'a psychological counterpart to Marx's *Capital* ', for his emphasis in the inner life of the individual provoked by the development of the money economy.

The way that the development of the money economy resulted in the imbalance of modern culture was, according to him, through the modifications of traditional modes of production and consumption of commodities which it introduced (Simmel, 1978:458). In the instance of production in the capitalist system, Simmel explains that the division of labour, the separation of the worker from the means of production, and the specialisation in production are the most important factors why the product is completed at the expense of the producer (Simmel, 1978:458-460). As a result, the product fails to function as a projection of the personality and effectively as a form of expression. While the form of consumption of commodities in capitalism, represents a decline in the access to custom made objects specifically produced for the consumer.. It follows that objects lose their subjective value for the consumer and the collection of them become highly impersonal (Simmel, 1978:462)

Thus by transforming the materiality of life through its modes of production and consumption, capitalism affected the consciousness of modern mankind, which would become estranged from the most intimate aspects of daily life. Although not necessarily lacking of meaning, the material world of modernity would pose the challenge for human subjectivity to make sense of the world as it is experienced in the alienated immediate surroundings.

Simmel's theory of modernity accounts for the effect of the transformation of physical objects on man's subjectivity, by their interrelatedness in the notion of culture, a concept of central

importance in his conception of modernity, and which he developed throughout his work. According to him culture played a vital role in the development of humanity, being life constituted by the duality of the individual and the culture that arises from the individual's desire to control and further the natural development of the human race (Simmel, 1908:41)

Through cultural development, he argues, like a plant can be aided to deliver more refined products, humanity takes over the development of its own essence to develop its maximum potential, controlling the destiny of the cultivation of mankind's spirit according to plans humanity has designed by itself, not as determined by nature (Simmel, 1908:41). Such effort for development adopts the form of something external to the individual, 'by the use of purposively formed objects' – that is ordinary objects we live with everyday – and the objectification of individuals' forms of interaction into entities such as languages, morals, legal systems, etc. (Simmel, 1908:42). Both forms of objectification take the process of perfection of humanity beyond the individual, being them the result of the labour of various generations of men and women.

The importance of Simmel's understanding of cultural forms resides in the recognition of the meaning they are bestowed with, them being the result of the will, intelligence, emotion, mood, and personality of the individuality and society that has created them (Simmel, 1911/12:60) Simmel points to this when he describes cultural objects as 'vessels of spiritual life' (1918:76), the form that human life adopts for its manifestation, lacking human subjectivity of a visible presence itself. By doing so, culture serves then human subjectivity with a sublime experience, by allowing it to adopt a solid form that others can interact with, and be served, moved, and enriched by (Simmel, 1911/12:60); from an objectified form that no longer belongs to the creator but has acquired an existence of its own, and will, in the completion of the process of culture, be drawn into subjective life by being used and made sense of.

In its dual conformation, culture had to progress by the mutual development of the individuals' subjectivity and the objects of the world, feeding each other; that is the 'formula of culture' (Simmel, 1911/12:68). However this interaction as Simmel understood it was inherently conflictual, with subjective life with its restless character continuously entering in opposition with the material world (1911/12:68). But with capitalism the confrontation acquired such a problematic character that Simmel considered it as the source of the deepest problems of modern life (Simmel, 1903:175). The money economy had broken the equilibrium between material development and human subjectivity, with the former becoming dominant and making it increasingly difficult for the individual to draw from it for the cultivation of her/his personality.

In the modern world, the crisis of culture means that material production has lost sight of its ultimate aim, the improvement of human life, which Simmel sees manifested in two observable

contradictions (1916a:91): in modernity life becomes increasingly composed of a multiplicity of products and activities – particularly with the extensive development of technology affecting all experiences – and in its fragmentariness loses the sense of having a common direction; and material products develop according to their own logic, even if it is contrary to the demands of individuals for their acquisition of culture – means transform into ends as we engage in activities and develop commodities without real human value.

In other words, Simmel explains that due to the introduction of capitalist modes of production and consumption, modernity brought about the loss of the personal value and personality from society's purposively formed objects, which cease to serve as a true manifestation of human subjectivity. Material products fail to accomplish culture's aim of becoming a sublime experience and to constitute both a vehicle of expression for their creators and a source of meaning when drawn back into subjective life in their consumption. Since in the commodities there is not a reflection of the personality of the individuals, Simmel explains that a proper relationship between subject and object is missing (Simmel, 1978:459).

To this state of culture Simmel points to in his view on what defines modernity: 'The essence of modernity as such is psychologism, the experiencing [...] and interpretation of the world in terms of the reactions of our inner life and indeed as an inner world, the dissolution of fixed contents in the fluid element of the soul, from which all that is substantive is filtered and whose forms are merely forms of motion' (Simmel, 1909, cited in Frisby, 1985:46). That is, the act of understanding and incorporating of what is of cultural value from an increasingly fragmented reality in permanent motion, into the individual's personality; a process increasingly made difficult with reality acquiring that fragmented character, as in Baudelaire's original notion of modernity.

### **1.3 The metropolis and the emergence of a new mentality**

In addition to the understanding of the origins of modernity in capitalism and its effects on people's everyday interactions, we also find in Simmel, an examination of the metropolitan location and its centrality to apprehending modernity. The importance of the site of the metropolis in Simmel's body of work, resides in his perception of it as the point of maximum intensification of modernity, as it was the city that was the seat of the most advanced economic division of labour and mass consumption. As he says: 'The money economy dominates the metropolis' (Simmel, 1903:176). Frisby indicates (1985:103) that while capitalism is for Simmel the ultimate cause of the discontinuity of modern experience, it is the urban context the key site of display of the transformations of culture introduced by it.

It was after all the social experiences derived from Berlin during its period of maximum

expansion that informed Simmel's vision of modernity (Frisby, 1985:103). Simmel recognised that it was the city where he had spent most of his academic life, and its culture, which had most provided him with inspiration for his work: 'Perhaps I could have achieved something that was also valuable in another city; but this specific achievement, that I have in fact brought to fruition in these decades is undoubtedly bound up with the Berlin milieu' (Simmel, 1907, cited in Frisby, 1984:22 )

The metropolitan environment as an exemplary site of display of modernity, was the main focus of one of his most recognised and influential works, *The Metropolis and Mental Life* (Simmel, 1916b:108). The relevance of *Metropolis* resides in it being one of the first studies to approach the city to investigate the new living conditions introduced by modernity (Gleber, 1999:23), and with which Simmel would influence other notable thinkers' understanding of the city, as it is the case of Walter Benjamin (Gilloch, 1997:144).

In *Metropolis* Simmel sought to explore the effects of the development of the 'social-technological mechanism' of culture on the individual, that is, what conditions of material development of the city restrict or allow the development of the individual's personality. This event he saw as exemplary of the overall case of the development of culture in modernity, turning individuals into isolated entities, distanced from each other and from their reality. His insight into the urban context would focus on two primordial, and related factors, and the new metropolitan mentality they gave place to: the increase in nervous life and the domination of the money economy (Simmel, 1903:174-185).

In reference to the first of them, Simmel notes that: 'The psychological basis of the metropolitan type of individuality consists in the intensification of nervous stimulation which results from the swift and uninterrupted change of outer and inner stimuli' (Simmel, 1903:175). In contrast to the form of living in small towns and rural areas, Simmel identifies a fundamental feature in the city, which confronts its inhabitants all the time with more and more intense sensory stimulation, and thus infuses metropolitan life with a frantic and fragmented rhythm (Simmel, 1903:175). These stimuli originate from the multiplication of phenomena which the city concentrates, including the social, economical, and occupational spheres of life.

In response to the over-stimulating metropolitan life s/he cannot manage, the individual is lead to block out all events and remain indifferent to them, or to react to them in a rational, rather than an emotional manner, as a way to protect her/himself from the continuous disruptive nature of the metropolis. By doing so, Simmel argues, the stimulation is transferred from the emotional to the rational level, preventing it from affecting the personality of the subject and protecting her/him from the excess of stimulation that oppresses her/him.

Although Simmel was not exclusively referring to visual stimuli, his emphasis on the impact

of the external world on the individual is characterised by a dominance of the visual (Savage and Warde, 1993:115). According to Anke Gleber (1999:24) the process of intensifying sensory stimulation that Simmel charts, points to a redefinition of man with urban life being increasingly experienced as a series of rapidly changing images provided by the streets, advertisements, billboards, posters, placards, store signs, shop fronts, display windows, commodity forms and architecture. Simmel suggested, visual impressions are characteristic of the metropolis: 'The interpersonal relationships of people in big cities are characterised by a markedly greater emphasis on the use of the eyes than on that of the ears' (Simmel cited in Benjamin, 1939:191).

That form of interacting with excessive stimulation, withdrawn from emotional connections with the objects of the world and other individuals, Simmel maintains is connected with the rationale of the money economy that strips out the personal from them, denying their uniqueness by treating them in a purely functional way. As money reduces all diversity to the question 'how much?', the individual adopts in an urban context over-saturated by events a 'matter-of-fact attitude' (Simmel, 1903:176). In the world of the money economy all things and human relationships appear to lose their colour in the process of their commodification, to acquire a sense of impersonality: 'Money, with all its colourlessness and indifference, becomes the common denominator of all values; irreparably it hollows out the core of things, their individuality, their specific value, and their incomparability. All things float with equal specific gravity in the constantly moving stream of money' (Simmel, 1903:178)

Thus the new metropolitan mentality is doubly determined, by the physiological impossibility to handle all the events that call the individual's attention, like the presence of many others, the multiplying forms of advertising, and the display of commodities, and by the spirit of capitalism oriented by the economic profit; and becomes uninterested in and distanced from a world that does not seem to offer the opportunity of human development. This attitude of the metropolitan population that Simmel characterises as blasé, in which all things and people that come to the individual's attention appear devalued, and which at the end, as he says, 'unavoidably drags one's own personality down into a feeling of the same worthlessness' (Simmel, 1903:179)

In Simmel's account of an alienated objective culture we can identify his concern with the fate of the individual in the modern world, as it is experienced in the daily, sensory manifestations, and best exemplified by life in the metropolis. Frisby (1985:52) suggests that Simmel's final aim was not to formulate a historical account of modernity or of the origins of the money economy, but to offer an analysis of man's inner transformation in response to the experiences of modernity, 'very much as Baudelaire had understood it' (Frisby, 1985:40). A metropolitan modernity which he situated in the context of the development of capitalism.

In Simmel, as in Baudelaire, lies the recognition, albeit in a different form, of the historical process of modernity and the preoccupation with the type of individuality that it had engendered. While the French poet is acknowledged for initiating the critical tradition of thought on modernity and for his poetic renderings of his urban experiences, the German author introduced the sociological analysis of the deterioration of experience in the modern context, with focus on the city as the key site of its occurrence. According to Walter Benjamin, another fundamental thinker of modernity who would make of the same sensibility the centre of his study of modernity in his lifelong work of the *Arcades Project*, the voice of Simmel was the expression of a "self-alienated humanity" in the era of industrial capitalism' (Wolin, 1982, cited in Gilloch, 1997:133).

#### **1.4 Walter Benjamin and the phantasmagory of the city**

In the context of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Walter Benjamin followed on the tradition initiated by Baudelaire, seeking to understand the rupture of experience as he encountered it in his native Berlin by positioning it as the result of the cultural transformations that were made visible in the late Nineteenth Century Paris of Baudelaire. He aimed to analyse modernity as it had been characterised by Baudelaire, as 'the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent' (Frisby, 1985:190), and as Simmel, he would make of the city the key location to examining modernity. With his work, it has been argued, Benjamin would contribute to delineate some of the contours on the debate of cultural modernity as it has taken place in the most recent years (Cohen, 2004:200)

The *Arcades Project* was to constitute the synthesis of the vision that Benjamin had developed throughout his writings on the phenomenon of modern experience, and would become his most recognised enterprise and studied material. Nevertheless, having been left incomplete with Benjamin's death, it would remain not as a coherent single piece of writing, but an agglomeration of ideas begun at different times, transformed, and eventually abandoned (Gilloch, 1997:100). Furthermore, Theodor Adorno argues that Benjamin's plan was not to produce an integrated discourse guided by his interpretation, but a shocking montage of material for studies on different themes on the late Nineteenth Century Paris, in which fragmentariness was its guiding principle (1997:239).

Therefore the *Arcades* may be seen instead as the identification of a set of concerns that guided the Berlin figure's thinking and writing. More specifically, it has been argued that, viewed along with other of the main articles that Benjamin produced before the *Arcades*, his other writings in parallel to it and a couple of exposes of the project, it can be distinguished as an expression of what Benjamin considered determinant features of the urban setting and the historical origins of modernity in industrial capitalism (Gilloch, 1997; Susan Buck-Morss, 1989).



The *Arcades* makes apparent, that in Benjamin's vision, like in his predecessors Simmel and Baudelaire, the urban context played a fundamental role for the development of the modern era. According to Frisby the city was for Benjamin 'the crucial showplace of modernity' (Frisby, 1985:224); while Gilloch points to the metropolis as an entity towards which Benjamin felt both intensively attracted and repelled (1997:1). Besides the *Arcades*, focused on Paris, Benjamin's interest in the setting of the city resolved in a series of writings on different European cities – including Naples, Moscow, Marseilles and Berlin – exploring various themes on architecture, the city spaces, street life, the city inhabitants and daily routines (Gilloch, 1997).

On the Berlin author we can identify a preoccupation on the transformation, as in Simmel and Baudelaire, of the character of experience in the city, a site which he conceived in a close form to that of *Metropolis and Mental Life*. For Benjamin the city was characterised by the rise of fragmented, ephemeral experiences that demanded momentary attention and were soon to be forgotten; experiences which he termed the *shocks* of modern life and which were the result of the development of industrial production that shaped Paris from the middle of the Nineteenth Century (Benjamin, 1999:560). For Benjamin with its new forms of experience, the city was the source of intoxication, of the new and intense forms of encounters that have no end.

In this form of understanding the city, Frisby indicates that Benjamin was notably influenced by surrealism (1985:188), of which both Aragon's *Le Paysan de Paris* and Breton's *Nadja* were known to him. Along the lines of surrealism, Benjamin recognised the idea of the embodiment of the progress of humanity in man made products like commodities, buildings and technology, which were assumed to be the depositories of human development, and which found in the city the site of their display and circulation. Instead of bringing enlightenment with the empire of reason in the dominion of science, the logic of the money economy, and all forms of rationalisation of society, this view held that modernity had created in the banal products of mass culture new objects of reverence, which dominated the city. This is the view of modernity as a dreamworld, which according to Buck-Morss is a visible armature of the *Arcades*: 'Benjamin's central argument in the *Passagen-Werk* was that under conditions of capitalism, industrialization had brought about a reenchantment of the social world ' (1989:253).

Benjamin like the surrealists conceived the products of modernity as objectifications of the aspirations of humanity to triumph over the forces of nature, with all its wonders and forms of innovations parading through the streets. The city had been transformed into a magical site, with enticing experiences which the modern individual would be attracted to traverse in order to avoid tedium. However, Benjamin held that in its fantastical material form, modernity was a paradoxical era that attempted to bring about the ultimate development of the individual with an abundance of

products, but had in fact thrown humanity back into a state of ignorance (Gilloch, 1997:105). In modernity, Benjamin explains, experience follows a pattern of momentary enjoyment of the surprising and the novel, which is soon followed by a sensation of its depreciation. Like a gambler who constantly raises the stakes, hoping to get back what s/he lost, Benjamin asserts that the modern individual steers towards ruin in her/his search for significant experience: it turns it into a narcotic (1999:515) .

The truth of modernity resided for Benjamin in the fetishisation of commodities: the process through which any object which society produces bears no marks that remind us how it came into being; 'it becomes a magical object, insofar as the labor stored up in it comes to seem supernatural' (Benjamin, 1999:669). In parallel to Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, regarding the alienation of man in the context of capitalist production, Benjamin saw the products of modernity confronting the worker as an alien entity, something that cannot be recognised as the product of labour. In this magical appearance of objects of consumption and of the society which produces them, with its standardised methods of production, lies the the concealment of labour and the lack of value of the objects of consumption.

Thus Benjamin's vision of the city on one hand recognises the attractive sensory dimension of the everyday objects the modern individual interacts with and which have a magical appearance, and the significance of their function in the process of human development; but on the other hand, it also adopts a critical stance as it understands metropolitan modernity as a deformation of the impulses of development turned into the cult of consumer goods, with the fetishisation of commodities in capitalism. Benjamin referred to such development of commodification of culture in the Nineteenth Century as the phantasmagoric, that is, the transformation of materiality into a stage of mere appearances, emptied of human values. Benjamin like Simmel, recognised the alienating nature of the material development of capitalism, manifested all the time in more intense experiences ultimately devoid of meaning.

In the conception of the modern city in Benjamin, the individual's experience ceases to occur in a continuous form, and is reduced to what would appear as random impressions that are only partially registered but ultimately not understood. With the multiplication of sensory forms, metropolitan modernity gave place to new forms of sensorial encounters which meant the destruction of experience in a coherent, intelligible form. According to Benjamin, sensory experiences become the norm in modernity, and among them the individual consciousness must be capable to discriminate which do enter her/his intellect (Benjamin, 1939).

For Walter Benjamin it was to the advent of this urban setting which he analyses throughout his work, that Baudelaire, a central presence in the *Arcades*, responded with his work in Paris of the

Nineteenth Century. He represented for Benjamin the articulation of the experience of man at the centre of modernisation, in Paris, the home of the most advanced technological accomplishments and imperial achievements, filled with the finest commodities and innovations. The importance of Baudelaire, maintains Walter Benjamin, 'resides in his being the first and the most unflinching to have taken the measure of the self-estranged human being, in the double sense of acknowledging this being and fortifying it with armor against the reified world' (1999:322).

In this sense, Benjamin sees in the figure of Baudelaire, as Buck-Morss states, treating Baudelaire's poetry 'as a social object, not a literary one [...] ' (1989:57), an indication of the transformation of experience of mankind within modernity. He observes in Baudelaire the struggle of the modern individual in the context of the new urban setting in her/his attempts at engaging in a meaningful experience, this having become increasingly ephemeral. Benjamin found in the work of the poet the embodiment of the modern individual attempting to give form to the fluidity of life which capitalism had brought about.

For Benjamin this form of existence in modern life, attempting to engage with the new material conditions of the environment in the phantasmagory of the city, gave to modern existence what he called an heroic dimension. According to Benjamin, the heroism of Baudelaire consists of being able "to give a form to modernity", to the fluid and fragmented experiences which it has to offer (1999:322). Benjamin recovers this notion of the heroism of modern man as a representation of the difficulty for the individual to engage with modern reality in the magical but deceptive setting of the metropolis, both vindicating the materiality of industrial production but also ultimately attempting to resist its illusory character.

### **1.5 The *flâneur* in the search of meaning in the fragments of modernity**

Benjamin found in Baudelaire the heroism of modern existence embodied in the poet's representation of the figure of the *flâneur*. As it features in Baudelaire's work this character is the purposeless city stroller who in his promenading through the streets, can extract meaning from the ephemeral impressions of the crowds and all spectacles which he encounters. Specifically in the time of Baudelaire, the notion was tied to the writers and journalists who wrote sketches of urban life from a wandering perspective, with the basic aim to provide an interpretative view of fragmented modern reality (Tester, 1994:5). The *flâneur* is in its origin a literary man.

Furthermore in the work of the Charles Baudelaire the *flâneur* appears as an admirable figure, which features most prominently as a main narrative device in his collection of prose poems *Paris Spleen*. As it features in Baudelaire's *The Painter of Modern Life*, the *flâneur* was the character driven out to the public life of the city, in the search for meaning in modernity. 'The crowd is his

element, as the air is that of birds and water of fishes. His passion and his profession are to become one flesh with the crowd. For the perfect *flâneur*, for the passionate spectator, it is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow of movement in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite' (Baudelaire, 1964:9)

Keith Tester indicates that for Benjamin this character which Baudelaire depicts, 'is basically the hero of modernity' (Tester, 1994:6). While the city was the location of modernity for Benjamin, Frisby points out that it was the figure of the *flâneur*, as Baudelaire presented it, whom for him represented the subjectivity experiencing the city life and providing philosophical insights into it (Frisby, 1985:228). Through the *flâneur's* particular outlook on life, Benjamin holds, Baudelaire expresses his insights into modernity, which he asserts, correspond to the gaze of the alienated person (Benjamin, 1999:894).

In his analysis of the flâneur Benjamin characterises it as a social type with specific location in relation to the arcades, to journalism and especially the feuilleton and the physiologies of the 1830's and 1840's, and to the urban crowd. But further than as a historic figure, Dana Brand argues (1991:7) that Benjamin seems to conceive the *flâneur* as a larger figure than it appears in the *Arcades*, as an archetype in which an aspect of the historical reality of the modern era was made manifest. For Buck-Morss, Benjamin appears to see him as offering a 'philosophical insight into the nature of modern subjectivity – that to which Heidegger referred abstractly as the “thrownness” of the subject – by placing it within specific historical experience.' (1986, cited in Brand, 1991:7)

Following Dana Brand, Benjamin's *flâneur* may be seen as a model of the relationship of the modern individual in her/his experience in the world, which having origins in journalistic social practices, functions as indicative of a new kind of human subjectivity in the modern era. An individual who recognises her/ his existence in the agitation of the city, and feels attracted to it but who also attempts to assert her/his freedom in experiencing the surroundings and obtain meaning from the shocks of modernity. It is the flâneur, like the city, a monad of the fortune of the individual in the urban setting, of what modernity had done to human subjectivity.

That the *flâneur* can stand as a symbol of modernity having a further significance than in its existence in Paris of the nineteenth century, is observable in its prominent presence as a motif in the writing of metropolitan existence, appearing at different places and times, in the discourse of the nature of the conditions of modernity. A telling appearance of the *flâneur* is, as Tester has suggested, in the literature of existentialism (Tester, 1994:13), in Sartre's *Nausea* and Robert Musil's *The man without qualities*, where the *flâneur* serves to illuminate issues of life in the city, irrespective of its geographical and temporal location.

In this sense the *flâneur* can be seen as representing a new form of relationship between the

consciousness of man and the experience of metropolitan life. It synthesises the paradoxical position of man in a modern era filled with contradictions. The *flaneur* stands as the recognition of the individual in the new conditions of material life brought about by capitalist development, which having represented an improvement in comparison to previous eras in the history of mankind, would ultimately represent the source of distancing between the individual and the objects and other individuals around. In this context which the modern individual has not chosen to live in, but recognises her/himself to inhabit, everyday existence acquires an heroic character. The heroism of modern man, as symbolised by the *flaneur*, consists of being able to feel at home in an alienating urban setting. That is, to have a meaningful existence by understanding the spectacle of the city; as Tester says, to ‘satisfy his otherwise dissatisfied existence; replace the sense of bereavement with a sense of life’ (Tester, 1994:7).

The image of the *flaneur* serves to view the effects of modernity in the shaping of the individual consciousness, as it also allows us to recognise the possibilities of acting on the everyday surroundings to unmask and transform the reality of modern development. The *flaneur* as Benjamin sees it, is an active figure, who attempts to resist the overwhelming stimuli of the city, an individual who is not totally submerged in the crowd and distances himself from being a passive spectator (Frisby, 1994:89-90) That is, even though the circumstances of his surroundings control him, the *flaneur* represents the possibility of transforming them in his ways of exploring the streets and his attempts to extract meaning from its spectacles: “nothing comes closer to the task of the ancient hero in Baudelaire's sense – and in his century – than to give a form to modernity” (Benjamin, 1999:322). It is the decision of the individual to engage in a meaningful contemporary existence, rather than succumb to it.

More precisely the activity of the *flaneur* consists precisely of examining the fragments of the city to view them in a new light, to place them in a new context. Like the figure of the collector, which also featured in Benjamin's work, the *flaneur* seeks to rescue objects from the surroundings, from the functions and the context they have been assigned by society, to bring them into a new context which reveals another dimension from them. They are related sensibilities that seek out images and scenes of the modern streets. As Benjamin says: ‘To the collector, the world is present and indeed ordered in each of his objects. Ordered, however, according to a surprising – indeed, to the profane, unintelligible – configuration.’ (Benjamin, 1999:207) Thus the collector recognises the necessity to organise the order of things to transform our perception of them.

In the same manner, the *flaneur* in his traversing of the streets documenting his excursions collects images of the spectacles of the city to interpret them according to the knowledge he possesses, and to present them as the writers of the physiognomies of the nineteenth century did

before their readers. As Benjamin notes: ‘flaneur optical, collector tactile’ (Benjamin, 1999:207) In this sense, the *flaneur* as understood by Benjamin, exercises the principle of montage, which based on the notion of shock, seeks to provoke and disconcert other individuals and manifest what is hidden in the commodified world by reassembling its pieces (Gilloch, 1997:115). For the *flaneur* committed to go deep below the surface, holds Benjamin, awaits estrangement and surprise, in a standardised and uniform world (Benjamin, 199:444)

In a period which Benjamin held as ‘the primacy of the optical sense’ (Benjamin, 1999:206) as it had also been recognised by Simmel in his view of an overstimulating environment, the image of the *flaneur* is thus at the centre of the city, asserting his existence in the site of the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent. With the *flaneur*, Walter Benjamin symbolises the way to unmask the myths in the phenomenal forms of the present, by deciphering the meanings hidden in them.

### **1.6 From the sensibility of the *flaneur* to the transformative potential of cinema**

The concern for penetrating the phantasmagory of the city by means of collecting images through *flanerie* extends to Benjamin’s meditations on the development of photography and film, subject on which even though he did not produce a systematic theory, he formulated some fundamental observations in their relationship with metropolitan life. For the Berlin author, photography and most notably film, provided models for the depiction of the urban setting, the latter of which he notes as being the only form capable of capturing the essence of the city, in its fluidity and fragmentariness (Gilloch, 1997:18).

By means of photography Benjamin understood that the smallest details of the ephemeral could be revealed with fidelity and made to endure in order search in them for illuminations of the totality of reality (Frisby, 1985:238). While film more than any other medium is compatible with Benjamin’s enterprise of the *Arcades* of formulating dialectical images of modernity through montage, to reassemble the fragments and present them in their shock-like form; it does not only reveal as photography but allows a critical recomposition of the visual material.

For Walter Benjamin the technical properties of film were apt for illuminating our perception of the everyday world, to further our sensibilities and recognise the world in new forms. Film represents for him a form to act in the modern world, a revolutionary force. In the *Work of Art in the Age of Reproducibility* he would celebrate the advent of the transformative power of film: ‘Our bars and city streets, our offices and furnished rooms, our railroad stations and our factories seemed to close relentlessly around us. Then came film and exploded this prison-world with the dynamite of the split second so that now we can set off calmly on journeys of adventure among its far-flung debris. With the close-up, space expands; with slow motion, movement is extended’ (Benjamin,

1936: 265)

This way, he sees film as opening up, with its resources, the possibility of discovering details which would normally escape us in a world that is already familiar to us. It rescues the detail and rearranges our perception of things. In other words, it furthers humanity's field of perception, by allowing to analyse more precisely details from the stream of events that would otherwise go unnoticed. "By close-ups of the things around us, by focusing on hidden details of familiar objects, by exploring commonplace milieus under the ingenious guidance of the camera, on the one hand, extends our comprehension of the necessities which rule our lives; on the other hand, it manages to assure us of an immense and unexpected field of action" (Benjamin, 1936: 265). The film camera, with its resources, opens up before us a new dimension of reality.

Following on the potential of film, Anke Gleber suggests (Gleber, 1997:134) that with its technical properties, the film camera acts like a double of Benjamin's *flaneur*, set out to capture the life of modernity by penetrating the space, mingling with others, lingering in different places and remaining in permanent motion. It searches reflections of the city seeking images in the spectacle of the streets, alike the observant *flaneur*. Additionally, Gleber points out (1997:135), both film and flanerie work to preserve the visual stimuli as a form of remembrance of the culturally significant.

In this respect, Gleber draws from the thought of Siegfried Kracauer, a contemporary author of Walter Benjamin who turned to observing cinema as part of his larger project of cultural criticism, and shared with him a similar sensibility in investigating different themes of modernity. Among the spheres of life which Kracauer centred on, cinema would feature significantly in his work, and most notably in the latter part of his writings, with his works *From Caligari to Hitler* and *Theory of Film. The redemption of physical reality*.

### **1.7 Siegfried Kracauer, film and the return to reality**

Together with Walter Benjamin, Kracauer identified in his work an affinity between film and the city, the quintessential site of modernity. The two authors perceived the cinematic qualities, experiences and moments of the metropolitan environment, and conversely, the urban sensibility of cinemagoers and of the act of film reception (Gilloch, 2007). Gilloch says 'the reason for this is clear: for both Benjamin and Kracauer, albeit in different ways, the cinematic medium contains a radical and popular political promise' (Gilloch, 2007). As Benjamin, Kracauer sees in film the possibility to transform our perception of everyday life.

Gleber recuperates from Kracauer the likening of the sensibilities of *flanerie* and film, both of which constitute for him analogous forms of pursuing the profane aspects of reality in the streets. The attraction towards them, he states is that: 'The street in the extended sense of the word is not

only the arena of the fleeting impressions and chance encounters but a place where the flow of life is bound to assert itself' (Kracauer, 1965:72) That is, he understands life in the city as constituted by fragmented encounters, which in their present configuration appear as 'sketchy, completely indeterminate figures', but behind which ultimately lies a meaning awaiting to be revealed. Each fragment of reality Kracauer says 'has a story, yet the story is not given' (Kracauer, 1965: 72) This flow of life in the street that film has the ability to portray, Kracauer says, 'casts its spell over the *flaneur* or even creates him' (1965: 72)

In the work of Kracauer, the presence of the *flaneur* like his insights into cinema, belong to his wider interest of examining modernity from the point of view of the transformations in the structure of everyday experiences; with his attention directed on the marginal zones of culture like cinema, the streets, sport, the operetta, revues, advertisements and the circus. According to Frisby (1985:111) Kracauer's preoccupation resided in the growth of material civilisation emptied of meaning and an individual whose essence remains lost or unfulfilled; like Georg Simmel, he views a disjunction between an increasing material culture and the unrealised development of the individual.

The disjunction between material progress and the increase of understanding of the world for the individual, resides for Kracauer, as it does for Simmel and Benjamin, in the new way of understanding the world that results from the advent of capitalism and instrumental reason (Frisby, 1985:113). Capitalism like the development of science, he maintains along the lines of Simmel's notion of the decolouring of reality, render the world objective for its domination but lose sight of the essence, of the qualitative values of things and individuals: 'The capitalist economic system offers these qualities many, secure ways of being sold, gives them goals and lets them be honoured and become universally applicable [...] Just like science, capitalism possesses a deep indifference to the "what" of things [...]' (Kracauer, 1917, cited in Frisby, 1985:113)

The consequence is that the individual no longer identifies with the reality of modernity: the meaning of the environment has been lost, fragmented into pieces. Kracauer's response to the shattering of the world, is to 'return to reality' (Frisby, 1985:116), to attend the everyday world concretely in its materiality, in its fragmented form. Thus, like Simmel, the way Kracauer approaches the study of modernity is by turning to a microscopic observation of ordinary life, in different 'exemplary instances' akin to Walter Benjamin's monads: they act as a miniaturised version of the totality of society. Among other instances for the examination of modernity, he explores are: the detective novel, forms of mass entertainment, photography and film (Frisby, 1985).

The importance of film in Kracauer's insights into modernity resides in its potential, as



Benjamin notes, further than in its ability to portray the fluidity of life in the city, on the possibility it represents to reveal alternative configurations of reality through cinematic montage (Levin, 1995:22). It allows the individual to realise the provisional character of the arrangement of the objects of the world and the possibility of its transformation; that is, the questioning of the current state of being of the setting in which the individual exists.

As Gleber notes (1999:152) in her linking of the way of relating to the world by the *flâneur* and the film camera, film stands then in the view of Kracauer as mode of engaging with exterior reality, in an attempt to relate to the world in the way it is increasingly defined by modernity: as a series of visual stimulations. Both the *flâneur* and the film camera are guided by the individual's desire to decipher these sensorial impressions. As Gleber says, film and *flanerie* answer to the modern discontent of the destruction of experience, an 'antidote' to the melancholy and alienation of the individual that seeks in the consumption of images a way to fill the void produced by modernity.

Cinema like *flanerie* represents a way for the individual to establish an immediate relationship to life, if paradoxically this is by means of a visual representation, through mediated images. They are Kracauer's 'return to reality', countering the evacuation of meaning with the abstraction of reality by modernity (Gleber, 1999:165).

The belief in the revolutionary role of film to propose alternative arrangements of the world in both Benjamin and Kracauer did not however translate into an unrestricted support of all products of cinema. Kracauer in particular, held a cautious understanding of cinema among his conception of a culture of distraction. As well as being a tool of engagement with and transformation of reality, film also had ideological uses for the maintenance of the status quo, by distracting society from their real circumstances of existence rather than unmasking its disintegration. These are films where social reality is absent or even distorted (Kracauer, 1922:308). Aware of the context of the capitalist society in which films were produced in Berlin of the 20's, Kracauer realises that films may offer nothing else but a continuous excitement of the senses or present reactionary tendencies.

In this scenario, he understood that his role, as a film critic, 'is only conceivable as a critic of society. His mission is to unveil the social conceptions and ideologies hidden in the average film and, by means of this unmasking, to break the influence of the films themselves wherever it is necessary' (Kracauer, 1915, cited in Frisby, 1985:158)

### **1.8 The case of *Berlin* and the paradox of modernity**

An exemplary case of Kracauer's criticism of cinema's treatment of modern reality that is particularly relevant for this work for the subject matter of the film, is Walter Ruttmann's *Berlin*,

*the Symphony of a Great City*. The consideration of this film and his observations on it allows us to reflect on the paradoxes of the metropolitan modernity which the film depicts and the form of engagement with it by the cinematic form.

Produced in 1927, *Berlin* is acknowledged as belonging to the film genre of the 'city symphony' along with other notable examples like Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera*, Cavalcanti's *Rien que les heures* and Joris Ivens' *Rain*; films which aimed at documenting life in the transforming panorama of European cities. The city symphony film was a form of engagement with the everyday life of the metropolis, as it had been the impulse of cinema from its inception, to capture everyday experiences. It followed on the interest of cinema's early practitioners for daily life on the way people dressed, what houses were like, how people dined (Cohen, 1995:246). Thus, as Mark Shiel says, as well as formally linked, as Benjamin and Kracauer observed, the city and the cinema have also been since the origins of the latter, thematically linked, with cinema being '[...] constantly fascinated with the representation of the distinctive spaces, lifestyles, and human conditions of the city from the Lumiere brothers' Paris[...]' (Shiel, 2001:1)

*Berlin* belonged to the period of the consolidation of cinema's initial impulse to document the world around into the formal practice of documentary filmmaking, which would acquire a more defined form in the 1930's with the theorisation and practice of the British Documentary Movement. Guided by John Grierson, in the British Documentary Movement the practice of documentary film adopted an aesthetic, social and political positioning. On Ruttmann's film, Grierson stated: '*Berlin or the Symphony of a City* initiated the more modern fashion of finding documentary material on one's doorstep; in events which have no novelty of the unknown, or romance of noble savage on exotic landscape, to recommend them. It represented, slimly, the return from romance to reality' (Grierson, 1932:99)

According to Paul Rotha the idea of *Berlin's* return to reality had grown in Carl Mayer, the writer of the film, from his desire to engage with the reality of the surroundings: 'Mayer was tiring of the restriction and artificiality of the studios. All these films had been wholly studio-made. Mayer lost interest in "fictional invention" and wanted his stories to "grow from reality" ' (Kracauer, 1947:182) And that reality which *Berlin* turned to was that of life in the metropolis, with its buildings, inhabitants, machinery, means of transport, forms of mass entertainment and other ordinary events in the metropolitan setting. In doing so, says Alsayyad, *Berlin* would become one of the first depictions in film of the rising modernity (Alsayyad, 2006:3).

Without the recourse of a plot in a strict sense, *Berlin* depicts the events in the city organizing them in a way that suggests their occurrence over the course of a day. Moving around different locations, the film presents its images of a day in spring, assembled by their formal properties,

emphasizing the appearance of things and events, and their movement in the space; as well as by their thematic content. *Berlin* can be recognised as Bordwell and Thompson suggest it is a characteristic of the city symphony film, as treating its city documentary material by associations that suggest certain emotions or concepts (2001:378).

The film is structured as a journey to the metropolitan modernity of Berlin, for the viewer to witness a typical day in the city, from the setting in motion of the activities of its inhabitants in the early morning, their going about the day, and until the fall of the night. The fragments of life it features are organised in five acts that correspond to different moments of the day – marked by the recurring images of clocks indicating the time – , without verbal commentary, and hinting at developing certain themes related to life in the city. In broad terms, the first act of the film presents our departure from the rural environment and arrival on train – an emblem of modernity – to the *Berlin* setting, characterised for its house developments and commercial as well as industrial sites. Gradually the stillness of the city recedes and it is infused with life: people and some animals take to the streets, the crowds soon dominate, they walk or travel by train or streetcars. The waking up of the city corresponds to the beginning of the population's working activities; the film highlights events in the factories and images of industrial machinery.

Throughout the second and third acts *Berlin* shows glimpses of people of all walks of life starting out their daily activities, cutting between images of office workers, refuse collectors, children going to school and wealthy individuals. Everybody seems to have a function to perform. The film presents us with images of different forms of transport, from the horse drawn carriage, to the modern streetcar, train, and the automobile; it appears as one of its dominant themes. The film then turns to explore the spontaneous gathering of crowds around various street events, a random encounter between a man and a woman, and other events taking place such as a wedding ceremony and a street protest.

At midday, during the fourth act, the city takes a break from its working activities and everybody goes to lunch to restaurants or on the go in the streets. The film adopts a slower tempo as people relax, and soon after resume their productive activities together with the build up of the film's rhythm. The city is presented as a chaotic site, through the juxtaposition of images from inside a roller-coaster, traffic signals, trains, and big close up of an eye which highlights the intense nervous stimulation. The frenzy comes to an end and people participate in leisure activities; they go boating, horse riding, to play at the park, car racing, and relax at the cafes. As the sun subsides and throughout the fifth act, life in the city equates activities of public entertainment. Crowds flock to the movie theatre to the screening of a Chaplin film, attend the performances of an orchestra, showgirl burlesques, jugglers, singers, dance troupes and others; they drink, dance and play cards.

As Kracauer observed *Berlin, the Symphony of a Great City* presented a cross section of Berlin of the 1920's, touching on various spheres of the metropolitan modernity (Kracauer, 1947:181) . The most evident aspect the film centres on is the different forms of transport which infused the city with an incessant mobility and instil the film with rhythm. Along with the railroad and the automobile, it features other innovations through which modernity has been familiarly grasped, as the telephone, photography and cinema itself. With the different modes of transport, the film presents the site of the city as the arena of circulation of people, who for the most of *Berlin* are presented simply transiting through the streets, and of the circulation of commodities which are presented on their mass production and display on the shop windows.

Visual and mobile, the inhabitant of *Berlin* may belong to a different social class yet be a citizen as all the rest. From the house worker and the refuse collector, to the businessperson and the politician, everybody is pushed by modernity into the urban stage. Opposed to the calmness which the film abandons in the first shots, the site that the modern individual experiences in *Berlin* is as Simmel characterised living in the metropolis, of an ever increasing stimulation from the surroundings. They are mostly visual but also verbal stimuli; there is the traffic signs, the unavoidable presence of the crowd, the forms of advertising even at night. Another evident theme of the film which touches on Simmel's preoccupation with the material culture is the domination of mass form of production of all goods, as invariably the working activities that it depicts are in the form of a relationship between people and machinery, be it in the elaboration of bread, production of milk or road constructions. Nevertheless, it must be observed that the film does not problematise this mechanised form of mass production; as Kracauer observes: 'Machine parts in motion are shot and cut in such a manner that they turn into dynamic displays of an almost abstract character. These may symbolize what has been called the "tempo" of Berlin; but they are no longer related to machines and their functions' (Kracauer, 1947:184)

In fact Kracauer (1947:181-189) was almost totally dismissive of Ruttmann's film, which he thought as being limited to a "surface approach", relying on the formal properties of things rather than on their meaning. As he argues, Ruttmann heavily resorts to creating visual patterns and analogies for the structuring of *Berlin*. Nevertheless Kracauer recognises that even if *Berlin* lacked social comment on the events it represents, it reflects the 'shapeless reality' of capitalist Berlin of the time (1947:186) . If *Berlin* does not constitute a critique of the reality it depicts, it does succeed in documenting the ambiguities that characterise the modern capitalist world.

An example in case of the contradictions that *Berlin* serves to illuminate is of the alienation of people in the city, as Simmel characterised it, with the individual becoming increasingly withdrawn and uninterested from the world. As Kracauer says: 'That everybody is indifferent to his fellow man

can be inferred from the formalization of social contrast as well as from the repeated insertion of window-dressings with their monotonous rows of dolls and dummies' (Kracauer, 1947:186). These mannequins feature prominently in *Berlin* from the first act, appearing before any person, and in juxtaposition to the individuals in the streets, which they might resemble for the clothes they wear, a body position they have adopted and in one case in the third act for the marked motionless of a person. In this case, as Kracauer points out, the film does not seem intent on humanizing the dummies, but on expressing that 'human beings are forced into a sphere of the inanimate' (Kracauer, 1947:186)

If *Berlin* lacks a systematic critique of metropolitan modernity, and furthermore, a suggestion of an alternative state of being, which both Benjamin and Kracauer believed to be the full revolutionary potential of cinema, it does however succeed on capturing the kind of events that informed these and other thinkers of modernity. Perhaps the best example of this virtue of *Berlin* is found in its fourth act during the lunch break sequence. In a segment from this sequence, everybody is shown eating: a wealthy woman eats at a restaurant, then cuts to the image of two men in business suits who also eat, to the shot of a plump man having lunch, then to the image of a lion feeding from the meat of a bone, the shot of a kid being spoon-fed, a man ordering food at an al fresco, and it goes to the shot of a woman being embraced by two kids with clothes as ragged as hers who do not eat but remain waiting at city steps. The film then cuts back to a shot of platters of food nicely decorated and one of which has a lobster at its top, and so the images of food continue.

Utilizing the potential of film to capture and rearrange the fragments of reality *Berlin* has thus given form to a sequence which first, recreates the character of a metropolitan modernity that would give place to all kinds of juxtapositions, and furthermore, presents the kind of juxtaposition which exhibits the contradictory and regressive nature of the modern era. It evidences that in spite of the abundance and material progress it represents it is not necessarily guided by a preoccupation for the living conditions of mankind. The juxtaposition which this sequence in *Berlin* has produced resembles one that Marshall Berman identifies in Baudelaire's poem *The Eyes of the Poor* (1983:149). It is the story, as Berman tells it, of a man whose love for a woman has turned to hate, after an incident in a café on a new boulevard. The reason for the change in his feelings, Berman says, is the sadness and anger that he has experienced when confronted with a 'distinctively modern' encounter. While the pair of lovers sit in the 'dazzling' café '[a] poor family dressed in rags[...] come to a stop directly in front of them and gaze raptly at the bright new world that is just inside', the man is touched by the poor conditions of the family to the point of finding their presence unbearable. He is unable to make them go away and from there on his love has changed to hate as the woman who remained indifferent to the event reminds him of the confrontation by the

eyes of the poor family and his feeling of guilt.

Berman explains that the illuminating character of the event narrated by Baudelaire resides on the principal role that the urban setting, the boulevard in particular as an innovation of the nineteenth century, plays in allowing such encounter. He argues that as the boulevards had created a scene for the display of the couple's love, they had inadvertently opened the possibility for the poorest individuals to walk through the magical city whose development had been possible in the first place by the discarding of the poor.

Like *The Eyes of the Poor* according to Berman, I suggest that *Berlin* exhibits at least in that sequence, that the quintessential site of modernity, with all its monuments of progress and sources of exhilaration, with its appearance of a well-oiled machine, has undeniable contradictions which cannot be ignored as they are also on stage for display. As the poor family in Baudelaire's poem, the poor woman and her kids, captured in *Berlin*, are the other face to the modern metropolis on which *Berlin* can seem to adopt a celebratory view. Intentionally presented by the film or not, it hints at an exploration of the emergence of the modern, as a phenomenon with contradictions, with liberating and oppressive qualities affecting humanity's experience of the world. As Simmel noted, although notably advanced in the development of material culture, with means of transport, science and technology, the world of modernity may have impoverished in respect to the cultivation of humanity.

## Chapter 2

### A Phenomenological understanding of Film

#### 2.1 The transformative power of film

As presented in the previous chapter, Siegfried Kracauer and Walter Benjamin regard film as a defining product of the modern era – tied to it by formal affinities – and consider it an instrument apt to relocate the individual's experience of the world which has deteriorated with the advent of modernity. In this chapter I expand on this notion of the significance of film for the modern individual and her/his relationship with reality, with its potential to further our perception of things and rearrange our views on the already familiar, through the consideration of the phenomenological view underlying Kracauer's and Benjamin's thought.

In terms of Kracauer, film offers the opportunity to redeem physical reality. That is, it gives to the individual access to experiencing things in their concreteness and to appreciate them for their qualitative properties. As well as corresponding with the condition of modernity, for Kracauer cinema allows to transcend the abstraction and fragmentation that characterise the modern experience and redeem reality by redirecting the attention of the viewer to the 'texture of life' (Aitken, 1996:126). In Kracauer's words, film exposes a world never seen before although it is within everybody's reach: "[s]trange as it may seem, although streets, faces, railway stations, etc., lie before our eyes, they have remained largely invisible [...]" (Kracauer, 1965:299)

While for Walter Benjamin film is a revolutionary force to act in the modern world, to illuminate our perception of everyday life, and which offers the possibility of transforming our world view and discover details that would otherwise escape us, from that which is already familiar to us. It has the potential to rearrange our perception of things in the everyday.

In this respect the argument is that cinema has the potential to become an alternative mode of representing reality to the form of mass culture that turns the world of experience into spectacle, and which ultimately represents a return to mythical thought. For Kracauer mass culture in its representation of the world as a form of spectacle was central to the legitimation of capitalism, like instrumental rationality, since they 'arrested the processes of liberating and enlightening reason' (Aitken, 1996:126). On the other hand, film is a way to reveal the distortions of the world of instrumental rationality.

The transformative potential of cinema resides from this perspective on the possibility of engaging through it with 'physical reality', to recover the subjective dimension that has been obscured by the rationality of science and the mentality that arises with the money economy. In the view of Kracauer cinema is a privileged medium to redeem the everyday world that constitutes the

base of life for the modern subject but which remains negated by the objectifying abstract discourses. Although film is part of the mass spectacle, it also has the potential to escape its abstractions.

In this particular conception of film as a form of reconfiguring the subject-object relationship, Ian Aitken refers to the influence that phenomenology played in the underlying notion of reality: “Kracauer’s ideas were strongly influenced by the emphasis on the concrete and the transient within Husserl’s phenomenology, and, in particular, Husserl’s conception of the *lebenswelt*.” (Aitken, 1996:127) He drew from the notion of a dual constitution of reality: a system of abstract knowledge that dominates modern life, imposed over the sphere of everyday life objects experienced in their qualitative dimension. In this context he sees film was a possible way to return to that phenomenological world at the base, to escape the abstract and turn to the concrete experience of everyday life.

In this sense, Kracauer follows a philosophical doctrine that allows to position the individual in the context of modernity, in the face of the transformations brought on by the development of capitalism and positivist science and which result in an individual alienated from reality. The difficulty of inhabiting a moment in modernity is a situation that Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, two of the most representative figures of phenomenology, had come to realise (Charney, 1995:281). From that inability arises the characteristic alienation of modern experience, what Heidegger defined as the ‘falling into lostness’ (Charney, 1995:281).

The phenomenological view underlying Kracauer’s and Benjamin’s vision of cinema represents the opportunity to break out of the alienation of modernity utilizing a philosophical perspective that emerged as a response to the period of Enlightenment, which presented itself as the project of a rational political society and development of human knowledge through science but revealed itself as something else. As Robert Sokolowski maintains in his reflection on the outcome of modernity, “it has become more and more clear that the heart of the modern project is not the exercise of reason in the service of knowledge, but the exercise of a will, the will to rule, the will to power” (Sokolowski, 2000:202).

## **2.2 Phenomenology, the crisis of man’s existence and the life-world**

The relevance of considering phenomenology resides in the possibility that it offers to reflect on the way in which the modern era represents a critical moment in humanity’s existence, by turning modern man into alienated from everyday experience. This idea, within the wide and varied spectrum of theorisations of this philosophical movement, is particularly evident in Edmund Husserl’s *The Crisis of European Sciences*, as in and Enzo Paci’s view of Husserl’s work from a



Marxist perspective.

The importance of *The Crisis*, to which Husserl dedicated the final years of his life towards the end of the 1930's, at a time of discussion of the theme of the crisis of European society in particular and human civilisation in general, resides in it being the author's final attempt at formulating an introduction to phenomenology (Husserl, 1970:xxiv). Produced in this context *The Crisis* is characterised as a text that emphasises the relevance of phenomenology to address the human problematic of existence (Husserl, 1970:xxv). It came as the result of Husserl's realisation of the need of philosophy to be relevant to the individual's life in the way Existentialism was giving expression to the feeling of crisis of man's existence.

Although the need for a spiritual renewal of the West was a theme previously developed by Husserl, in the historical context of writing *Crisis* the rise of the National Socialist movement in Germany in the late 1920's was observed by the author as a dreadful sign (Moran, 2000:180). It was a sign of the turn of Western civilisation towards irrationalism, a sign of the deformation of our understanding of the world, brought on by a new framework of modern science. "Husserl embarked on writing *The Crisis of European Sciences* in an attempt to alert the world to the increasing danger of the collapse of the genuinely scientific and philosophical outlook which had marked out the progress of the West." (Moran, 2000:180)

It represents Husserl recognition of humanity's worldview as historically constituted, the product of a misguided rationalism of Enlightenment that leaves out the subjectivity which makes the rationally objective possible (Moran, 2000:180). In his view, modern positivist science guided by the principle of exactness fails to speak to humanity at its most vital needs (Husserl, 1970:6). According to him, science "excludes in principle precisely the questions which man, given over in our unhappy times to the most portentous upheavals, finds them most burning: questions of the meaning or meaninglessness of the whole of this human existence" (Husserl, 1970:6). Thus, he argues that philosophy must turn to a critique of modern knowledge to turn it relevant for humanity's development.

The sense of failure of modern science that Husserl refers to consists in its general orientation that leads it away from its objective of serving man's existence. Modern rigorous science oriented towards facts, abstracts all events which it analyses and strips them out of their unique value for the individual, and has nothing to say about humanity (Husserl, 1970:7). That is, human knowledge in modernity loses the world of ordinary life as its horizon of action, disconnected with the development of values for people to live by and the cultivation of the individual's personality.

The philosophy of Husserl in *The Crisis* seeks to examine the meaning of the world and

human existence, when the 'spiritual' as the physical is exclusively treated as objective, factual truth. He reflects on the real possibility of attaining a truthful meaning of the world and of human existence at a time when science recognises as true only what is objectively established by abstracting from the world of experience (Husserl, 1970:7).

According to Husserl it is the world of experience to which "belongs the form of space-time together with all the bodily shapes incorporated in it; it is in the world that we ourselves live, in accord with our bodily personal way of being. But here we find nothing of geometrical idealities, no geometrical space or mathematical time with all their shapes" (Husserl, 1970:50). This is a "trivial" remark, he adds, which has been historically ignored by exact science, "through the substitution of a methodically idealized achievement for what is given immediately as actuality presupposed in all idealization" (Husserl, 1970:50)

Furthermore, along with the loss of foundation of modern sciences in everyday life, other forms of loss of the value of experience of the world occur in the failure of Enlightenment. The crisis in the sciences is an exemplary case of a wide crisis in the West, a crisis which is "the inevitable consequence of the manner in which European civilization has interpreted and implemented the goal of universal rationality" (Moran, 2000:183) As the sciences lose their foundation in the ordinary world and their function of improving humanity's quality of life, in the domain of the economic, capitalism reduces too the uniqueness of the individual and turns her/him into a commodity, in the form of labour power (Paci, 1972:385). In this sense, in both the sciences and the economy the individual is reduced to an object.

As Enzo Paci indicates (1972:386) in the sphere of the economic the reduction of the individual means the negation of the real subject, who is turned into an abstract category that can be appropriately studied by the economist, which coincides with the "reduction to the level of a machine" that the industry needs, and the "reduction to the level of a commodity" that the market requires. In any case, the individual is not interesting anymore as a subject. This means that capitalism renders men into abstractions and abstract categories are treated as subjects: "what happens here is a genuine and true reversal which can be expressed by the term objectification" (Paci, 1972:385)

These categories of economy however, Paci says, are not pure reason and not independent of real human relationships, which take place in life. They originate in the relations of production between individuals involved in production. In this respect, Paci says, following Marx, that economics has made of its subject matter the own economist's dogma, not the active and busy life of men (Paci, 1972:380).

In this sense, according to phenomenology the problem of modern man consists of her/his

state of alienation, that is, the reduction of man to the level of a thing, which is manifest in the sphere of the economy and the sciences (Paci, 1972:387); and the way to escape from it is to gain consciousness of that objectification, to recognise oneself as estranged. In the words of Paci “alienation turns out to be objectification - the very same objectification into which political economy as a science has fallen.” (Paci, 1972:390)

The transformation of experience by alienation in modernity is understood by phenomenology in the terms of an occlusion of the life-world (Paci, 1972:19). The idealisations of science and the commodification by a mode of economy have their origins in the *life-world*, the world we experience everyday, however this is obscured and forgotten, lost as the reference of their actions. Modern experience is marked by the reification of the discourse of political economy and modern sciences, whose abstract views of the life-world are assumed as being true (Paci, 1972:20), when they are in reality nothing more than a symbol or a method of understanding and organizing the world, yet they are placed over and against the individual.

The sciences (and the technology that emanates from them) lose their foundation in the world of experience and with it, their connection with their goal of improving the existence of humanity (Paci, 1972:21). In phenomenology's terms the crisis of modernity is motivated by the loss of *intentionality*. Thus, for Enzo Paci modern man finds himself in a situation in which he must free himself from the abstract dressing, the occlusion of objectified science and commodification of capitalism that prevents us from experiencing life as it is, from experiencing the *lebenswelt* from which all meaning truly originates. As he says, “we must always rediscover the original basis beneath the covering and the occlusion.” (Paci, 1972:21)

The notion of the *lebenswelt* is one that first appeared in Husserl's *Ideas I*, referred to as the world of experience, to become further on in the 1920's a technical meaning and predominant theme, and finally becomes the main focus of examination in *The Crisis* (Moran, 2000:181). The life-world of Husserl is the world of the pre-theoretical experience which allows us to interact with nature and to develop our own cultural forms (Moran, 2000:181). “[T]he life-world, for us who wakingly live in it, is always already there, existing in advance for us, the 'ground' of all praxis whether theoretical or extratheoretical” (Husserl, 1970:142). It is the horizon of all individual experience.

For Husserl we already inhabit the *lebenswelt* as the conscious beings we are; it is a general structure over which things emerge in different form across different cultures, and it has been of interest for the research of the relation of culture and the natural world (Moran, 2000:182) In *Crisis* the interest of Husserl lays in one aspect of the life-world: how scientific consciousness guided by rationality emerges out of ordinary forms of everyday lived consciousness and practices (Moran,

2000:182).

The failure, he argues, is not to have the life-world as a subject of investigation, which is reflected in a distorted cultural formation that includes the modern scientific enterprise. Humanity has created a gap between two worlds, the one in which we live and the one of reified reason, the former generally conceived as completely subjective and the latter as the truly objective.

In this sense, the alienation of the modern individual originates from a misguided sciences and economy that empties humanity of their subjectivity, leaving the individual to struggle for its self-understanding, to find the meaning of her/his own existence which cannot be reduced to the view of positivism and capitalism. Man as a whole, also having a spiritual dimension, is denied, as all things which cannot be quantified, like the feelings they provoke. They are dismissed as belonging to the subjective world and thus sacrificed. The world view that emanates from them is an indifferent turning-away from the questions that are decisive for the existence of a genuine humanity (Husserl, 1970:6)

The crisis of humanity as characterised by Husserl does not consist of the lack of theoretical or practical successes of science or economy, but in a wider sense, on their loss of sense for the cultivation of the modern individual. It is the failure of the philosophical function of the world view sustained by the sciences and the economy, a betrayal of their purpose, in spite of their apparent successes. This consists of an abandonment of the mundane that is *bracketed* by factualism and fetishisation (Husserl, 1970:9).

In this scenario the role that phenomenology is called to play according to Paci is to release the real man that is hidden in its objectification, in its level of a thing that is reduced to by the economy (Paci, 1972:383), and in the widest sense, to return to humanity the subjectivity that has been sacrificed (Paci, 1972:6). Phenomenology does not deny the legitimacy of the development of sciences or any form of abstraction of the world, but seeks to bring consciousness on their foundation and dependence on the world we experience, and the necessity of not losing it as their reference. For phenomenology they are just a method of approaching the life-world, not the source of events, and cannot in this sense compete with the world of experience.

This is manifest in Husserl's positioning towards science, as described by Moran: "Husserl always admired the extraordinary achievement of the sciences but he was very interested in how this theoretical outlook was achieved and on what it was grounded" (Moran, 2000:183) In other words phenomenology helps to clarify the partiality of our forms of knowing that inform how we act in the world. As Sokolowski says, "it does not doubt or reject, but clarifies and restores" (2000:146) For Husserl, scientific knowledge can only remain truthful when developing it we are able to inquire into its original meaning structures and methods through which it is produced

(Husserl, 1970:57).

The terms in which the crisis of modernity can be seen from a phenomenological perspective is as the metamorphosis of appearance and reality; appearances that function as if they were not appearances (Paci, 1972:423). The critique of positivism and economy by Husserl and Paci aim at discovering what is hidden behind the abstractions of science and capitalism; that behind the consumption of commodities in capitalism there are in reality social relations between subjects and behind the idealisations of science, which do not materially appear in reality, are concrete things in which they have their origin and ultimately depend on.

The crisis of humanity in modernity is understood as a result of abstract categories that become concrete and organise reality: “It is an overturned society in which the abstract is concrete and the concrete is abstract” (Paci, 1972:426) Positivism like capitalism deny the existence of the concrete things and individuals, and end up denying the existence of the world. Following Marx, Paci maintains that the analysis must lead “appearance back to reality and reveal the real situation”, to the awareness of the distorted reality we inhabit (Paci, 1972:427). He argues that phenomenology's role is oriented to “return to the things-themselves by allowing them to be revealed so that man can move toward his own telos” (Paci, 1972:427)

In this characterisation of the crisis of the modern world by phenomenology we can identify its continuity with the postures of Kracauer and Benjamin, who like Simmel, understand the occurrence of a disjunction between material progress and the understanding and concern for the individual. As Frisby says on Kracauer (1985:111), the preoccupation resides in the growth of material civilisation emptied of meaning on one hand, and on the other the unfulfilled essence of humanity. As he maintains, capitalism and modern science render the world objective for its domination but lose sight of the qualitative values of things and individuals. In the words of Kracauer: “just like science, capitalism possesses a deep indifference to the ‘what’ of things”, to the qualities that makes them unique (cit in Frisby, 1985:113).

To return to the things-themselves with phenomenology is the function that Kracauer sees film fulfilling. By doing this, film provides a return to the subjective value of the surrounding which has been lost; it is a form to “return to reality” (Frisby, 1985:116), as Kracauer characterised his overall approach to the modern world. Film is an instrument to approach the world *concretely*, in its fragmented existence, in order to illuminate the reality of modern existence.

Inscribed within the debate on cinema of the Weimar period, Kracauer's conception of film believes in freeing the individual from the structures it is dominated by in modernity through the visual experience (Aitken, 1996:124). The emphasis as Aitken says is “on the concrete and immediate experience as means of ‘seeing’ the world through the veil of dominant ideologies”

(1996:125). As phenomenology aims to counter the abstraction of Enlightenment, film is understood as offering “the possibility of transcending the abstraction inherent within modernity through its ability to disclose the sensuous and ephemeral aspects of reality” (Aitken, 1996:125)

To return to the concrete through film means for Kracauer to present events and things for aesthetic contemplation, to stimulate a form of interaction that is rich in connotations with the perceiving individual (Aitken, 1996:126). To return to the concrete is to engage the viewer in scrutinizing the world of experience, to involve her/him in the search of meaning and restore a power of understanding that has diminished with the development of mass culture, and to bring it together with the power of imagination (Aitken, 1996:127).

For Kracauer film has an inherent inclination towards exposing the concrete: it gravitates around the recording of natural unstaged events; affinity for the fortuitous as demonstrated by film's early preference for the setting of the street, railway stations, and other sites where the accidental prevails; a tendency to cover all material phenomena of which is composed daily life; a concern for the essentially indefinable meaning of all natural objects; and it has the ability to suggest through the capturing of material phenomena a series of emotions, values and thoughts - a sense of “flow of life” (Kracauer, 1965:60-74). These affinities, says Kracauer, are inherited by film from photography, save for its ability to create a sense of “flow of life”, which is exclusive to film.

The interest of the work of Kracauer on film is given by the recognition of the social crisis, and although it does not see film as capable to “turn the world upside down” (Schlupmann, 1987:108), it understands the significance of the process of film reception as a productive force. The importance in this sense, he maintains, is not of film as a technological or an artistic medium, but film in terms of its significance for the relationship of man to reality. As in his essay *Those who wait*, Kracauer notes: “The overburdening of theoretical thinking has led us, to a horrifying degree, to become distanced from reality – a reality that is filled with incarnate things and people and that therefore demands to be seen concretely ” (Kracauer, 1922:139-140).

### **2.3 Phenomenology and Film**

Founded by Edmund Husserl at the beginning of the 20th century, phenomenology emerged as a response to the historical time of dislocations in the social, economic, and intellectual spheres, of European capitalist society (Tomasulo, 1990:1). In this context, Husserl sought for a method on which to ground our knowledge of the world which could transcend the unquestioned positivism of modern science; his basic proposition is that we cannot be sure about things existing autonomously, but only how they appear to us in consciousness (Tomasulo1990:1), be them acts of believing, remembering, wishing, feeling, etc. That is, Husserl argued that the secure foundation for all things

we know lies in immediate experience (Jarvie, 1987:125).

In this sense, the main contribution of phenomenology is the warning that it represents against the “engulfing power we accord reason in our society” (Andrew, 1976:244), a reason which has overwhelmed and distorted the world of experience it purports to understand. As Dudley Andrew indicates, for phenomenologists like Merleau-Ponty, Ayfre, and Agel, the modern world is controlled by an ungoverned reason “which would devour all experience” (Andrew, 1976:244). Yet rationality is only a mode of approaching reality.

Thus the turn towards film from a phenomenological perspective, aims at placing and understanding the individual at a position that is not determined by instrumental rationality. Film as other art forms are for the phenomenologist “getaways leading out of the useless labyrinth of logic and to the riches of experience” (Andrew, 1976:245). As Kracauer maintains, from a phenomenological perspective the aesthetic experience restores the individual her/his power of understanding diminished by mass culture and brings it together with the power of imagination. It hopes to bring awareness to the individual about her/his living material conditions, to make possible their transformation.

This notion of the aesthetic, as in John Dewey’s *Art as experience*, emphasises the integral unity between the art object and the world of everyday experience. In Dewey’s view in the aesthetic experience, the individual realises something about the way s/he experiences the world (Stadler, 1990:43). The art object, Dewey argues, is not complete until it comes to life in the experience of someone else. However when he talks about the aesthetic experience, he does not refer to popular media, but to traditional art: architecture, sculpture, painting, music and literature. (Stadler, 1990:43)

But unsurprisingly in a modern world characterised by the increase of forms of presentation and representation, predominantly in visual terms, as early recognised by Georg Simmel and in Benjamin’s notion of shock, film has been of interest for its understanding from a phenomenological perspective, beyond the work of Siegfried Kracauer. The cruciality of the understanding of film, the most paradigmatic form of modern culture, resides in the increase of experience of the world in visual terms (Tomasulo, 1990:3)

According to Tomasulo, a phenomenological approach to film can actually be found at the very point of academic and institutional legitimation of cinema, in the work of the French movement of Filmology, the first effort to explain cinema from a philosophical perspective (Tomasulo, 1990:3). Involving other paradigms like Marxist sociology, psychoanalysis, aesthetics, and physiology, the filmology movement adopted a characteristic phenomenological attitude which “sought to describe cinema as a phenomenon among other phenomena”, one that exerts a special

pressure on the individuals (Andrew, 1985:628).

This perspective with its origins in Gilbert Cohen-Seat's *Essai sur les principes d' une philosophie de cinema*, would influence a wide spectrum of other investigations. Among them we can identify Edgar Morin and his *Le Cinema ou l'homme imaginaire*, Stanley Cavell's *The world viewed*, David Thomson's *Movie man*, Amedee Ayfre's *Cinema et mystere*, and Munier's *Contre l'image*. (Andrew, 1985:628) These authors in varied ways followed a phenomenological approach in investigating cinema.

As diverse as the development of phenomenology after Husserl has been, with numerous thinkers undertaking different themes, its application in the study of film has been also characterised by a series of approaches by different authors that can be loosely grouped as phenomenological. As Dudley Andrew indicates, even though a phenomenological theory of film has never developed in the proper sense it is possible to identify different work with a phenomenological view, focused on what dominant film theory ignores: the consciousness of the viewer in her/his act of apprehending a film (Andrew, 1985:629).

Among other authors who are considered as adopting a phenomenological approach to film are Jean Mitry with *Esthetique et psychologie du cinema*, Albert Laffay and *Logique du cinema*, Jean-Pierre Meunier with *Les Structures de l'experience filmique*, Merleau-Ponty, Roland Barthes, Andre Bazin, Hugo Munsterberg, Henri Agel, and others (Andrew, 1995:629; Stadler, 1990:38)

Therefore when referring to phenomenology in film what we have is a wide scope of work which in broad terms coincides in attempting to "describe as adequately as possible the experience of signification in cinema comparing it to other forms of perception and imagination" (Andrew, 1995:629). So wide it appears this influence would seem that, as Stadler points out, phenomenology is among the most widespread methodologies in film theory (Stadler, 1990:38).

On the other hand, in spite of its early presence on the study of film and its influence on different scholars, a phenomenology of film never developed into a paradigm largely because of the introduction of other movements like structuralism and semiotics, with elements of auteurism, feminism, marxism, historicism and psychoanalysis (Tomasulo, 1990:3). This event, as Dudley Andrew maintains, is an unfortunate one, in the face of the lack of a view of cinema interested in "describing the peculiar way meaning is experienced in cinema and the unique quality of the experience of major films" (Andrew, 1995:628)

In spite of that in recent years phenomenology has been the centre of attention of a few authors, more notably in the work of Allan Casebier and Vivian Sobchack, who have explored the richness of the relationship between film and consciousness. Both of them have produced book length accounts of a phenomenology of film that constitutes a critical view against the alienated



discourse of established film theory, by offering a framework for understanding film as an encounter with the world in a non-naive form.

The common element uniting their approaches is the central role of the film experience as mediating process between the author of the film and the viewer. Kevin Sweeney notes that what is particularly welcome about them is their criticism of the received theory account of film viewing, and their offering of an alternative account of film spectatorship understood as a phenomenological encounter with the world (Sweeney, 1994).

Nevertheless while attesting that the phenomenological study of cinema is not dead, as Dennis Rothermel indicates (Rothermel, 1998), the work of Casebier and Sobchack from a Husserlian and Existential phenomenology perspective, respectively, with all their vibrancy and the complexity of their work, also leave the impression of falling short at the time of applying their ideas to the understanding of the actual film-viewer relationship since they do not propose how their ideas illuminate concrete experiences with film. Then it becomes apparent that perhaps another account of film from a phenomenological approach might be more pertinent and straightforwardly applicable for the study of film.

This phenomenology of film, which can be of use for the present work I contend can be grounded by drawing from different phenomenologists of film, and can be of use for the actual understanding of the interaction film-spectator in the present theorizing of cinema in a dynamic and concrete form. I argue that a framework on which to position Kracauer's notion of film experience as a catalyst of individual and social transformation, can be sketched out by drawing upon the phenomenological considerations on film by George Linden, Jean-Pierre Meunier and Harald Stadler's conception of film as experience.

#### **2.4 George Linden's *Reflections on the screen***

Virtually unknown to the reviews of phenomenological approaches to film, American philosopher George Linden published in 1970 *Reflections on the screen*, during a period of development of American writing on film by other philosophers like Stanley Cavell, Noel Carroll and Allen Casebier, whose work has become influential on the development of film theory and recognised as sharing a phenomenological stance. His and their work is marked by an early fascination for film and their enthusiasm for the transformative power of film upon the spectator.

This fascination with the experience of film by academic philosophers, Jarvie says (Jarvie, 1987:31) is due to the possibility they see in film of offering the spectator a way of engaging with playing with her/his sense of reality, and exercise the power to model the world and playing with modelling possible worlds. When we experience a film we allow ourselves to be deceived, we play

with our sense of reality. Jarvie notes that professional philosophers cannot help being fascinated by ordinary people playfully accomplishing what the philosophers theorise about, that is, engage casually with reflecting upon their sense of reality (Jarvie, 1987:31),

Furthermore, the invitation to philosophise that film seems to promote, extends well beyond the form of philosophy as it began in Ancient Greece, reserved to an elite that contemplates humanity's most transcendental matters (Jarvie, 1987:121). Film was recognised as having the potential to bring out philosophy to a mass level, confronting us with serious issues about humanity's existence in a playful way, and thus was seen as playing a transcendental role in our way of understanding the world as humanity as a whole.

In this manner Hugo Munsterberg approached the study of film from a philosophical perspective with *The photoplay: a psychological study*, the first work that engaged in the study of serious questions raised by film (Jarvie, 1987:73). It was he who first approached film not in a casual manner but with an intellectually serious view to connect them with central concerns in philosophy. What Munsterberg aimed for was to “prove the shallowness of the idea that films are unreal, commonplace and possibly a source of social corruption.” (Jarvie, 1987:73) It was his belief that film was a new art form with a yet unrealised potential, and that it confronted us with our mental processes: for him films replicated externally the way the mind works.

Since Munsterberg, according to Jarvie, most of the philosophical insights on film were written from a phenomenological standpoint (Jarvie, 1987:124) According to his account among the most notable were George Linden's *Reflections on the screen* (which Jarvie notes was at the time the longest phenomenological treatment of films in English), the work of Paul Weiss, Danto and Seansonke (Jarvie, 1987:127).

Written in the first person *Reflections on the screen* is George Linden's attempt to understand the experience of watching a film, an object which he acknowledges as going through, at the time of his writing, a process of transformation that exceeds its status as mere entertainment. In this sense, Linden observes that movie audiences have higher expectations and are more demanding of films: “Audiences no longer go to the movies to watch anything; they attend films to see something. And the something they see is providing not escape but aesthetic involvement” (Linden, 1970:v)

In *Reflections* Linden dwells on varied considerations on film, most of which are elaborated by phenomenologically contrasting the experience of cinema with the experience of the forms of representation like drama, the novel and photography, to identify their similarities and differences and propose what makes film a unique experience. Through these reflections Linden builds a conception of film that has continuity with Kracauer's notion of film as a form of redemption of physical reality, identifying connections between existential phenomenology and the film

experience.

Linden presents film as an art form that makes us see, as he also elaborates a conception of the nature of human life. More explicitly the considerations on man's being-in-the-world he presents them in the fifth and sixth chapters of the book, entitled "The Lived World" and the "Personal World". In these two chapters, according to Maxine Green, "Linden has some important things to say about knowledge and existence" (1975:64) and leads him to discuss the emergence of human consciousness. *Reflections* is both concerned with presenting a theory of film aesthetics and on man's being in the world, and the connection between one and the other that gives film its 'philosophical' function.

In spite of the uneven development of the book, situation which has been acknowledged by its author (Green, 1975:67), and its neglect by the literature surveys of film and phenomenology, I contend that *Reflections on screen* constitutes a suggestive conception that can be complemented with the review of certain phenomenological concepts to suggest a model of film that can be useful for the understanding the experience of film.

## **2.5 The body as the centre of perception, the aesthetic experience and film**

Before characterizing film as an art form that invites us to see the ordinary world by engaging with its sensorial properties, I delineate *Reflection's* understanding of man's form of inhabiting the world and the function of the aesthetic experience. This conception takes as point of departure man's form of inhabiting the world, to which Linden proposes that film possesses an analogue relationship, and therefore becomes highly significant for the modern individual.

Linden asserts that our ordinary experience of the world is filtered by our bodily position, the centre around which all things are organised: "we see through our eyes", he says (Linden, 1970:204). Following an existential phenomenologist perspective informed by the work of Merleau-Ponty, derived in turn from Husserl's *the Crisis* and *Experience and Judgement*, George Linden conceives man's participation in the world as corporeally situated, before we encounter it in cognition (Moran, 2000:402).

Aimed at correcting the distorting objective thought prevalent in modern science, which presenting the world as already existing forgets about the subject of perception, Linden follows Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology attempting to reawaken our immediate contact with the world (Moran, 2000:402). In this sense, it recognises that our knowing of the world is given by our presence within it. "Our insertion into the world is through the body with its motor of perceptual acts [...] The world confronts our bodies as flesh meeting with flesh" (Moran, 2000:403) Against Cartesianism, it seeks to emphasise the unity between the world and consciousness, and the unity of

the body and the mind. That is the point from which we all depart in our inhabiting the world and cannot escape.

Linden asserts that our ordinary experience is constructed by the sense of our body and its relationship to the things of the world. The body is the perspective of perception and of all thought and the centre of effect of the world. “I order and am ordered by my world. I become informed, I perform, and the world is transformed” (Linden, 1970:124) It is only the world of experience the one we can know, and this is given to the individual in its sensorial manifestation, something we cannot avoid.

From the recognition of bodily centred experience of the world, *Reflections* argues in favour of a conception of the aesthetic experience that is directly related to our experience of the ordinary. Art is seen as a natural, immediate, way of understanding life and all theorisation is secondary, aimed at explaining experience and dependent on the former (Andrew, 1976:244)

Following Husserl’s critique of instrumental reason in the era of Enlightenment, phenomenologists have a distrust of pure reason, which is regarded as only another mode of consciousness (Andrew, 1985:631). Thus for the phenomenologist the art form, is a means to reveal the qualitative richness of experience. For instance Andre Bazin: “Art, he says, ‘unveils a world’ which was hidden and which will always be hidden to the cold logic of analysis. This world is ‘expressed’ [...] by the epiphany of the sensible.” (Andrew, 1976:245).

The aesthetic experience, Linden contends (Linden, 1970:168), accomplishes the function of expanding the individual’s perspective of the world: the mode of seeing, hearing and experiencing the world. By returning the individual to the immediate qualitative properties of the world, it challenges her/his acquired rationalised form of understanding the world, built in by past experiences and education.

The art object confronts the individual that has become fixated at a level of abstraction of viewing reality that prevents her/him from continuing with his personal growth. He notes that perhaps this is the reason we attend art museums, read poetry, or watch films, since through them we bring up from within our minds new modes of articulation and standards of relevance (Linden, 1970:169). In other words, art challenges the individual’s taken for granted attitude towards the world.

For George Linden then the scientist and the artist “work different banks of the stream of experience”, (Linden, 1970:181) each of them directed at the same objective of understanding, but following different paths. While the artist seeks to bring out the differences among things, the scientist achieves understanding by seeking the common, by reducing the different into abstract forms. However, as Husserl does not reject the achievements and the necessity of sciences and

points out that we need to be aware of how we generate knowledge through them, Linden does not deny the validity of their abstract point of view. Simply, film as art and sciences, fulfill their own functions (Linden, 1970:181).

The power of art resides in its engagement of the viewer with the sensual dimension of the world. For George Linden art “presents us the universal in its concrete circumstance for our perceptive appraisal” (Linden, 1970:180), which, as opposed to positivist science that seeks the quantitative dimension of things, has the qualitative as its “dominant mood”. Film as art is thus considered as a mode of understanding, of mediating between the individual and the world, which adopts a different attitude than that of the dominant science.

Inscribed in this notion of aesthetic involvement, the experience of the film is seen primarily as providing the richness of immediate presence which cannot be reduced to the dominant logical understanding (Linden, 1970:39). Our form of relating to film is through what it presents us in sensation. Its apprehension depends on what is immediately seen and heard, and only secondarily by other elements like a narrative line that functions as a unifying element. Of the structuring elements of the film for Linden, photography is the dominant. (Linden, 1970:63). The appeal of film is directly to the senses, as we are presented before us an apparition that is more concrete than in other arts, like for example literature: “In order to experience a motion picture, we need to be able to see and to hear and to feel. It does not make the demands on our imaginations that a poem or a novel or even a painting does” (Linden, 1970:217)

Unlike any other art form, film brings the spectator close to the experience of the everyday where motion is one of the main characteristics of happening (Linden, 1970:206) That we assent to an immediate presentness of the events on the screen is to a large extent due to the impact of motion which imparts them with a feeling of vividness. Then for Linden what we see on screen “is very much like what we see in our everyday living-in-the-world” (Linden, 1970:207), where our awareness of it all is in terms of their qualities and their being in motion.

According to him film has an analogous relationship to our incarnated beings; the camera becomes the way of the author of the film to create a view the world, and the final projected image, the viewpoint of the spectator. George Linden maintains then that the film is the expression of its author towards the world through the camera, mediated by her/his selection of setup, angle, lighting, speed, etc., and this then becomes the way of the viewer to gain access to the world in the film before him. In this sense, the camera becomes her/his perceptual ‘here’. He notes that “in the experience of film, the camera becomes our virtual body” (Linden, 1970:134) Film, as other art forms, like painting, sculpture, or drama, has the function of transporting the viewer to another world, to give him another temporary world to live in (Linden, 1970:36)

To experience a film is to willfully surrender our body, our primary stance in the world, to identify with the viewpoint of the camera. While maintaining our physical presence in the space of watching the movie-picture, the perspective projected on screen becomes our temporary abode. Hence Linden's identification of film as an experience of incarnation (Linden, 1970:133), by which the viewer is subject to a bodily displacement and experiences the world in the film as having continuity with the lived space. Because of this perceived continuity of the viewer with the perspective of the camera, he points out, is that often employed self-reflexive gestures like a character addressing the audience jolt us and remind us of our subjecting to a body displacement. (Linden, 1970:27)

As art form, film is an invitation to participate in the expression of a theme, a conflict, a quest, that reveals another man's grasping of the world; it mediates between the author of the film and the viewer. It accomplishes the function of philosophy as understood for Merleau-Ponty, of bringing awareness of the acts through which we gain understanding of the world, of 'relearning to look at the world' (cit in Moran, 2000:401)

In this sense, a central phenomenological notion underlies the notion of the aesthetic experience and of the film experience as extending ourselves to inhabit new and unfamiliar worlds. A central idea for Linden is that we willfully engage with art in general and with the motion-picture in particular, to gain a new understanding of our surroundings, by sharing the perceptual perspective of Other, expressed through the movie camera. This is, our encounter with the film and its understanding is guided by what it expresses about our being-in-the-world. The film as the work of art is directly related to our existence, what it expresses is "the stream of direct experience, life as it feels in the living" (Linden, 1970:189); thus the film is experienced in its relation to our world of experience.

As Harald Stadler argues in his sketch of a phenomenological model of the film experience, at the basis of the world presented in the film, is the world of the everyday experience (Stadler, 1990:45). That is, before any filmic rationale, the main motivator and sense giver of the film experience is the everyday; the film is experienced as a metaphor of the human condition. One does not attend a film to experience camera angles, locations or the editing, but the lived world it is concerned with. Stadler notes: "As a rule, viewers experience the 'real' world before they enter and learn to understand the 'world of movies'; and it is primary experience of the life-world that shapes interest in, and interpretation of, films" (Stadler, 1990:45)

In phenomenological terms this relationship of dependence of the film world on the world of experience points to the notion of intentionality, a notion which is at the centre of phenomenology. As previously mentioned, it is in terms of it that, Paci following Husserl, maintained that the

problematic of the modern world can be characterised, as the loss of intentionality of the sciences and the economy (Paci, 1972:21), that is the loss of the function for the everyday world on which they depend and aim to improve. The film experience needs to be understood in the same way, existing in function of the everyday and oriented towards its understanding.

For Sokolowski it is intentionality the way phenomenology differentiates itself from other philosophical traditions which hold human consciousness as an enclosed space that it is not directly related to things 'outside' and all happens inside our heads. "We can try to get outside by making inferences: we may reason that our ideas must have been caused by something outside us, and we may construct hypotheses of models of what those things must be like, but we are not in any direct contact with them" (Sokolowski, 2000:9) If we followed any of these philosophical perspectives we establish that we do not know how our contact with the 'real world' occurs, or whether it is simply an illusion, a mere subjective projection.

Furthermore, from them we are not allowed to propose that we have a world in common, just that each of us has our own private world (Sokolowski, 2000:10). Consequently, contrary to the unquestioned positivism of modern science, and to escape the trap of the irrational relativism of subjectivism, Husserl made of his basic proposition that the subject and object of experience are inseparable and we cannot be sure about the independent existence of things, but only of how they appear to us in consciousness (Tomasulo 1990:1)

The focus of Husserl's work is ultimately on the mediation of the methods by which we gain knowledge of the world. He founded a new form of philosophy that emphasised the necessity to carry out an analysis of all claims of knowledge, to set this on a secure foundation. (Moran, 2000:187) Where the key element for this task was to regain the domain of the subject in the process of apprehending the world which was lost with the advent of modernity.

For this reason in the most general consideration of what phenomenology is, the notion of intentionality is the one at the core of it, and the one most closely associated with it (Sokolowski, 2000:8) It can be said that phenomenology is the doctrine of intentionality, that is, the acknowledgement that all acts of experience are 'consciousness of' or 'experience of' something (Sokolowski, 2000:8). Every act of consciousness is correlated with an object; to see is to see something, a person or an object, to remember is to remember an object of the past. To intend a thing, means 'the conscious relationship we have to an object' (Sokolowski, 2000:8)

Furthermore, phenomenology recognises different kinds of intentionalities. We carry out perceptual intentions when we see an object, but intend pictorially when we see a photograph or a painting. (Sokolowski, 2000:12) We change our intentionality to the mode of presenting itself of the object of consciousness. Phenomenology seeks to sort out and differentiate all these

intentionalities, and the specific kind of objects they are correlated with (Sokolowski, 2000:13) Phenomenology aims at describing the varied forms in which we know the world to remind us that they are different methods of approaching the everyday and need to keep their foundation in the world of experience.

Understood from the perspective of the notion of intentionality then the experience of film is a form of consciousness that is expressed and understood in terms of its relationship with the ordinary world. It is in a similar vein that Jean-Pierre Meunier in *Les Structures de l'expérience filmique: L'identification filmique*, drawing from Merleau-Ponty and filmology, has characterised the film experience (Sobchack, 1993:242). Fundamentally, for Meunier, all films are characterised by the event of their presentation of objects to perception, which are not physically present but only in the form of images (Sobchack, 1993:242).

Yet the absence of physical objects in cinematic representation does not turn the film into imaginary (Sobchack, 1993:242), but that absence is filled by our personal and cultural knowledge of the object. "Our consciousness is neither disembodied nor impersonal nor 'empty' when we go to the movies - which is to say that, from the first, our personal embodied existence and knowledge give our consciousness an existential 'attitude' or 'bias' toward what is given for us to see on the screen" (Sobchack, 1993:242) Rather than conceive film as a fiction, opposed to reality, it is considered as another mode of accessing the world analogous to our being-in-the-world, where the camera becomes our temporary body and the existence of its objects and their signification depend on our previous knowledge and experiences in the ordinary.

Meunier suggests that our identification with a film depends on our degree of personal and cultural knowledge, which engaging with the cinematic data, constitutes the reality mediated by the film (Sobchack, 1993:244). The way we posit the existential status of the objects on screen is given in relation to what we have experience in and our knowledge of the life-world we inhabit (Sobchack, 1993:242). The more knowledge and experience we have of the objects represented on screen, the more we see 'through' the screen object to reach out to the object beyond the screen, giving to them a more intense presence. (Sobchack, 1993:245) But in all cases our relationship to the film is given by that reaching out to objects, transcending their visual presentation.

Thus, going back to the notion of intentionality, in phenomenological terms it can be said that the experience of film is a method of understanding the ordinary world, that is, of intending it, which necessarily has this as the basic reference for its interpretation. Unlike in dominant film theory which holds that the viewer sees only light and shadows on the screen, in this notion of the film experience from Linden, the viewer reaches out to objects which exist independently of her/his mental processes. The viewer is intending objects, guided by the visual and aural stimulations of the



film, which are seen *through* to grasp the objects they represent.

With a direct reference to Kracauer's belief in the 'revelatory power of film' (Linden, 1970:83), Linden holds that film is a strange objective/subjective phenomenon which has a strong hold on us and brings the illusion of the world as we live it directly. This experience, he says, takes an extraordinary meaning, a revelatory character. The revelatory power of film consists of three functions it accomplishes: reveal the circumstances of the time in which it is produced, reveal the fleeting detail of things and persons, and its invitation to see the familiar in a different manner to what we are accustomed in our lived world (Linden, 1970:83). In sum it is revelatory since it allows us to redeem physical reality but also because it provides us with another possible world to experience.

## **2.6 Psychic distance. The incongruity of the ordinary world and the screen and the phenomenological attitude**

While such notion of the film experience affirms a continuity of the filmic world with the world of ordinary experience, it does not adopt a naive realistic notion of film functioning as a window to the world. The film just appears to be like our mode of being-in-the-world; it has a sense of vividness and immediacy due to its photographic base and its ability to represent things in movement. Linden holds that so close is film to our being-in-the-world that we tend to forget that it is after all an abstraction, a created object which we perceive as a more or less authentic representation of the world (Linden, 1970:72).

To complement the continuity of the film and the *lebenswelt* then is necessary to consider phenomenologically, the discontinuity between the two in the way they present themselves before us. The sense in which the filmic world is non-congruent with ordinary experience, he says, is that: it is not three-dimensional, it cannot be inhabited, and it is constantly variable due to the shifting perspectives of the camera (Linden, 1970:19). Another form of incongruence resides in the inability of the viewer to affect the events on screen, which remain invariable to the audience response. (Linden, 1970:20)

Engaged in the same task of contrasting film and everyday life, Stadler considers that the differences between the two means that film reception does not imply the same codes and consequences, socially and interpersonally, as real-life encounters (1990:45). He says that, for instance, viewing a film can be described as an experience invoking responses but without implying certain responsibilities.

Consequently, the cinematic space is discontinuous with the historical world of the viewer; situation from which originates a psychic distance with the film experience (Linden, 1970:19). This

notion of discontinuity is central for a dialectical understanding of the film experience, that, while placing everyday experience as the horizon of understanding of the film, recognises the ontological differences between the filmic and the everyday experience. Thus, phenomenologically, the film experience can be conceived as the voluntary engagement with illusion by the individual. Ian Jarvie notes that the attraction of film for the viewer is that “films contain a potential seeming-world that can be entered voluntarily partly because of the way it contrasts with the real world” (Jarvie, 1987:54)

That there is a contrast between the filmic and everyday world means that film makes possible for the viewer to play with the boundary between illusion and reality. As Jarvie says with the experience of film, the ordinary individual can dominate the art of philosophizing, by crossing into and out of reality, without the need of the professional philosopher. (Jarvie, 1987:54) On this event, going out of reality should be understood as positing a possible world, dependent on the world of experience.

If we return to Linden’s definition of the motion-picture experience as an experience of excarnation (Linden, 1970:204) we can grasp its suggestion that our bodily position in the world is negated, or dislocated, by the temporary positioning provided by the perspective of the camera . While located in the historical world in the space of the film projection, film provides us with the position of the camera which we temporarily assume. Consequently, in all its sense of vividness and immediacy, its redirecting to “the texture of life”, the world in the film cannot be ontologically equated with the world of experience. It presents before us certain aspects of things - not the things themselves - which we have a tendency to believe but of which we are also aware that are not the things as we know them off screen. The world in the film is one we temporarily slip into and out of (Linden, 1970:204).

Thus, there is a perceived discontinuity between the world on and off screen which implies that when experiencing a motion-picture we shift from the unreflective state, that is, our taken for granted attitude of everyday, to the reflective stance where things can be revealed in a different manner to that we are accustomed to, but that finally the reflective stance is oriented towards our taken for granted attitude. That unreflective state is what Husserl called the *natural attitude*, and it is something we break by *bracketing*. (Jarvie, 1987:133)

In this sense, film can be thought of as a mean of shifting from the natural to the phenomenological attitude. This corresponds to changing into a philosophical reflection where we contemplate our intentionalities, and their correlated objects, of the natural attitude (Sokolowski, 2000:48). Sokolowski asserts that when we move into the phenomenological attitude, “we become something like detached observers of the passing scene or like spectators at a game. We become

onlookers. We contemplate the involvements we have with the world and with things in it and we contemplate the world and its human involvement. We are no longer simply participants in the world; we contemplate what it is to be a participant in the world and its manifestations” (Sokolowski, 2000:48) Yet the intentionalities we contemplate remain ours, we simply contemplate them. The individual turned philosopher freezes her/his intentionalities and remain the same self. (Sokolowski, 2000:48)

In a phenomenological sense, by virtue of the discontinuity between the manifestation of film and the world of experience before the viewer, the viewpoint we enter with it is a philosophical stance where we look *at* our position in the world and our relationship with things in it, to problematise them. If we experience the world in the natural attitude in a mode of belief, where we accept things as we are used to (Sokolowski, 2000:45), film invites us to consider that things are not always what they seem, it allows us to reflect about the things we ordinarily experience.

## Chapter 3

### Phenomenological Analysis of the film experience

#### 3.1 Studying the social viewers

Having outlined the context of the emergence of film with the advent of modernity, and sketched out an alternative form of conceiving the encounter of the individual with the filmic representation from the perspective of phenomenology, this chapter presents an exploration into the actual contact of the viewer with film, and the interpretation of the findings of this encounter in light of the theoretical considerations of the previous chapters. In this manner, the acknowledgement is of the fundamental necessity to take into account the experience of film, by its ordinary users, to complement and support the reflections of the theory.

As Martin Barker indicates the inclusion of the actual individual that interacts with a film, is a necessary measure to counter a common problem in film theory and research that assumes an abstracted notion of the individual, that is, the spectator implied by the text, the subject position offered to the viewer (Barker, 1998:185) Although the fact that abstractions are inherent to a scientific enterprise that deals with concepts and terms that are not always understood by those whom they seek to describe, the problem with this situation, according to Barker, is that the theoretical account of the experience of the film viewer becomes too antithetical to the actual experience when it brackets the real individuals.

Consequently he argues in favour of bringing the study of film closer to the discussion that is already present in people's everyday contact with film, and with the media in general, where the viewers will naturally reflect on their experiences of them. These conversations deal with the feelings evoked by the events on screen, what they mean for each individual, the pleasures that are involved, etc. This is, to observe the occurrence of real media processes and effects as they indeed take place. Otherwise, Barker points out that in the way the individual is theorised in relation to her/his interaction with film s/he can hardly be recognised in the actual film viewers (Barker, 1998:185).

Ultimately, he indicates, the theorisation and research of the film viewing experience must be oriented towards illuminating the experiences of concrete audiences, of what they do and say with their media (Barker, 1998:190) . Annette Kuhn echoes this sentiment in her observations on the use of methods that privilege the film text and downplay reception, which, she notes, makes the research irrelevant to the average cinemagoer (Kuhn, 2002:4). This practice, she says, runs “antithetical to the spirit of a popular entertainment medium”, proceeding as if films were not

experienced everyday in specific places and times.

To assume the concern for the actual individuals experiencing film is to position this research within the sphere of film audience studies, centred on investigating the social audiences that in reality interact with films, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the medium with the inclusion of the privileged perspective of those who experience it, the ordinary viewers. This is with the understanding that the viewers' response to a film are a valuable source of information which can offer an insight into the effective form in which its representations are made sense of and valued by the audiences. According to Janet Staiger the interest of studying audiences resides precisely in knowing what has actually occurred in the material world, not in attempting to construct a generalised explanation on how individuals might have comprehended a film, or may do in the future. It must turn to investigate how they have actually understood it (Staiger, 1992:8).

For Judith Mayne, there has actually been in recent years an increase in the study of film which includes the perspective of their audiences (Mayne, 1993:42). This she identifies as a sign of dissatisfaction with the traditional form of theorising film and a way of rethinking its notion of the film audience as a function of the film and dominant ideology. The interest has then turned into an empirical examination of how film viewers actually respond to cinema, and involves a rejection of the purely theoretical speculation of their encounter with the representations on the big screen.

In Mayne's detailed account of the evolution of the paradigms of film studies and their corresponding forms of conceiving the audience, she identifies as the earliest notion of audience what she terms the institutional model of spectatorship (1993:41). Belonging to the period of the early and mid 70's, it is characterised as taking as its point of departure the notion of cinema operating as an institution. According to it, as Baudry – one of its most notable contributors – maintained, cinema produces an ideological position for the spectator through the very mechanisms of representation – the camera, the editing, the immobile spectator in the cinema (Mayne, 1993:45).

The ultimate purpose of this *cinematic apparatus*, is to obtain a precise ideological effect, necessary to the dominant ideology. As Baudry expressed in his 1975 essay "The apparatus", cinema is understood as pursuing one wish all along its existence: "to construct a simulation machine" (Mayne, 1993:55) that offers to the public representations which they will mistake for perceptions. That is, cinema is seen as a tool that exerts a powerful control over the spectators, who subjected to it, are caught up in its illusions and have surrendered their capacity of discernment.

Such form of conceiving the viewer as already fully implicated by dominant ideology by the very act of interacting with a film, conceives the spectator in analogous terms to that of the consumer, who is "seduced" by the images of advertising, as the viewer is by the images of the film (Mayne, 1993:50). Born during the same period as modern advertising, cinema is conflated with

consumerism, as an instrument for the subjugation of the individual. Other main characteristics which emerge of this conception of the audience is of an agglomeration of totally passive individuals, undifferentiated from one another (there is no consideration of the consequences of a difference of sex, race and culture), and without a historical context.

That 1970's theory held such perspective that undervalued the diversity and activity of the viewer, was the result of the different theories which informed it – like Althusserian Marxism, Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and Semiotics – for which the central element were the strategies of reading aimed at uncovering what is transformed, displaced or disguised by ideology (Mayne, 1993:54). Reacting against empirical research, these theoretical agendas informing the institutional models were focused at unlocking the ideological role of the film, and the spectator was dismissed as just a consequence of the strategies of the cinema and its representations.

The move against empiricism, Mayne indicates, must be understood itself as a reaction against the dominant traditions of mass communications and sociological research which were the context of emergence of film studies. Going back to the 1930's this kind of audience investigation was guided by a commercial interest, and funded by private companies that sought to anticipate the success of their productions (Barker and Brooks, 1997:85). Oriented to study the observable effects of the mass media on the audiences, there was in them a lack of and disinterest in theoretical sophistication, and a preference for the collection of empirical data (Mayne, 1993:54). Thus for the institutional model of the spectator, empiricism meant complicity with the dominant ideology, as it was represented by the administrative research of the effects tradition; a path which it sought to avoid.

In addition to that, Mayne holds that in spite of its limitations, the institutional models of spectatorship should be recognised as significantly contributing to redefining the field of film studies, and for bringing the subject of spectatorship to the foreground (Mayne, 1993:52). Nevertheless, the model remains limited for the understanding of the ways in which the viewers respond to cinema, when they are reduced to nothing but a construction by the industry.

The return in the past decades to empirically oriented research in the area of film, says Mayne, has been marked then in terms of audiences, as an attempt to correct, challenge and revise what has been perceived as a passive and homogenous spectator in established film studies (Mayne, 1993:54). The reevaluation of empirically oriented research, has taken a variety of specific interests of investigation, but it can be identified as a whole for its concern for the study of the flesh and blood film viewers.

Within this work that returns to empirical research she identifies different major directions according to their methodology and basic assumptions about the spectator. In her account, this work

has been mostly informed on one hand by cognitive psychology and linguistics, and on the other hand by ethnography (Mayne, 1993:42). Among the authors that represent the new empirical research, we can find, in the cognitivist tradition the work of David Bordwell, David Branigan, and Noel Carroll; and the likes of Miriam Hansen, Janet Staiger, and Jacqueline Bobo in the ethnographic approach.

In the view of Bordwell the traditional models that conceive the spectator as a passive individual who is positioned, or placed by the mechanics of the film, is suggestive of the view of the spectator as a victim, backed into a corner by conventions of perspective, editing, narrative, point of view, and psychic unity (Mayne, 1993:55). From his perspective, film viewing is instead an activity carried out by a diversity of individuals, all of whom are united by their capacity for active perception, and by virtue of which they have are involved in shaping the sense of a film. As Martin Barker, Bordwell criticises the apparatus theory's notion of an ideal viewer, which brackets the real individuals, and maintains that the theorised spectator cannot be separated from the real ones.

As cognitivist based work, ethnographic oriented studies have come to challenge the notion of the passive spectator, appealing to empirical research and using critical and qualitative observation methods of how individuals actually respond to cinema (Mayne, 1993:59). Inspired by the work of Stuart Hall, this current of research, has aimed at investigating the different ways in which the viewers interpret films according to their own social positions. As Mayne says, this perspective helps restore the complexity and contradictions that emerge in the actual encounter with the media, in contrast to the abstract pronouncements of apparatus theory.

From the work of Hall would derive a new tradition of critical media studies that involved a detailed analysis of the audiences. As well as seeking to understand the organisation of a film or other media representations in order to identify their proposed meanings and their ideological implications, they also signified a reaction against textual determinism (Barker and Brooks, 1997:91). Critical studies would emphasise the ways in which real individuals make their own meanings from their encounters with the media. For Barker the one expression which came to summarise this approach is of “the active audience” (Barker and Brooks, 1997:91).

Within this tradition a wide range of research has been produced. Exemplary of this mode of ethnographic study in film is Jacqueline Bobo's enquiry into the response of black women to the film *The Color Purple*, centring on the meanings created from the film and in relation to issues of race. Having experienced a largely negative reception by critical and established film reviewers, for what was perceived as a racist film with stereotypical characters, Bobo sought to explain the wide positive response it had received from female spectators (Morley, 1992:15). She examined the interpretation of the film by conducting group interviews with black women who had seen the film,

to find out the emotions that it had provoked in them and how they interpreted the film. Grounded on these responses, she found out that in contrast to the criticism by established film reviewing not only black women had liked the film, but had also established a strong attachment to it and stood out as significant in their lives, since they had found something progressive in it to their cause as black women (Bobo, 1994:240)

Following Stuart Hall, Jacqueline Bobo argues that the viewer of a film, like the reader of a text, comes to engage with the media already possessing a certain knowledge of the world and other mediated representations (Bobo, 1994:239). When the person interacts with the film s/he carries with her/himself a repertoire of cultural, social, economic, sexual, racial, and other histories, which come into play in the moment of interpreting it. Therefore, the meaning of a film cannot be defined in advance, before it comes in contact with its audiences, all of which have a different viewpoint that might even produce a contradictory view to the ideological intentions of the film.

Another current of film studies which Mayne identifies in her survey of models of spectatorship is guided by an interest in understanding spectatorship as a phenomenon that must be defined according to the historical period being researched (Mayne, 1993:43). That is, how the meaning of a film is shaped by specific circumstances of place and time of viewing. And in a separate category, Mayne places the studies focusing on the female spectator, who has been largely ignored by 1970's theory, carried out to understand the difference that gender produces in the film viewing experience.

Taken together these different directions of development of film studies, which Mayne suggests as overlapping categories and not strict divisions, helps understand the variety of work that has been produced, which makes emphasis on different aspects of the issue of spectatorship. Their development has contributed to problematise a spectator that was once seen as an abstraction, and served to redefine the notion of response to film (Mayne, 1993:60). As a whole, they have challenged the monolithic and mechanistic conception of the abstract viewer of the institutional models and recognised the need of paying attention to the social audiences, who with all their complexity exceed the subject implied by the film (Mayne, 1993:60).

For Janet Staiger, the purpose of including the instance of reception of a film is not to reverse the terms of the process of communication involved, to eliminate the considerations of the context of production of a film and erect the viewer as the sole creator of meaning (Staiger, 1992:3). What it does, is reject the assumption that it is possible to know the meaning of cinema by simply attending to the instance of production and the analysis of film as a text, as has been excessively emphasised by previous film studies. Reception studies are not aimed at a textual interpretation but at the understanding of interpretations made by real individuals (Staiger, 1992:9)



The production of this research, she adds, can significantly contribute to different areas of film theory, regarding issues of philosophy, criticism, and history (Staiger, 1992:11). With reception studies, various propositions made in the theory can be tested against the spectators, including for instance, notions of the suspension of disbelief, the significance of memory, concerns for ideology, etc., among the philosophical. It can help correct many of the assumptions about spectators on which film criticism operates, and suggests that history of cinema itself could be rewritten from the perspective of the reception of films.

A suggestive case of the potential of film research of the social audience that contributes to a broader understanding of the history of cinema – as Staiger indicates reception studies can do– is Annette Kuhn's *An Everyday Magic*, which draws from different sources of information and includes a qualitative inquiry of filmgoers of the 1930's period (Kuhn, 2002:7). As she indicates, the investigation serves to understand the meaning of going to the cinema and how this activity featured in their everyday lives, as it also contributes, with the stories told by the informants to the historical record of that period.

The importance of carrying out research of social audiences, like Annette Kuhn's or Jacqueline Bobo's work, resides in the value that understanding the individual viewers represents for illuminating the phenomenon of film. The research is centred not in investigating the individuals on their own, reducing the findings to the anecdotal, but it attempts to articulate those experiences with wider social and cultural processes in which they occur. As Barker maintains, from what would appear to be very individuated responses we can recognise them having nuances of all kinds of social processes (Barker, 1998:184)

### **3.2 Methodology for the study of the viewers' response to film**

To investigate the point of intersection between the theoretical considerations in the first two chapters and the way film features in people's everyday lives, this research turns to examine the way in which a number of selected members of the audience have created meanings and experienced specific emotions in the viewing of certain mainstream films. These responses are the result of an exercise of gathering of data on memorable film experiences, which I have carried out. They are interpreted in light of the theory, to propose that across them we can identify some predominant elements that connect to social processes of the development of modernity and the transformation of everyday experience in film.

It takes the form of a small-scale study with its attention centred on the detailed accounts of nine individuals, who express in their own words their mode of engaging with films. Using these accounts as the main source of information, the purpose is to take them as key insights into the

process of film reception, at the centre of which, as Barker says, we find socially created meanings. Therefore their individual accounts are analysed to view them as suggestive of broader social issues, beyond their purely anecdotal apparent value. However the purpose is not to generalise the findings but to reflect through them on the phenomenon of making sense of a film.

The characteristics of the inquiry correspond to those outlined for the phenomenological analysis of experience as it has been mostly developed in the area of psychology, as an approach to a qualitative inquiry of human experience. With a markedly phenomenological commitment, the concern of it, is primarily to examine how people make sense of their life experiences, rather than to fix them in overly abstract categories (Smith, 2009:1). This can be employed to analyse a wide range of experiences, but has been more commonly applied to the kind of experience that has had a larger significance in the life of a person, as opposed to the ordinary experience that goes unnoticed in the flow of the everyday (Smith, 2009:2)

The reason for this is that it is in the occasion of those major experiences in their lives, when people are inclined to reflect on their significance, and therefore represent an opportunity for the researcher to look in detail how they are made sense of (Smith, 2009:3). Among the sort of experiences which are subject to phenomenological analysis, we have, starting a new job, having a first child, the decision of migrating to another country, the taking of an examination, etc. Beyond their varied durations, their unexpectedness or other characteristics, their common element is the major significance of the event that prompts the individual to engage in reflecting on it and working out what it means for her/him (Smith, 2009:3).

Another main feature of the research that employs the phenomenological analysis of experience, is the limited number of people that are interviewed, as it focuses on qualitative and not quantitative issues (Hycner, 1985:295). The commitment is to the examination of the detail, how each individual involved is making sense of their experience, and observe how the accounts of the participants have differences and similarities with one another.

Together with the reduced number of participants, another relevant characteristic of the phenomenological research is that the sample of individuals is not randomly generated (Hycner, 1985:294). In fact, says Hycner, for the phenomenological perspective it is often necessary to employ this methodology, where the researcher seeks out participants who have had the experience that is under investigation and verify that those participants are able to articulate their experience (Hycner, 1985:294). This approach allows for the research to go into a considerable depth into the phenomenon investigated, which might not be possible to do with a random sample or with participants unable to express themselves in the extension necessary.

As a consequence of these two characteristics – the reduced number of participants and that

they often need to be preselected to allow for the generation of detailed accounts – it must be acknowledged then that the results of a phenomenological research as the one presented in here, cannot be generalised (Hycner, 1985:295). The findings cannot be said to apply to others than the participants themselves, but as Hycner indicates, the phenomenological research does not seek to generalise its findings but aims at “illuminating human phenomena” (Hycner, 1985:294) In the present case the findings are used to reflect with the theory on the phenomenon of film experience, without proposing that the same applies to all film viewers.

In this research of the phenomenon of film reception, the experience under investigation, consistent with the nature of experience that phenomenological research investigates, is that of the memorable film. This is understood as the kind of film viewing experience which has had a major significance for the individual, who regardless of the details on why this is or the nature of the film, considers the film they have chosen as one that has stood out for them from other films and has had some impact in their lives. This kind of experience I consider it particularly suitable for the approach adopted, as it is one that is already prominent in the viewer's mind, and an event in which the participant will have invested a substantial amount of time reflecting on its meaning and its impact on her/his life.

By taking the experience of a memorable film for examination, it also allows the research to get around a difficulty that Barker points to in his research of audiences for the film *Judge Dredd* (1997). Among the problems he highlights in his investigation, is the lack of response they faced when approaching people to talk about the film (Barker and Brooks, 1997:23). As he says, to experience a film is something that is done ordinarily in a casual way. “ ‘[H]aving an opinion’ on a film is not an obvious process, and having one that you might feel comfortable expressing to an ‘expert’ is even more tricky” (Barker and Brooks, 1997:23). The solution for them, he explains, was to carry out the interview in a natural, conversational manner, as it ordinarily occurs. For this research, I have taken the case of the memorable film, as a form of encouraging the participants to have in advance a non-obvious response, and to place them in a situation in which they can feel as the experts with their participation.

Thus the nine individuals whose cases are presented in this research were approached for their awareness of having watched a film which they considered had some impact in their life, as for their willingness and ability to give a verbal account of that experience. All of them were asked then to engage in reflecting about the film that each had the meaningful experience with, and asked to watch the film again, so that it would facilitate them remembering it and thinking how the film had impacted on their life. To help encourage the participants think about their memorable film and how it impacted their life, they were also asked to consider a series of key-points to prepare the account

of the film and their experience with it.

The participants were advised above all to take into account the connections that they had established between the film and their everyday living or their understanding of the world. That is, to indicate in which way they considered that film had impacted them, be it in their way of thinking or the way they conducted their daily living, as they were encouraged to point to the specific element of the film that had prompted them to do or think in a certain way, which could be a scene, location, a theme, storyline, piece of dialogue, etc. Another aspect which they were asked to consider when preparing their account of the memorable film experience, was to give some context to their viewing experience, considering how they came across the film, with whom they had seen it, when and where. Other points which they were suggested to think of, was whether they knew of another film with which they could compare their chosen film, and if there was some type of person in particular to whom they would recommend watching it. Finally, they were asked to consider at some point in their account, a brief synopsis of the film.

Since the verbal accounts were prepared by the respondents considering a set of topics which I developed to facilitate the comprehensiveness of their descriptions, their participation is closer to a written or oral description, rather than to an interview setting where the researcher poses questions to the respondents as they formulate their description. This type of account, prepared in advance to be communicated in a full single account, is one of the alternatives for source of experiential data for contemporary phenomenological investigation, which besides observation and interviews may resort to oral or written descriptions of experiences (Myers and Hansen, 2011:90).

The kind of exercise that the participants engaged in while describing their memorable film experiences is what in phenomenology is referred to as reflective experience (Spinelli, 1989:24); that is, not direct accounts of the events as they took place, but a descriptive account of them some time after they have occurred. This means that the accounts prepared by the respondents are partial and incomplete, not a description of everything that occurred. Through this kind of exercise of reflective experience, it is understood that participants are able to formulate the meaning of their experiences and able to communicate a minute part of all elements that form the experience, while other variables are necessarily excluded from its focus (Spinelli, 1989:24).

In this respect, the collection of data through questions that were considered before being answered by the respondents facilitates the reflectiveness and coherence of their accounts. This is, it allows the participants to formulate well prepared accounts that go into more detail on their experiences and thus provide the means for a richer analysis of the memorable film experience. However, for the same reason, the descriptions may have a higher degree of self-consciousness and of the participants' desire to present themselves in a certain light. On this account, they are not

necessarily taken as straight descriptions but as a collection of experiential data to which I have returned several times to analyse the memorable film experience as it emerges from their description of the experiences, considering that their discourse also involves elements that emerge from the image which the participants wish to present of themselves and as a result of their social context – for instance as a function of ideology.

Additionally, the consideration of prepared continuous descriptions of experience, instead of interviews, has been intended as a way to facilitate their insertion in the audiovisual component of this research. In the Internet and the Youtube age, with a marked increase in visual culture, it seems appropriate to include in this film which explores the pervasiveness of visual culture and its possible impact on daily living, the accounts of experiences recorded on video in the style of Internet posted videos where individuals express in a casual manner their everyday experiences and opinion on various topics. Their accounts presented in a continuous form facilitates the viewer's engagement with their descriptions and her/his reflection on the experiences being shared.

For the future I can see the possibility of developing the research by complementing the data generated through the oral testimonials of the participants recorded on video, implementing interviews with them to discuss, verify, and amplify, the themes which I have identified as emerging from their accounts. This is a further step which a phenomenological investigation, inclined to a dialogical method, may follow to reach a further level of detail with a closer involvement with the participants.

Having recorded this planned and guided account of the nine participants in video and audio, they have been transcribed and analysed following a phenomenological procedure as described by Robert Hycner (1985). This procedure, he indicates, represents just one possible manner of phenomenologically analyzing data; one which he proposes in spite of the reluctance of phenomenologists to focus on fixed steps in their research methods in their fear that these will become reified as in the natural sciences (Hycner, 1985:279).

This process has basically consisted in obtaining from the verbal accounts the sense that each of the individuals makes of their own memorable film experience, identifying their basic characteristics according to their narrations. From there, I have identified the uniting and differentiating meanings across the different cases, which I utilise to reflect on the theory. By doing this the research attempts to prioritise what the respondents have said, by utilizing the material as it emerges from their testimonials, but also to position their individuated experiences in the wide social context of modernity. According to Moustakas the phenomenological method involves returning to the experience under investigation for the basis of analysis that reveals the essential components of the experience (1994:13). First the descriptions of the experience are obtained and

then are read several times in detail and analysed by the researcher; with the purpose of determining what the experience means for those who have had it, and how it emerges from their own words (Moustakas, 1994:13).

The method I have followed resembles in a way that of the Uses and Gratifications approach to audiences, where the viewers are conceived as having an active role in their interaction with film and their individual differences seen as playing a determinant role in their experiences. Rather than in technological, aesthetic, or ideological terms, the relationship between film and viewer is analysed in terms of the audience. Yet unlike in Uses and Gratifications the viewers are understood as belonging to a social context which informs the construction of meaning in the interaction with film, and additionally I make some considerations too on the shaping of the viewers' interpretations by the textual properties of the films. As it has been observed, there has been in Uses and Gratifications a tendency to ignore issues of ideology completely and overplay audience freedom (Moore, 1993:7).

Below are the findings of the encounter with the experiences of the participants and their analysis, developed in a set of themes where I consider the viewers' responses and the theory intersect one another. The themes developed are: the relationship between the film representation and the world of experience, film and its appeal to the senses, the relationship of the individual and society, and film in the search for ontological security. These have emerged from the phenomenological analysis of the viewers' responses to the films: *Cast Away* (2000) as experienced by Jimena, *Ghost* (1990) by Tim, *Motorcycle Diaries* (2004) by Matthew, *The Last King of Scotland* (2006) by Nikhil, *Clockwork Orange* (1971) by Steve, *Requiem for a Dream* (2000) by Chris, *The Thin Red Line* (1998) by Edward, *The Innocents* (1961) by Polis, and *You've Got Mail* (1998) as experienced by Kevin.

### **3.2.1 Film and the representation of the world**

The central element of this work is the conception of film from the perspective of its significance for the relationship of the individual to reality. This has been understood as a form of experience which enables the individual to access the world that we know through personal experience. Therefore one main aspect in which I have focused on the data generated through the interviews is the manner in which film features in the individuals' experiences as another form of *things presenting themselves* for the viewer, giving place to a mode of apprehending the world. In other words, the primary interest is observing how the understanding of film is shaped by the viewer's experience, and conversely, how film informs the individual's understanding of life.

To do this I refer to David Bordwell's categories of the meaning which the viewer produces in

her/his act of understanding the representations on screen (Bordwell, 1989:10). According to him the viewer constructs different kinds of meaning, for their level of abstraction. Bordwell says that the meanings can be of a referential nature when they point to the film's spatio-temporal world, of an abstract type when a conceptual meaning is assigned to the fabula (whether this is something intentionally done by the film or implicit in it), and what he calls the symptomatic meaning, which refers to a meaning perceived by the viewer as the film transmitting involuntarily.

Employing these categories, we can observe the way in which the participants comprehend the films and how they help expand their perspectives on the world, by alternating between the referential and the abstract meanings. The aim of doing this is to consider the complex interrelation between the filmic and the everyday experiences, in the sense that Stadler conceives it: where the inventory of everyday experiences and preceding film experiences constitute the horizon of understanding for the viewing of a film (of its motivations, expectations, selection), and afterwards the sense made of the film helps expand the inventory of experiences. (Stadler, 1990:45)

While all cases have identified, to different degree, concrete elements of the participant's personal experience or cultural knowledge and their correspondence with the world in the film, some of them have emphasised the conceptual point perceived as being expressed by the films. By focusing on these variations and the interrelationship between the kinds of meaning assigned to the film I suggest we can identify defining features of the operating of film and its relationship to the experience of the world. Following this approach, I have organised the films in three groups, according to the function which film can be seen performing: where film functions as a *reminder* of a personal life experience, where it functions as a *revelation* about the everyday world, and where film is perceived as the opportunity to *reflect* on an issue of the world. The account of two of the films, which are not considered in any of the groups, are used to make other observations on the notion of *film and its appeal to the senses*.

### **3.2.2 Film as a reminder of a personal life experience**

Within the group of experiences in which film functions predominantly as a reminder of a life event, fall the responses to *Cast Away*, *Ghost* and *Requiem for a Dream*. Common to them is the identification of a continuity between the on-screen representation and the viewer's personal experience, and the appropriation of a movie's proposed conceptual point that serves to evaluate said events in which the continuity is perceived.

In the first of the films considered, *Cast Away*, Jimena establishes a tenuous referential connection between her personal experience and the events in which the main character becomes involved in the film. A modern version of *Robinson Crusoe*, the film tells the story of Chuck, the

worker of a package delivery company who is involved in a plane accident that leaves him stranded on a deserted island where he has to survive by himself and left to his own to plan his return to civilisation. According to her account, her identification with the film originates from a personal event in which she unexpectedly had to live on her own in an unknown place. That is, she understands the incident of the protagonist as analogous to her own experience, both with referential coincidences (being in a foreign place, for a certain period of time) and symbolic ties (the experience of loss). As she says it: “The story I think has touched me personally because when I saw it I think, the guy was four years in the island and also I felt that my staying in London, because I am South American, had been also four years, and during this time I felt that I lost a lot of things and the main character as well, he lost everything he had”

If it cannot be said that there is a literal correspondence between a life episode and the events in the film, since her reference is not to living alone in a deserted island, we can consider it as a connection at a referential level where the film event *is as* the real life experience, complemented with the symbolic understanding of the experience of loss. With that as point of departure, further the viewer derives an abstract sense connected to the fabula of the film, which allows her to reflect and help interpret her experience of struggle in a foreign place. That is, it can be said that while on a first instance the extraordinary events in the film *are like* those of her personal experience, through the assimilation of all events into a narrative the film provides in return a frame of reference to give some meaning to personal life experiences. As she interprets the film, it is a metaphor for “the struggle that we go through life”, where the protagonist will face a series of trials, to become a new kind of person. This evaluation can be seen to extend to her interpretation of her life experience.

That *Cast Away* conforms to the structure of a mainstream Hollywood film means that it presents the story of a character who after an incident finds himself in a critical time in his life which takes him through a period of transformation, and which will see him finally survive the crisis and emerge triumphant. Chuck having lost it all, restores the balance of his life by returning to civilisation, and towards the end realises that life could have new things to offer him for the future, in spite of all setbacks. An indication of this comes in a speech he delivers before his friends near the end of the film, looking back at his experience: “And now, here I am. I'm back. In Memphis, talking to you. I have ice in my glass... And I've lost her all over again. I'm so sad that I don't have Kelly. But I'm so grateful that she was with me on that island. And I know what I have to do now. I gotta keep breathing. Because tomorrow the sun will rise. Who knows what the tide could bring?”

Thus the film provides a positive resolution to the conflict which the viewer identifies with her personal experience and I suggest serves to cast a positive light on what is an adverse life defining event. Marked by a sense of loss and isolation, her condition of a foreigner in the city of



London, can then be, in an analogous form to the experience of Chuck, assimilated instead as a period of self-discovery and transformation. As in the movie, it can be seen as leaving open for her the opportunity for new things to come in the future. This is indicated by her considerations of having moved from an initial state of crisis, to another of restoration of balance in her life: “I felt that I lost a lot of things and the main character as well, he lost everything he had. But at the same time he became in somebody different, somebody stronger. And I feel that I did that myself [...] and also the beginning was very tough period but actually I had become in somebody different as the character”.

In a similar manner, there is in Tim's account of *Ghost* the identification of a major personal experience with one of the main events in the development of the story in the film, and its understanding from a point of view emerging from the film which serves to redeem it. For Tim, the event of the death of Sam Wheat, a character who gets killed and remains in the world as a ghost to clarify the mystery of his death and protect his fiancée from his attacker, reminds him of a personal experience with the supernatural. He explains that the film reminds him of the death of his brother and an apparently unexplainable subsequent event: “it reminds me when my brother died, and I was saying goodbye to him all alone, it was in an airless room, no air conditioning, no windows and I was saying goodbye to him and no longer than ten minutes was I in there and the door to a closet actually closed and to me that was kind of like a closing, you know, a closing to the event.”

If not a literal correspondence again, we can identify a marked referential connection between the world on-screen and the viewer's life experience. That is the rare event of the death of a loved person, whose occurrence instills the ones left behind with a sense of loss and of having unresolved affairs. As in Jimena's account, built over the basis of what is already known to the viewer, the film in return can be seen as providing a form of making sense of the experience, of the passing away of someone held dear, to facilitate its assimilation by the viewer. As in *Cast Away*, this form of interpreting the main events of the narrative, conforms to the structure of a mainstream Hollywood film.

Although unavoidable, *Ghost* makes “the point” (as in Barker) that death does not mark the end of the existence for the individual, but it constitutes her/his entrance into another stage of existence. A mix of New Age spirituality and classical Hollywood filmmaking, as it was described by critical reviews (Mayne, 1993:143) it points to the belief that consciousness persists after death, for further learning in the form of a spirit. “You’re dead. It's all in your mind. Your problem is that you still think you’re real. You ain't got a body no more. It's all up here now”, explains in the film another ghost to the protagonist. This redeeming position of the film in relation to death is manifest all throughout the story. Unsurprisingly, at the end, as the respondent indicates, the film has a

“wonderful conclusion”, which happily resolves the issues which it presents : “They got to give a kiss goodbye, and you know, he went on to heaven and he took care of his business and he was in peace, and she was in peace and the drama was great, the action was great, the cinematography and the editing fantastic. I just loved the movie.”

As in the experience of *Cast Away*, via its incorporation into the narrative, the film helps reflect on the meaning of the life event of the viewer, in a specific sense which it proposes. But unlike in the experience of *Cast Away* in which the reflection seems to originally emanate from the viewing of the film, according to Tim's account, the view of *Ghost* on the afterlife corresponds to his already existing belief. As he says, his involvement with the film was given by his belief in spirits: “Believing in spirit, kind of piqued my interest on a personal level [...]”. Instead of providing a new perspective on the familiar, the reflection through the film comes to reaffirm his already existent notions on afterlife and the supernatural. As he says, it has nothing but confirmed what he already knows.

For the third reviewer in this group, Chris, his experience of *Requiem for a Dream* can also be seen as functioning as a reminder of a personal episode in his life. The events of literal correspondence are, on the one hand, the character of Sara Goldfarb, who plays the mother, and her drug addiction problems which end up driving her insane; and on the other hand, is the reviewer's own experience of his mother's drug addiction struggle. If briefly, Chris refers to this connection and the effect of the film on him: “[...] this movie has got a personal impact on me because my mother did use to get hooked up on pills, antidepressants and other kind of crap, and to watch this character actually losing it and losing it all and go through this martyrdom of electroshocks in the hospital stuff, it was just heartbreaking for me.”

But unlike *Cast Away* and *Ghost*, *Requiem for a Dream* does not conform to the formula of the happy ending film, since the crisis of the characters are not resolved to restore balance to their lives. Basically the film tells the story of the destruction of the lives of the five main characters, all of whom, in a different mode and to a different extent, become addicted to drug consumption, and have their lives increasingly determined by it, to reach a point of no return. Everyone including the character of Sara Goldfarb is marked by an irreparable loss.

Consequently, although Chris identifies a literal continuity between the screen and the life-world, unlike in the accounts of *Cast Away* and *Ghost*, there isn't an identification of an overall conceptual meaning, as in Bordwell's terms, that would mark the film as helping to provide resolution to the life experience. Simply put, the moral of the story is that following the path which the characters have, devastation awaits and there is no point of return. Yet in relating his experience with *Requiem*, Chris also points out a fundamental aspect of the story which allows us to see it too

as redeeming the real life event it has been linked with, as in the other viewers' accounts in this group.

When outlining the character of Sara Goldfarb, the viewer assigns it a feature which although is not explicitly presented by the film, it has been inferred from the contrast of her story with that of the rest of the characters. That is, the naivety of the mother in her gradual fall into drug addiction: "...she is the only one who gets into the drug addiction as an innocent person, not knowingly, not willingly". Her descent, as he indicates, comes as the result of following "a completely separate line" from the rest of the characters. It happens as a consequence of her desire to appear as a contestant in a TV show wearing an old dress in which she no longer fits and which drives her to start a pill diet that turns into her addiction, unaware of their effect on her health. That is, she suffers for her ignorance in an attempt to fulfill her dream of reliving the past, and can be thus seen as a victim of her circumstances. And by pointing to her as a victim, Chris seems to follow in the other two reviewers' use of the film as a form of assimilating a personal life-experience.

Seen as a whole, the three experiences are indicative of a film viewership where the sense of the film is constructed on the basis of the individuals' preceding experiences, including the filmic and non-filmic. If the latter are emphasised, there are also references to the expectations and comprehension related to the knowledge of film. For instance Tim alludes to his expectations about *Ghost* from knowing of the actors who were starring (laughter and lightheartedness with Whoopi, passion and love with Demi, and an unbelievable performance with Swayze); or Chris who refers to his expectations on *Requiem* partially given from his knowledge of the presence of one his favourite actresses – Ellen Burstyn – whom he knew had won an Oscar for her performance in the film.

They suggest that the interpretation of the film feeds from the personal experience, on the basis of which the films are approached, understood and evaluated. This is particularly evident in the reviewers' concentration upon specific elements from the on-screen world and the identification of certain themes, while they leave others undeveloped. For instance, while Tim refers to the fact in the story of *Ghost* that the protagonist is killed by "a good friend [...] greed being the so called accomplice", this element which could have possibly been for someone else a starting point to elaborate on themes around *friendship* or *betrayal*, for him it appears simply as an event that recedes to the background. He concentrates instead on the events in the film that serve to elaborate on the theme that connects to his life experience – the afterlife and the supernatural. Or as in Chris' account where the focus is on the consequences of drug addiction and the emotional impact of *Requiem*, and the possibility of developing another theme around *economy* or *greed* – as it is the idea of running a business that prompts the characters to deal with drugs – remains undeveloped.

Built over previous experiences, the responses also show the way film cues the viewers to

identify the statements that it makes about the events it narrates, which can be seen to help interpret their personal experiences. That is, given the possibility of understanding that the cinematic representation refers to physical objects like the ones we already know, it can function as a form of philosophizing about our daily living. The mode in which it appears to do it is by providing a certain context, in the narrative of the film, to the isolated event that the connection is established with. Perceived as furnished by the same material daily life is made of, film in return enables a reconsideration of the personal experience, by observing the ordinary in light of the narrative and the moral of the story.

Lacking the life-experiences of sense by themselves, they can be arranged by the individual to make sense according to the way in which they feature in the film. It can be observed that while they refer to particularly overwhelming personal life-experiences, the reviewers' exercise of talking about them in the occasion of the films they have chosen, allows them to understand their experiences as events that have causes and consequences in other events in their lives and thus seem to acquire some sense. Jimena's unexpected event of having to live abroad, alone, for a long period of time, becomes through her account a period which allowed her to become another, stronger, person. Tim's unexplained event of his dead brother, is through his account of *Ghost* a manifestation of the reality of afterlife and a reinforcement of the fate of his brother after his death. And Chris' experience of his mother's addiction problem is as Sara Goldfarbs' story in *Requiem*, the result of getting into trouble inadvertently "as an innocent person". That is, the personal life events cease to be isolated, and become part of the chain of events of the life of the individual.

In other words, these experiences are suggestive of a process of film-viewing in which the on-screen representation is understood as populated by objects and events of the world, just like the ones we already know, come in contact with and go through in ordinary living; and of the manner in which film facilitates in return for the individual the ascription of coherence to their life-experiences. They suggest a film-viewing experience as a dynamic process in which we draw from the life-experience for the interpretation of the on-screen events, and conversely, from the film representation to make sense of our personal life.

### **3.2.3 Film as revelation about the material of the world**

The second grouping of the viewers' responses for the mode of relating the filmic with the ordinary world, is where film acts as a revelation of an aspect of the everyday which remained unknown to the viewers prior to watching the film. The two accounts considered under this category are of the film *The Motorcycle Diaries* and of *You've Got Mail*. Together they are characterised for the viewers' identification of a literal reference to the historical world, and subsequent incorporation

of their acquired knowledge through the film representation in their decisions on how to act in the world. This reference to and appropriation of the objective quality of film, I suggest is also linked to the thematisation of the film's events.

The *Motorcycle Diaries* presents a dramatised version of a period in the life of Che Guevara, based on the chronicles of his experiences on a road trip across South America which he undertook, accompanied by a friend, at a young age. This period in the life of the Argentinian would be considered in retrospective as key in the formation of his character and of a sensitivity towards the injustices committed against the oppressed. Unsurprisingly being the film about a political character of the stature of Guevara, it touches on political ideas, although it does not present these explicitly. As has been commented in a review of the film, it actually succeeds at showing how the trip is pivotal to his development, but by presenting it in terms of the formation of a sensitivity, rather than an outright formation of a political conviction (Vineberg, 2005:18).

Nevertheless for Matthew, who tells of his response to the film, *Motorcycle* is charged with a political message, which although subtle, is one which the film is attempting to put across. Dismissing then any interest in the political ideas, Matthew points out that his relationship with the movie is marked by a realisation through it of an aspect of the reality of the South American region in which the film is set and where it has been filmed on location. He points out that the film has showed him that contrary to his knowledge previous to viewing the film, that Spanish, the language in which the story is spoken, is a common element uniting the countries of South America.

This reality of South America is evidenced as the character of Che and his friend, Alberto Granado, progress through their journey and meet people from different countries. Some of the encounters have a light tone like when they are shown flirting with a couple of Chilean women, and others of a more serious note, like their encounters with the remains of the Inca culture, the communist Chileans, and the working conditions of the Peruvian miners. For Matthew the film shows through these encounters that his belief that Spanish was a language that could not be understood by people from different countries in South America, was just “a myth”. Taking that element revealed to him by *Motorcycle*, Matthew incorporated it with other practical considerations and his previous interest in learning a second language, to decide to take up the study of Spanish.

If Matthew's response to *Motorcycle* would seem to be restricted to the spatio-temporal world of the film (and the assumption of its faithfulness to the reality of the world), it can be suggested that as in the viewer's responses where film functions as a reminder, the reality that he constructs from the film is to an extent connected to one of the themes, or abstract meanings, which the film elaborates upon. Even though this has been unacknowledged by the viewer, and even dismissed from the beginning of his account as he distances himself from the political dimension of the film, a

correspondence can be traced between his realisation of language as a common element across South America and a political theme which the film develops.

Although the film is cautious not to adopt a marked political posture, one implicit meaning which can be read from it is of Guevara's own realisation throughout his journey of the existence of a unifying sentiment and reality across all of Latin America. It was after all during this period that the historical figure of Che Guevara would begin to develop his internationalist ideas. This development of ideas, however simplistic at the time, are clearly expressed at the end of the film when the character of Che delivers a speech in his birthday party, on the relevance of the journey: "Even though we are too insignificant to be spokesmen for such a noble cause, we believe, and this journey has only confirmed this belief, that the division of America into unstable and illusory nations is a complete fiction. We are one single mestizo race from Mexico to the Magellan Straits. And so, in an attempt to free ourselves from narrow minded provincialism, I propose a toast to Peru and to a united America."

Even if unaware or in disagreement with the political themes of *Motorcycle*, Matthew's response to the film shows that the referential element which he picks up on from the filmic world, is one that can be considered key to a realistic dramatisation of this period of the life of Che. This is, that in order to communicate the realisation by Che of the Latin American unity, the film has decided to show elements of continuity across the different locations the characters go through, and one of them is that of language. An indication that language may be featuring in the film to give this sense of unity is suggested by Matthew himself, who refers to a game which the characters play of trying to guess the name of the authors of different poems they quote, all of which are written by South American authors and in Spanish. In one occasion in which they play the game it is actually another character they have encountered in their trip who guesses correctly the author being quoted, which appears as an indication of the common cultural references across the different countries.

Thus it isn't language simply featuring as in any other film, but language as part of the cultural elements, which together with the social characteristics, geography and history, are defining of a united Latin America, as Che became aware of during the journey. This idea is reinforced by the viewer's indication of another realisation which accompanied his observation on the element of language: "Something else that I found very attractive was the extremely rich depths of cultural history that exist, because there's like I guess so many countries that speak Spanish that have a rich cultural heritage from that."

The second film that features as a revelation about the historical world is *You've Got Mail*, as experienced by Kevin. The viewer refers to having his life changed by it, as it showed him a reality of the world which according to his account was unknown to him, and the possibility of employing

that knowledge to affect the course of his life. As in the account of *Motorcycle*, the element of the diegesis the viewer picks up on, is taken and employed according to his own needs and circumstances. Unacknowledged by the viewer, I suggest that, as in the other experiences so far referred, the literal continuity between the film representation and the everyday is framed by a conceptual meaning formulated by the film.

*You've Got Mail* is a romantic comedy that tells the story of two characters, Joe Fox and Kathleen Kelly, who unaware that they know each other face to face in an unfriendly relationship as business rivals, develop a love relationship via the Internet. According to Kevin, the story of the film is “interesting” and “funny”, yet that is not what changed his life but “the idea of the technologies they were using”. At the moment of watching the film, he says, he didn't have any knowledge of and interest in the use of communication technology, as a cell phone, a pager, or about being online. As he saw it featuring in the film, he realised that the Internet constituted a good opportunity to meet other people, and since he had been divorced for a period of time, the realisation turned into the idea of utilizing the same technology to find a date and meet a partner. Prompted by the film, “in a few weeks of watching the movie”, Kevin had his computer and internet set up and after some attempts eventually got to know the person he married and formed a family with.

The literal reference from the film is to the presence of communication technology, at a crucial period in which this had just begun to take off, when the online experience was being introduced in the early 1990's. A rising phenomenon which in a few years transformed our everyday lives and mode of interacting with others, understandably found itself being the theme of different films: *The Net* (1995), *Hackers* (1995), *The Chatroom* (2002), *FearDotCom* (2002), *Swimfan* (2002), among others. While some of these films played to the idea of the Internet as a threat to security, identity, human relationships and even human life, *You've Got Mail*, is characterised by a positive view of its incorporation of it into the everyday. Unproblematic, it features in the narrative as a facilitator for deep and meaningful human interaction; in the same way that Kevin describes his real life experiences with online dating after the film: “before you ever met this person you can really get to know them, rather than just being taken by their looks or whatever, you would actually get inside this person's head and get to know them in a more personal way”

In this sense, his realisation about a fact of the world presented by the film (the existence of a kind of communication technology), as in Mathew's experience, is also dependent on the way it is thematised by *You've Got*. That is, the *mode* in which that element fits in the rest of the story and the position that the film takes about the effect it has on human relationships, serve as a form of interpreting a fundamental transformation in society for the viewer. In the affirmative light in which

it features, it can be said that the viewer's experience, motivated by his personal circumstances of divorce, is also mobilised by the judgement of the technology which the film proposes to the audience.

Taken together this couple of experiences where film functions as a revelation of the everyday, point to another potential of cinema: it allows the individual to know about an aspect of the world which had been previously gone unnoticed. Whereas the first group of responses displayed the construction of the film's world according to personal experience and knowledge, to consider them in the light of a new context, these present the manner in which we can draw from the filmic to inform off-screen events. It can be said that they are suggestive of the objective dimension of film, which voluntarily or unintentionally reveals the circumstances in which it has been produced.

In both cases it has been observed that the material revelations are directly linked to the moral of the story which the films develop. This can be understood as the agreement of the viewers with a dominant meaning that is put forward by the films – subtly by the *Motorcycle Diaries* and explicitly by *You've Got Mail*. Although Mathew declares his awareness about “what the movie is markedly trying to foist on you” and claims to have distanced himself from the political dimension of the film, his realisation about the reality of a unified South America reflects the development by the film of the theme of Che's own realisation of a unified South America. While Kevin, who does not express any concern for an ideological purpose in *You've Got Mail*, derives from the film an affirmative view on the internet-mediated love relationship which can be interpreted as a direct function of the commercial interests materialised in the film. The centrality of the technology and its benevolence in *You've got Mail* can be understood as a result of an alleged product placement deal in the range of the 3 to 6 million dollars between Warner Brothers and AOL (WIRED, 1998), to promote the Internet service provider. Kevin's acceptance and incorporation of the technology in his own life, coincides with what was anticipated as the potential of the deal for AOL: “This deal gives AOL the opportunity to present their service to an audience of moviegoers that may or may not be familiar with AOL and to showcase how their service works and the benefits of it” (WIRED, 1998) As the reviewer recognised: "And so in a few weeks of watching the movie I had my computer and my little AOL disk, internet on training wheels, and popped it in the computer [...]".

As with the other accounts, they also suggest the mode in which the viewing experience is motivated by personal circumstances, and how the meanings obtained are incorporated according to the individual's personal situations. For instance rather than mechanically acting the film in the mind of the viewer to make him think in a certain way or act in a given form – although by



Matthew's own admission *Motorcycle Diaries* changed his life – the mode in which it can be seen doing it is as Matthew says, by placing an interest in the viewer. In Matthew's decision to change his life and take on studying Spanish, along with the learning from the film, other practical considerations take part, like that of evaluating how difficult it would be to study Arabic, Chinese or other language. Likewise, Kevin's meaningful experience of *You've Got* is given by his circumstances of a recent divorce in the face of which the idea of looking for a partner made sense, and his difficulties with meeting people via traditional forms (he was not much for the bar scene and he didn't know of anyone at work).

Both cases, with the acknowledgment of the viewers that their life changed from the experience the films, are also indicative of the maximum potential of cinema, which appears capable of prompting the individuals to do something which can be traced back to the experience of the film. However as has been mentioned, even at this maximum effect, the possibility for it to occur is shown to depend on the interests and other considerations by the individuals which exceed their film-viewing encounter.

This maximum potency which the two accounts display are suggestive of Giroux's conception of film, as a “teaching machine” with influence over the construction of meanings and identities, of societies and individuals (Giroux, 2001:587). In his words: “Put simply, films both entertain and educate” (Giroux, 2001:585) Films act as a pedagogical instrument by placing issues in specific and concrete contexts, and combining them with entertainment. Films, he says, create “a climate that helps to shape individual behavior and public attitudes” (Giroux, 2001:592), but does not claim a direct correlation between the on-screen representation and the viewers' acts. As the two accounts suggest, a film's influence operates within the limits of the personal contexts in which they are taken up.

On the other hand, following Giroux, accounts like the two referred are also indicative of the need for the film-viewer to engage in critically analyzing how “film functions as a social practice that influences their everyday lives and positions them within social, cultural, and institutional machineries of power” (Giroux, 2001:588). While film may act as educational tool, it is necessary to conceive it as vehicle of politics, to understand how a given film embodies relations of power and makes certain ideological assumptions according to the period and circumstances of its production. For Giroux this is an important task when understanding film as a serious educational tool, to engage in thinking of its dominant practices of representation. A critical engagement which clearly appears to be missing in Kevin's account, who is unaware of any possible commercial or ideological discourse reflected in the meaning he has interpreted and applied to his life, from *You've Got Mail*.

### 3.2.4 Film as reflection of the world

The third grouping of the viewers' responses to film for the way in which the screen representation is correlated with the reality of the everyday, considers the accounts in which the relationship with the film is not primarily in terms of a perceived continuity with the life-world but where the focus is on a mode of philosophizing which the movie promotes about events already known. That is, where the viewers, in the terms of Bordwell, engage with the film at an abstract level: they assume that the film proposes certain topics for the audience to reflect about, whether this is presented explicitly in the film or simply suggested by it. It is what the audience understands the film to be "about" (Bordwell and Thompson, 2001:46-47). Being at an abstract level the way in which the film is fundamentally made sense of, as in the other accounts, there is however also the element of the personal experience accompanying it. The accounts included are of the experiences of *A Clockwork Orange* and *The Thin Red Line*.

In his experience of *A Clockwork Orange* Steve focuses on a reflection which he perceives as being suggested by the film, of contemporary society developing into a more violent one, and secondarily on a philosophical issue raised by it about individual freedom and social order. These social and philosophical issues arise from the incidents in which the main character, Alex, becomes involved along the story. Together with the other members of the gang which he leads, Alex is dedicated to a criminal life, devoting most of his time to commit a series of violent attacks on random people. We see them assault a beggar, attack a writer at his home and rape his wife, and kill another woman. Later due to an internal dispute in the gang, Alex is betrayed by his accomplices, gets caught by the police and put in prison. While completing his time in prison Alex is enrolled in a program to commute his sentence for an experimental rehabilitation therapy, and upon its completion is released from confinement.

As Steve sees it *Clockwork* explicitly deals with the issue of violence, cued by the gang attacks at the beginning of the film however brief they are in comparison to the whole duration of the story, and also since the film explicitly problematizes the protagonist's criminal behaviour. Verbal indications of the theme abound in the film, as for instance, one of the doctors treating the protagonist indicates that "violence is a very horrible thing. That's what you're learning now", or another character who notes that "the problem of criminal violence is soon to be a thing of the past". Observing the film it can clearly be noted that violence is an element that forms part of its narrative and one on which *Clockwork* invites the viewer to reflect upon. However the film does not pronounce an explicit evaluation about this issue, especially with an ending that sees the antihero been pardoned of punishment. Precisely for the ambiguity of *Clockwork* about the element of violence, upon its release, it became a highly controversial film, considered an exemplary case of

gratuitous screen violence, and condemned as morally corrupt and called on for its censorship.

Unsurprisingly, having watched the film when it was released in the early 70's, Steve picks up on the element of the film that was then at the centre of the discussion. The awareness of the critical reception of the film is indicated by him: "That film was the *Clockwork Orange*, and always had mixed reviews over the years and it disappeared for a long long time because the director withdrew it from release in the UK." Yet his reflections about the violence in *Clockwork* can also be seen as furnished by his own personal experience, since he does not simply refer to the phenomenon of violence in abstract as presented in the film, but to the continuity between the depictions of violence in it and the development of a contemporary violent society, as he perceives it as the result of mediated or direct life-experiences. In his words: "I feel the childhood that I had, is totally different to the childhood that children have today, and in many ways this violence becomes part of their lives."

I suggest that Steve's appreciation for the film expressed in his account, is the result of its serving him to make sense of the transformation of society in the way he has experienced it, at least in one aspect, and the offering of the possibility to reflect upon it (and to talk about it). In this respect he says: "And I think having seen the film many many years later, the message, or the prediction made in the very late 60 s, and to what's happening today does not seem that extreme, which sort of makes the film quite relevant today... It was certainly very violent in 1969,1970, when it came out, and in fact the world was a different place back then, so it would've appeared to be more violent in itself; certainly some of the acts that are performed in the film probably don't seem that violent, if you read about them in a newspaper today you wouldn't think anything of it". The film serves as the opportunity to express a perspective on the evolution of society by allowing to place himself *then* when he first saw it and *now* that he sees it with a mature point of view.

The second film that has been experienced predominantly as a reflection about the world is *The Thin Red Line*, which Edward describes as "very philosophical" . For him, the way in which the film is related to the reality of the world is by putting in context the main event which it depicts. That is the phenomenon of war, as observed from a very particular point of view. *The Thin Red Line* tells the fictional story of the confrontation between the American and Japanese armies during the World War II in an island in the Pacific. It particularly focuses on the destiny of a unit of soldiers of the American side, as they carry out an assault on their adversaries encampment. As the viewer relates, there isn't in the film much of a progression of a story, in the classical sense of the resolution of a series events which are related by an overarching structure. Instead the film explores in detail the feelings which the soldiers experience in the different ways that they react to such extreme situation. Also, according to him, "it somehow brings in the wider context of the fact that war

doesn't just affect the men involved. It's actually, in this instance, it was an assault on nature”.

Lacking a strong narrative structure, the reflective stance is recognised by the viewer in isolated scenes which stand out for him, precisely for being perceived as transmitting a message, and not for their consequences for the development of a story. The scenes in question are formed by the juxtaposition of a series of images, which can be seen to propose the consideration of a concept to the audience. For instance, Edward refers to one scene where during a direct confrontation between the two armed forces, a shot of a soldier who strokes a plant which closes itself up, and another where a baby bird nest falls from a tree, are cut with “quite familiar war images of death and destruction and injury”. And another scene in which a shot of a Japanese soldier meditating is cut with images of his comrades getting shot and killed by an American attack.

In this sense the reflections suggested by *The Thin Red Line*, unlike in the account of *Clockwork*, occur mostly by the inferring of the viewer of certain meaning via the juxtaposition of specific images or verbal indications (which are in abundance in the form of internal dialogue), which cue him to consider that the film is proposing certain ideas. That Edward has picked up these notions which might escape someone else, if not due to a personal life experience, they are also partially given by his possession of certain cultural references. As he says, in the first place his interest in watching the film was set in him after reading a review of it, which described the film as a “zen war movie”; which in turn corresponded with his involvement at that time in Buddhism and eastern philosophy.

Another way in which he seems to make sense of the film is by using a filmic reference: the war genre film. Although no specific references to other films are given, he continuously refers to other war films, from which *The Thin Red Line* stands out for him. An example that points to his interpreting of the film for the genre it belongs to, comes in his observation: “I would thoroughly recommend, anyone who likes philosophy and war, to see this film, because it brings the two together in a way that I have never seen in another war film, and I’ve seen quite a lot. It takes the war movie genre to a completely different place...”

Taken together the experiences of Steve and Edward show that as well as having a potential to stimulate the reflections about personal life, film can also arouse the viewer's interest in thinking about the world in abstract terms. That is, the films have been primarily interpreted as having something profound to say about the world or the human existence, even though these events and issues may not be directly related to the personal life of the viewer (as in the first group of reviews). They achieve this by adopting different textual strategies: *Clockwork* explicitly problematises violence by building the narrative around it and by making statements about it through its characters, and *The Thin Red Line* cues the viewer to interpret it as dealing primarily with concepts

rather than a chain of events with the unlikely juxtaposition of images for a war film and internal dialogue.

If the viewers recognise in the films a predominantly abstract meaning, the way in which the appropriation of the screen representations are also delineated by the viewers' cultural knowledge (including the filmic), as in Edward's references to his interest in Buddhism and knowledge of other war films; and their experience of the world, as in Steve's shift in comprehension of *Clockwork* with the passing of the years and his perception of the changes in the world. This reference by Steve indicates that although the film allows him primarily to bring up and discuss the issue of the world turning violent, it also makes possible for him to place himself in that evolution of the world and talk about his own transformation along that of society: as the world turned violent from the 1970's to this day he became more aware of and concerned about this issue.

In this sense, as this element from the account of Steve indicates, even when approaching the film at an abstract level, the individual life experience as the development of philosophical frameworks are critical in the interpretation of the cinematic representation. It has been with the personal development of the reviewer after many years of having first watched *Clockwork* that he has shifted his interpretation and relation to the film: "Because, the film when I first saw it as I said it seemed a stylish film, it was full of violence, it was quite enjoyable, if you like, at the age of fifteen from that purely fairly low level. But now I look at it, and I don't see anything enjoyable about it at all, the violence is quite horrific [...]".

### **3.3 Film and its appeal to the senses**

Although the examination of the responses to *The Last* and *The Innocents* made apparent that it could have been possible to contemplate them in one of the groups identified for the way of relating the filmic and the everyday, I consider what marks their difference to bring out another dimension of the individual's relation to world via the film representation. I suggest that in their contrast with the other accounts, the two experiences complement the functions which have been proposed. While the three groups identified point to a way of gaining an objective or subjective understanding of the world which reduces the uncertainty about the things which occur in the surroundings or the personal experiences, the accounts on *The Last* and *The Innocents* point in a different direction.

For Polis in his experience of *The Innocents*, unlike the other reviewers who refer to making sense of the world, points out that his interest in the film is that it speaks to him at the level of his "love for things that are unexplained in cinema" and refers to it mostly in terms of provoking a feeling in the viewer. For him it is a film that "shocks", "stuns", "affects", and "haunts" the

viewer, as his experience of showing it to other people along the years has proved it. Although contextualised in his account by the circumstances of its viewing, most of his references and enjoyment of it are given in terms of its value as a film, as a cinematic experience.

*The Innocents*, like the already referred *Ghost*, takes as its main theme the notion of afterlife in the form of spirits which somehow inhabit the world of the living. Based on a novella by Henry James, it tells the story of a middle aged woman, Miss Giddens, who gets hired as the governess for a pair of orphaned kids, whose uncle does not want to be responsible any longer for their care and upbringing. As she arrives to their house and during the time she spends there, Miss Giddens forms the belief that the children are possessed by the spirits of two adults who are continuing through them a romantic relationship which they held when they were alive. Increasingly distressed by this, Miss Giddens, obsesses with helping to somehow exorcise the spirits from the children.

In contrast to *Ghost*, *The Innocents* develops the theme of spirits in an inconclusive form. From the development of its events it is not possible to say if indeed what Miss Giddens experiences is something supernatural, or as it also can be seen to suggest, that it is all the result of the woman's imagination or psychological problems. In different occasions the doubt about the nature of the events is indicated by the confrontation between the characters: Miles and Flora (the kids) will tell Miss Giddens that she is crazy, that it is all in her head, while she keeps seeing ghost apparitions and insisting that the kids need to be helped. As the viewer puts it: "things are definitely sinister and the kids are definitely precocious but it is ultimately left up to the viewer to decide whether this is a ghost story or whether it's just a portrayal of a repressed woman losing her mind".

Characterised by the ambiguity of its story and the presence of isolated shocking scenes as Polis indicates, I suggest that the experience of *The Innocents* points to film functioning as a sensory experience, which shocks and surprises the viewer. That is, as Martin Barker indicates in his research of audiences (1997:146), a film is also an opportunity to be physically affected by it, to be shocked by it. He notes that "the key to this kind of pleasure is not to intellectualize" (1997:146) but to simply let go and allow the film to do something with oneself. It is not what it says about the way the world operates, but the enjoyment it produces for its sensory qualities.

With a special interest in cinema, "as a filmmaker" himself, Polis's involvement with the film and the transcendence he perceives in it, is how exemplary he thinks *The Innocents* is of a kind of film that proposes another kind of interaction to the viewer: "I don't necessarily like to be told what is going on and what to make of characters, and *The Innocents* does this perfectly" It is an open-ended story that captures the attention of the viewer and invites him to consider different possibilities as to what is happening to the characters.

This kind of considerations by Polis in the sense of experiencing the film as a way to be

sensorily affected by it, independently of its intellectual effect on the respondent, is also present (although not as the central element) in other viewer responses. For instance Chris refers that while *Requiem* succeeds at conveying a message about the risks of falling into addictive behaviour, the way it does it is by making a strong emotional impact on the viewer; he says that it “gives you one hell of a big kick in the nuts as how the things could end, where they could lead...” Or as in the response to *The Thin Red Line*, to which Edward refers to as creating an atmosphere that surrounds the viewer.

The second experience which can be markedly seen as pointing to the enjoyment of feeling the events which it depicts and less to what it reveals about the world, is that of *The Last King of Scotland*. Based on a novel, the film is set in 1970 and tells the story of doctor Garrigan, a fictional character who eager to embark in a life adventure chooses to live and work in a remote and unknown location, which turns out to be Uganda. During his stay in there, doctor Garrigan becomes intimate of the character of Idi Amin, who is based on the historical figure of the African dictator, and who befriends him and hires him as his personal physician and close advisor. Then on the film focuses, from the perspective of the doctor, on the dramatisation of events of Amin's infamous rule.

Although in his account of the film, Nikhil does refer to the fact that it is historically based and to the importance and reach of Amin's dictatorship, his account can be seen not primarily oriented to the film *revealing* something about the events it represents or inviting to *reflect* on their consequences or transcendence, but to the mode in which *The Last* makes the viewer *feel* they are at a certain time and place. An indication of this mode of relating to the film, can be found in his reference to the scene which introduces the character of Amin : “you literally feel you are around them, you literally find them around you”.

Relating to the film for the feeling it produces of being in another place and time, Nikhil values it for its ability to depict its events with a sense of authenticity, be that transmitted through the camerawork (“they must have used some filter to get to that 1970's mood”), the music (“it is quite hard to find a movie that will show the lifestyle... not just through its pictures but also through its music”), or Forrest Whitaker's performance (“I never felt like its Forrest Whitaker, it's someone from the people”). As with *The Innocents*, the viewer refers mostly to filmic elements, which he considers for the way they render the events realistically.

As in the experience of *The Innocents*, the stimulation of intellect does not feature as the main function, against what one might anticipate from knowing that he film is based on a historical character and events. If Nikhil acknowledges his awareness about the historical Amin and the possibilities of the film allowing others to “know what people suffered at that time”, his emphasis on the realism of the film however does not point to the possibility of engaging with knowing or

reflecting about the dictatorship of Amin, but just to experience the thrill of being somewhere else living an adventure. He states that it is a film that he recommends since “ it's a historic based movie but there is always an adventure, a thrilling part of it because of this character of James McAvoy”.

Thus Nikhil picks up on the film's construction of the story as an exciting adventure, via the device of the adventurous foreigner who embarks on the journey and who is largely unaware of and disinterested in the consequences of his involvement with Amin. “He is always up to do something adventurous”, as Nikhil says. Like the events for the protagonist, the film does not seem to register in the viewer for the relevance of the historic event which it dramatises, but as a source of “thrill” and joy of feeling in an unknown place and time.

It can be noted that Nikhil's reading of the film points to the acceptance of the point of view which emerges from the device of the fictional character. If the character may serve to facilitate the viewer's engagement with the film and it's enjoyment as an exciting adventure with elements of suspense, it functions too as an obstacle rather than a catalyst for a critical thinking. The insertion of doctor Garrigan, as it emerges from Nikhil's account, distorts the sense of the reality which the film aims to depict.

With the mix of factual elements from Amin's regime with the device of doctor Garrigan *The Last King of Scotland* appears to explore an ideological view on the African dictatorship. In this respect, James McAvoy, who plays the character of Garrigan, has stated that “[t]his film is not just about Idi. It's not just about Uganda. It's about the way that Britain, and maybe the rest of the world [...] looked at Uganda because I'm very much Britain's looking glass in the film” (Robertson, 2006). Thus all throughout doctor Garrigan remains oblivious to the evident consequences of the incompetence and brutality of the dictator, which he is able to witness in his close relationship with Amin. Instead he seems more interested in indulging in womanizing, partying and enjoying the favouring of Amin. Furthermore, he becomes unwillingly an accomplice of the criminal activity of the Ugandan regime and only when his own life is compromised he escapes back to Scotland.

In this sense, Nikhil's interpretation of *The Last King of Scotland* points to the film's *equivocal* positioning around its factual events. It allows for its interpretation as an uncritical exploration of a historical period, with the adoption of the perspective of the coloniser. The viewer is invited then to get *close* to Idi Amin's rule via the device of the fictional character, but not to engage in a critical understanding of it, if s/he is to identify with a point of view that appears to be oriented instead towards arousing a sense of adventure and suspense.

The same notion of feeling like in another place, although not as evident as Nikhil's account, is also present in other of the reviews, as in Matthew's of *Motorcycle Diaries*. Based too on a historical event and centred on the journey of a character across unknown territory, the viewer



points to the feel of authenticity of its depiction and its appeal to the sensorial. Part of his primary form of relating to the film, as revealing something unknown to him about the world, he indicates is given by the feeling provoked by the film of wanting to be with the characters in their journey: “the dialog between the characters almost make you feel like, you wish you were in a trip with them, you wish you were buddies with Che and his friend... you wish you were there with them and laughing along with their jokes as well, which is a very effective piece of filmmaking to think about it”.

Together the experiences of *The Innocents* and *The Last* serve to observe that film has a direct appeal to the senses, and the possibility of engaging with it primarily at this sensorial level. Bringing closer the viewer to the materiality of the world, it is capable of making the individual feel like being in another place and time. Film as Linden says, appears to be like our mode of being-in-the-world, with this sense of vividness and immediacy, to the extent that we can forget that it is after all an abstraction which we perceive as authentic representation of the world (Linden, 1970:72) If over the basis of this ability the viewer can recognise a continuity between the everyday and the filmic that allows for an intellectual involvement with the film, they show that the sensorial experience alone is a source of pleasure for the viewer. Polis's and Nikhil's account are indicative of another way of relating to film, which derives pleasure from wilfully being *done* something by the film.

### **3.4 The viewers' responses and the power of film**

Starting out from the fact that the viewers' responses analysed in this work correspond to films which have featured prominently in the individuals' lives, it can be said that their cases as a whole are already illustrative of the potential of film to constitute more than a casual, irrelevant form of entertainment. They indicate that film can, as in the cases here considered, represent a serious opportunity for the viewer to engage in a meaningful relationship and be the occasion of an experience that can be talked about and reflected upon in detail.

To analyse the source of the relevance of these experiences, this work has adopted a phenomenological conception of film, which conceives it as another method to access reality, just like science, or other art-forms. That is, it is understood that the experience of film is directly related to our way of understanding the world (which is informed by other multiple sources), and conversely, that we draw from the filmic for our world-view. When viewing a film we are not in the presence of images and sounds, but shifting from reaching out through them to the objects and the events they represent, and back to our awareness of their status as a representation of reality.

On the basis of that notion the focus has been in observing the mode in which the representation of the films has been connected with off-screen references, specifically at the

instance of the appropriation of the filmic world. In other words, it has been observed in which way film, as it has been contemplated in the theory, represents a force to illuminate our perception of everyday life and to transform our world view; and how our reception of films is shaped by our own world-views.

According to the analysis which has been presented, the responses to the films vary in the form that they articulate the reality of the film with that of the historic world we inhabit. Across the responses I have identified three basic modes in which this occurs: where film acts as a *reminder* of a personal experience, film as *revelation* about the world, and film acting as a *reflection* about the world or the human condition. Separately I have considered film functioning as an appeal to the senses.

Where film functions as a reminder of a personal experience the responses are characterised by tracing a connection between a significant event of the life of the person with an event in the narrative of the film, on the basis of the perception that they are comparable with one another. Having established the resemblance, the film seems to provide coherence to the personal experience, according to the place and meaning of the event in the film with which the personal experience has been linked. In the experiences in which film functions as a revelation about the world, the viewers have rescued a reference of the film to an element of the culture in which the film has been produced, and appropriated it to inform their decisions on how to act in the world. In the third group of responses film functions as a way to reflect about issues about the world and human existence.

These observations derived from the analysis of the viewers' experience, can be seen to correspond to certain extent with the theoretical considerations by Linden. As he sees it, film is a subjective/objective experience which has a revelatory power that consists of the fulfillment of three main functions: reveal the circumstances of the time in which it is produced, reveal the fleeting detail of things and persons, and function as an invitation to see the familiar in a different manner to that we are accustomed to (Linden, 1970:83) The findings of this work can be seen as pointing like Linden's to film operating over either on the objective and subjective dimensions of reality.

In two of the groups I have identified, where film is a reminder about the personal and where it invites to reflect on issues in abstract, as in Linden's considerations, can be seen as providing another way of thinking about that which has been experienced or what is known about the world, to challenge (or confirm) our mode of interpreting it. That is, film can be seen in both instances as a mode of philosophising on our perceptions and ordinary involvements in the world, to view them anew. While the function here identified of film as revealing something about the historical world,

more clearly corresponds to Linden's reference of film revealing the circumstance of the time in which it is produced. That is, film as reflection of the culture and also of the materiality which it represents, in virtue of the assumption that its images and sounds refer to objects of the world which are "out there" in the world we inhabit.

The objective operating of film – as in Linden – in the accounts where film *reveals* something that was unknown prior to watching it, corresponds to Kracauer's recognised potential of film to engage the individual with her/his surroundings. Film, he suggests, fixes the culture – materiality of the world – that produces it to open the possibility for the viewer to explore details that were unknown. As Kracauer has it, film has the potential to reveal material events which may elude our observation: things too small for the individual to perceive them as the details or skin texture of a face, too big as the multitude of individuals in the big city crowds, the transient events of the kind which are bound to take place in the street, and things that remain normally unseen by the individual due to habit and prejudice. (Kracauer, 1960:46-53) For Kracauer the individual is incapable of perceiving certain everyday phenomena in their physical existence, whereas film can succeed at conveying them through cinematic technique and devices like the close-up, the long shot, the slow and accelerated motion.

In addition, the analysis of the data points to the second instance in which Kracauer, as George Linden, sees film functioning in terms of the reality which it reveals for the viewer: its subjective dimension. For him, beyond the materiality of the everyday which it captures, film can act as an invitation to think in a new way about that which we already know. As he says it: "[the familiar] we just take it for granted without giving it a thought. Intimate faces, streets we walk day by day, the house we live in – all these things are part of us like our skin, and because we know them by heart we do not know them with the eye" (Kracauer, 1960:55)

Film, indicates Kracauer, may confront the spectator with a new perception of a well known situation with the presentation of elements that compose it but are ordinarily taken for granted. The responses are indicative of this potential of film to rearrange the individual's perception about the ongoings of the everyday, of the making sense of what has been experienced at the most personal level or one's understanding of the world. In the words of Kracauer, "film exposes to view a world never seen before, [...] which cannot be found because it is within everybody's reach. Strange as it may seem, although streets, faces, railway stations, etc., lie before our eyes, they have remained largely invisible so far [...] physical nature has been persistently veiled by ideologies" (Kracauer, 1960:299-300) Film may assist us in discovering the material world and bring us close to our everyday surroundings.

Operating as an objective or subjective tool as the analysis of the accounts suggests, film

allows the individual to remain in touch with her/his immediate surroundings, making her/his life more significant. As Kracauer suggests, the spectator “misses life”, and is attracted to film since this gives him “the illusion of partaking of life in its fullness” (Kracauer, 1960:169)

### **3.5 The viewers’ responses and the forces of modernity**

Implicit in what has been commented on the form of making sense by the participants is their positioning as social individuals, in virtue of which their approach to and appropriation of the films is mediated by the interaction with others (with whom the films have been commented, or recommended by) and the cultural knowledge which they possess. To further explore the individuated responses and inscribe them in the wider context of society, I now consider how these experiences of film can be seen as emerging from the transformation of experience by modernity pervading in the everyday life.

I explore some defining characteristics across the responses to observe them as distinctively modern. I suggest that beyond their apparently exclusively anecdotal value, these concrete experiences carry elements that mark them as illustrative of the transformations of the everyday in modern life. To observe this I propose the reflection on two aspects that emerge from the responses with regards to the fate of the individual in modern society: the explicit concern for the nature of modern experience as it is proposed by some of the films and understood by the respondents, and the relation of the film experiences with the search for ontological security as understood by Anthony Giddens.

#### **3.5.1 Concerns for the individual and her/his interaction with modern society**

The element of the modern in the viewers’ responses can be observed in the contemplation of a few illustrative concerns underlying the participants’ accounts of the films, centred on different aspects of the experience of contemporary society as developed in the theory of modernity. I suggest these can be seen as images reflecting on the modifications of experience that arise from concrete transformations in society. The illustrative issues brought up by the respondents are: the loss of intentionality of modern institutions, the capitalist notion of time, and the transformation of the individuals’ form of establishing personal relationships.

Underlying these considerations is the recognition of film as a cultural product, in the sense of Simmel’s notion of culture, invested with the emotions, ideas, aspirations and contradictions, of the society in which it is produced. Additionally, along Simmel’s conception, the identification of these concerns serves to situate film as a cultural product which objectifies contemporary concerns on human experience, and observe how these concerns are drawn (back) into the subjective life of the

viewers that make sense of them. In other words, it allows reflection on how film mediates the nature of modern experience for the audience, and how the concern for modern life permeates their interpretations.

One explicit concern for the individual in modern society from the films, and as understood by the viewer, emerges from the film *A Clockwork Orange* as experienced by Steve. Engaging with the film at an abstract level, he identifies two main themes developed in the story of *Clockwork*: of society becoming increasingly violent and the dilemma which the therapy applied to Alex represents. The latter of these themes which he identifies from the film, I suggest points to the centre of the conflictual nature of the interaction between the individual and modern society.

The conflict, as Steve indicates, arises from the story in the film, when Alex - the protagonist- is caught by the authorities and in exchange for his prison sentence undergoes the Ludovico treatment which prevents him from being violent. A drug assisted method, the therapy consists of a form of classical conditioning that forces him to respond in a non-violent form under any circumstance. According to the viewer, the important issue which this event raises is whether it matters that Alex does not choose not to be violent but is forced to react in that manner. Steve notes: "He's not now being a nuisance, he's not hurting anyone anymore... The fact that he's got now no choice, do we care? Do we really care? Is it important? And that's really the message behind the film".

This can be seen as a profound reflection expressed in casual terms, which points to the conflictive relationship of the individual and society as it has evolved in modernity. As Georg Simmel understands it, the development of culture - which includes society's institutions that regulate the individuals' interactions- is the result of humanity's desire to gain control of its own progress beyond the capacities of any of the individuals alone. However this relationship, he points out, is inherently conflictual, as the objectifications which constitute culture do not always coincide with the development of the human subjectivity; and that relationship, he contends, in modern society reaches the point where the equilibrium between the two is lost. For Simmel this is the result of material production's loss of sight of its aim of improving human life.

Following Simmel it can be suggested that Steve's interpretation of the film points to the conflict between the improvement of human life and the development of modern institutions. This conflict in the film corresponds to the opposition between the legal, scientific, and political systems, on one hand; and the psychological and moral well-being of the protagonist (and his victims), on the other. In short, the problem which the film is touching upon is that even though in pragmatic terms the individual does no longer represent a threat to the social order, the cure he receives denies him his capacity of moral choice, and the negation of him as a person. There is a conflict between

the true improvement of the individual – the protagonist – and the requirements of the institutions of society – the prison authorities, the scientists, and the governor.

Furthermore the conflict that *Clockwork* poses is emphasised by the purposes which the process of rehabilitation pursues in the story of the film. This is manifested in the scene after Alex goes through the treatment and is deemed a “free man”. To prove the effectiveness of the conditioning method, he is presented for a demonstration before a selected audience composed of the prison authorities, a committee of scientists, and the priest of the centre. Once verified the success of the rehabilitation, since the protagonist cannot avoid being violent, the film raises the issue of the conflict in very particular terms, in an exchange between two characters.

After the demonstration the priest expresses that the treatment represents a problem since it makes of Alex a creature who has no moral choice that acts simply out of fear for physical pain. To the concern of the priest, the film opposes the view of the authorities in the film, in the words of another character who explains that the issue of Alex's loss of choice are “subtleties” that the system is not concerned with, as neither is it with the “motive” or “higher ethics”, but exclusively with cutting down the crime and relieving the congestion of the prisons. Yet the character states: “the point is that it works”.

In this sense the issue which the film raises can be linked to the conflict between the individual and modern life where relationships become increasingly mediated by its institutions, and these have lost their ultimate aim of improving the quality of life of the individuals. This is as from the perspective stemming from Husserl's work, which views the institutions of modern society, including science, technology and economy, as having lost their connection with the individual, who is forgotten as the reference of the actions of society. Or as Paci argues, when the institutions with their origins in the life-world, have this obscured and forgotten, and their actions become placed over and against the individual.

*Clockwork* makes of Alex's liberty to live in society independent of his mental health and ability to live with others, which become the “subtleties” the character speaks of, and instead comes to be dictated by pragmatic considerations like the lowering of the crime rate, and the overcrowding of the prisons. Yet the institutions, as the character, claim that things “work”, according to some criteria unrelated to the fulfillment of their functions. As presented in the film the individual ceases to be treated as a subject, and only as something that represents a statistic and other administrative criteria unrelated to his personal development. In terms of Paci, it is a manifestation of the negation of the subject in a modern society that renders men into abstractions and abstract categories are treated as subjects (Paci, 1972:385).

At the end the film points to the failure of the decisions made by the institutions about the

protagonist's reincorporation, when upon his release occurs a reversal of roles that turns Alex into the victim of society. He is abused by his former fellow gang members turned into police officers and by two of his victims from the first part of the film, to the point of driving him to attempt to commit suicide. Furthermore the incompetence of the institutions in *Clockwork* is crowned by recovery of Alex from the Ludovico treatment, to reestablish his old violent self and free him to live in society, again following external criteria to their aims. This occurs after Alex has become in the eyes of the media and the public opinion a victim of the government and its methods, which to regain popularity decides to hold in him in high respect and prize him for his "suffering".

The reflection over society as this one picked up on by Steve from *Clockwork* can be seen as indicative of the awareness by the viewer of the situatedness of the film in modern society, and the continuity of its themes with the reality of the everyday. On the basis of it, Steve recognises it as a film that has something to say about the way society has developed and enables him to discuss his own concern for the problematic of this development. However at the end, the dilemma which Steve identifies in relation to the conflictual relationship between the individual and modern institutions, he considers needs to be resolved in favour of society and its institutions: "I mean, Alex and his gang are very violent and they don't question this at all, so there's no point trying to, I guess, give them any other type of treatment other than the treatment that they get to prevent them from being like they are" Which may occur since *Clockwork* does not explore the reasons why Alex and his gang are so violent, they are presented as being already violent.

In another of the accounts we can observe an indication of a further issue related to modern society and individual experience. This emerges from Jimena's response to *Cast Away* in her identification of her experience of struggle in the city of London with the main events in the film. One of the elements which she raises, although does not explicitly develop, is the opposition which the film makes between the modern individual and society. This is manifest in her understanding of *Cast Away* as a film "about a guy whose life is always ruled by the clock, and suddenly he had to survive on a crash landing on a deserted island and he had to learn to survive."

This image which Jimena invokes to summarise *Cast Away*, is indicative of a theme suggested by the movie. Through it we can recognise the opposition which underlies the film between the character of Chuck and his life in the civilised world and during his stay in the island. Before the plane accident that sees him as the sole survivor, the protagonist leads a comfortable life, fitting conveniently with the requirements and offerings of modern society, a situation which is challenged during his period of isolation. From this opposition I suggest that the film is inviting us to reflect on the nature of individual experience in modernity, as Jimena points out.

One of the most clear terms in which this reflection is proposed is in relation to the notion of

the experience of time. During the brief period that *Cast Away* presents us with Chuck's way of living in Memphis he is shown well adjusted to life in society, with a successful career, a social life, and having just proposed to his girlfriend. Furthermore he can be seen not only as comfortably living in civilisation, but in fact as a symbol of capitalist society. In his role of the manager of an international package delivery company, he serves to uphold one of modern society's central characteristic: the development of a system of mass communications that enables the reduction of the barriers of space and time. This factor of modern society which different authors going back to Baudelaire point out markedly transforms the way the individual experiences the everyday increasingly as temporarily fleeting and injecting it with a frantic rhythm.

We can find a clear indication of this embodiment in the scene which introduces the protagonist. In a speech at a station in Russia of the company he works for, Chuck declares time as their most important value: "Time rules over us without mercy. Not caring if we're healthy or ill. Hungry or drunk. Russian, American, beings from Mars. It's like a fire, it could either destroy us or it could keep us warm [...] we live or we die by the clock. We never turn our back on it and we never ever allow ourselves the sin of losing track of time!" Furthermore, his preoccupation to conform to society's life rhythm, takes over the organisation of his private life, as back in the US his encounters with his fiancée and social commitments are also determined by the dictations of time. As Jimena puts it, the movie indicates that "his life is always ruled by the clock".

Well adjusted to life in modern society, soon Chuck's life experiences a dramatic turn when the plane goes down and he must survive by himself in the island. It becomes apparent that the requirements and possibilities of the environment are radically different and the notions which were central to his life become irrelevant. The man who was surrounded by technology and incessant human activity is now completely alone. As the viewer indicates, he then has to learn how to live in the island, a completely different environment. Then he goes through the process of engaging with physical activities to guarantee his survival and a change of his understanding about the world and his own existence.

One sense in which this transformation occurs is in his experience of the passage of time. In his exile it is apparent that Chuck's devotion to living by the clock is not only impossible to uphold as he has no working clock with him, but also totally unnecessary. With no other person around with whom to make valid the conventions of a standardised measure of time, his central notion of how the world operates ceases to make sense and becomes clearly irrelevant to the developments of his everyday. If he still makes considerations about the daily passage of time, these are now linked with his practical observations on the changes of the environment, for instance the modifications of the sea level, which are in turn related to his possibilities of fishing, sailing, etc. Time becomes



directly linked with his possibilities of survival and his immediate surroundings and not as per capitalist society's notion of universal time (and space), which Anthony Giddens observes, separates the experience of the individual from its local context to integrate it into society's rationalised organisation of the world (Giddens, 1991:17).

Giddens indicates that in all pre-modern cultures the calculation of time was always linked to that of place: “No one could tell the time of the day without reference to other socio-spatial markers: ‘when’ was almost universally either connected with ‘where’ or identified by regular natural occurrences” (Giddens, 1991b:17) An indication of this other form of calculating time by the protagonist can be found in the sequence in which he takes on building a raft to escape from the island, for which he takes into account the changes in the sea level to have any chances of surviving. Talking to the imaginary friend he has made of a volleyball, he explains to it that he must aim to take ship by March or April which increases their best chances “for high tides and offshore breezes”. And in another instance he remarks that they still have time left to complete the raft: “We do. We have time. Look! The wind is still blowing in from the west”.

In this sense, it can be said that Chuck goes from making a living in society by battling with the conventional measuring of time and space, to live from procuring himself the satisfaction of all individuals' most basic needs: of food, shelter and clothing, with which his notion of the passage of time have become directly related. Chuck's experience of transformation which Jimena refers to, can be seen in a way as the realisation of the frailty and artificiality of the mode of subsuming the individual's experience of the world to conventional notions such as the measuring of time.

An indication of the realisation by the character of the contrast between his notion of the operating of the world in the civilisation, and in the island, comes after the four long years of being deserted. While carrying out the building of the raft he expresses with an ironic tone to the volleyball on the importance of time: “That is not much time. But we... we live and die by the time. Don't we? Now let's not commit the sin of turning our back on time. (He laughs). I know. I know.” This comes in as clear reference to the above mentioned speech at the opening of the film. In the mode it is expressed and the circumstances of his isolation, his same words now acquire a new meaning, since time as he knew it has ceased to make sense.

This way, departing from Jimena's account that picks up on the motif of time in *Cast Away*, we can think of the film as a reflection of the self in the context of society and outside of it. If maybe not a full-blown critique of capitalism, it can be seen as an invitation for the viewer to think what is truly indispensable for her/his survival and the value of her/his interactions with others; and conversely, how assumptions held vital, like Chuck's devotion to make every second count are nothing more than conventions linked with a way of conceiving and organizing the world, and not

inherent to it and truly indispensable.

The third of the viewers' responses which points to the theme of the individual and modern society is to the film *You've Got Mail*. In his experience of the film Kevin tells of having his life changed by it, since it allowed him to discover an aspect of the world which he incorporated into his life to alter the course of it. The way *You've Got Mail* changed his life was with "the idea of the technologies they were using" -the characters in the film, who establish a love relationship by means of the Internet. While Kevin does not elaborate either on the theme of the individual and modern society, I suggest that this is implicit in the form he relates to the film.

The point of departure to consider this theme from Kevin's account, is his reference to the benefit which the use of the Internet represents for establishing a love relationship of another kind, as opposed to a face to face interaction, as the film has shown him: "you can really get to know them, rather than just being taken by their looks or whatever, you would actually get inside this person's head and get to know them in a more personal way". The relevance of this experience of the film is the mediation which the film seems to perform for the viewer's appreciation of the development of a characteristic phenomenon of modern society and its impact on the nature of human relationships. As Anthony Giddens indicates in his reflections on the advent of modernity, science and technology in modern society have signified a transformation of the most intimate aspects of daily experience, and that extends, as the movie shows, to the formation of personal relationships (Giddens, 1991:87).

For Giddens, modernity signifies a modification of the individual's personal relationships, which are significantly different from the interpersonal ties in pre-modern societies. He notes that while for instance in traditional contexts the intimate relationship was anchored by conditions of social and economic life, in modernity the tendency is towards the eradication of these external involvements and its focus on love as the basic motive (Giddens, 1991:89). That is, the love relationship becomes centred on the emotional satisfaction which it delivers with the contact of each other. Furthermore, Giddens notes that while physical proximity is often necessary for intimate relationships to develop, in modern societies new opportunities open up for the individual: "the lonely hearts column, computer dating and other forms of introduction service demonstrate well enough that plural choice is easy to achieve if one is prepared to shed the last vestiges of traditional ways of doing things". (Giddens, 1991:87)

In this process of transformation then, as in other spheres of individual experience, technology serves to disembody the relationship from the local context and rearticulate it across a global configuration of space and time. It serves as the instrument for modernity's tendency of fragmenting experience by promoting the inclusion of diverse and remote forms of interaction that

extend the phenomenal world of the individual beyond the habitual settings and people of the local context.

This opposition between the traditional form of interacting with others in a traditional face to face love relationship and the tendency of modern experience to open up new opportunities with distant relationships, is manifest in the film in the opposition which it establishes between the face to face interactions and the mediated by the Internet. One, the direct interaction, is depicted as determined by the appearances of the characters, and the difficulties of moving beyond them to really *know* the other person; and the Internet-mediated as allowing to reach out to their feelings and ideas. Furthermore, the contrast between the two is emphasised by the fact that both types of interactions, direct and mediated, occur simultaneously between the same two characters.

Unaware that they have met each other and developed a conflictual face-to-face relationship, the character of Kathleen Kelly and Joe Fox, have also established a relationship with one another online. Their unmediated experience is determined by the direct confrontation as competitors in the book business which culminates with the company owned by Joe driving Kathleen's out of business. In contrast, in their email exchanges and online chat-room conversations they find their intellectual affinities, and become increasingly attached to each other at an emotional level. A deeper kind of relationship as the viewer notes. The direct interactions appear clouded by their local circumstances (mostly economic), while the Internet-mediated, as Giddens observes is the tendency of modern love relationships, provides them with satisfaction for their affinity at the emotional and the intellectual levels.

The affirmative vision on the incorporation of technology in the everyday is evident in *You've Got*, since at the end it is the connection established online which prevails and finds its continuity into the their face to face interactions. The technology-mediated interaction triumphs over all differences, including the main conflict which arose between the characters from their business rivalry and which had as a consequence driving her out of business. However *You've Got* does not seem particularly interested that Kathleen lost to her eventual partner the small business which has been in her family for forty-two years. "Closing the store is the brave thing to do... you are daring to imagine that you could have a different life", tells to her another character, downplaying the transcendence of the loss.

From this and other indications it can be further argued that the film presents the opposition, from the point of view of the pervasiveness of technology in the everyday, between a traditional mode of experiencing the world and the forces of modernity transforming them. Kathleen embodies the vestiges of the traditions in modern society, administering a business inherited from her mother which although oriented to economic profit, establishes more personal relationships with its

customers; and Joe Fox represents the values of capitalist modernity, with his ever-expanding chain of bookstores.

At the end the “big bad wolf”, as one character calls him, wins the business confrontation, as the Internet relationship wins over the direct one. Thus in all, it can be said that *You've Got Mail*, in its thematisation of the impact of technology shaping modern individual experiences, holds a markedly positive view on the incorporation of technology in the everyday, capable in the film to happily resolve the tensions between the traditional and the modern. That Kevin has picked up on this aspect from the film, may be indicative of the centrality that the Internet technology was adopting at the time of the release of the film, before it would irreversibly transform our daily interactions as in more recent years, and how it mediates it for the viewer's understanding. Or possibly that the ideological meanings of the film that derive from the product placement deal between Warner Brothers and AOL, have been accepted by the viewer.

### **3.5.2 Film and the search for ontological security**

To further characterise the viewers' experiences as decidedly modern, I now make some considerations on the previously noted functions of film in the access to the ordinary world and their link with the individual's search for *ontological security* in contemporary society. This is understood from the perspective of Anthony Giddens's theorizing on modernity, a period which he characterises as a series of transformations which radically alter the daily social life and affect the most personal aspects of individual experience (Giddens, 1991a:1) One of these aspects, in which he focuses, is on how these transformations at an institutional level impact on people's everyday construction of a sense of continuity in the surroundings and the self.

According to him modernity is characterised by a series of structural processes, including the standardisation of the sense of space and time that provides modern social organisation with the conditions for the rationalised organisation of the world; mechanisms of disembedding like money and the institutionalisation of relationships which “lift out” the social relations from their local context; and a sense of reflexivity which arises from the other two processes which cut the orientation of human's actions according to the community traditions as in previous forms of social organisation (Giddens, 1991a:16-21) . The consequence of this for the individual is that s/he can no longer orient her/his actions, or anchor her/his beliefs, according to the traditional criteria of premodern cultures (in relation to a kinship system, the local community, religious cosmology, or habit). In modernity, says Giddens, none of these forces of ontological security have a comparable importance (Giddens, 1991b:101-105)

In modernity the individual cannot rely for making sense of the world on the authority that

tradition represented and which pervaded many aspects of social life. Instead for the modern individual, the notions of the world and the self emerge as a reflexive project for which s/he is responsible. S/he must embark on a permanent search for meaning, to establish continuity with their world around, the sense of their place in the world, of their relationships with other individuals, and of their own actions. This search for meaning runs against what he defines as a fundamental psychic problem in our times: “Personal meaninglessness - the feeling that life has nothing worthwhile to offer” (Giddens, 1991a:9).

Yet viewed from a dialectical perspective the erosion of pre-modern frames of reference for understanding oneself and the world, represents too a form of liberation for the individual to fulfill their unique character and special potentialities, as opposed to having to conform to conducting their existence and model their beliefs according to the pre-given notions of tradition. In modernity the individual has the opportunity to choose how to conduct their life and what to believe in. As Giddens notes, in modernity “we are what we make of ourselves” (1991a:75)

In the context of this conception of modernity and of the individual's permanent search for sense, film as the mass media can be seen as another form of experiencing the world that brings before the individual the representation of events that provides her/him with elements of reference for their formation of sense of self and of the meaning of the world. They offer to the individual notions that help to consolidate her/his identity, to interrogate it, to allow the appropriation of the past and the anticipation of a future (Giddens, 1991a:75-76) As Roger Dickinson following Giddens, argues, instead of effects of the media, it is more helpful to think of it as a source of possibilities, guides, or recommendations for social behaviour (Dickinson, 1998:257)

Viewed from Giddens's perspective of the continuous search by the individual for ontological security, the findings of this work on the way in which people relate film to the ordinary world, are as a whole indicative of the influence of mediated experience in the ongoing process in which the individual engages to form a coherent and consistent notion of reality. As much as film and the media in general belong to the globalizing tendencies of modernity, the film-mediated experience appears too as a form of integration that brings the distant event or the different perspective into the everyday consciousness. As Giddens points out, the media are also part of a unifying force, against its disgregating features (Giddens, 1991a:27).

This use of film in modern society as a source on how to act in the world, in face of the weakening of traditional criteria of premodern cultures, is manifest in the importance which the respondents assign to the films, making of them memorable experiences and source of meaning in their lives. The perception of the relevance of film for the search of ontological security is clearly manifest for instance in the account of Kevin, who perceives the film *You've Got Mail* as a partial

cause of the destiny of his life: “I thank the show and I thank God for bringing us together the way they did”, he says, placing the guiding force of film in comparable importance to the religious beliefs guiding his life.

From the potential of film recognised in the responses we can observe the permanent involvement of the viewer in constructing and adjusting her/his notion of the social and the individual, by confirming, challenging, or incorporating from the events in the films, to their taken-for-granted conceptions of how these normally operate. That is, as in Giddens’s conception, the film experience points to answers from which the viewers derive an ontological understanding of external reality and personal identity (Giddens, 1991a:47) They allow the viewers to be familiar with objects and events outside the immediate settings of sensory involvement. (Giddens, 1991a:47)

Instances of this occurring in relation to expanding the individual awareness of the world can be observed in the responses pointing to film as revealing something about the composition of the world in a distant place, as in the viewer’s response to *Motorcycle Diaries*. In it, as has been observed the viewer has interacted with the film to challenge his conception of the world, informed by the settings through which he habitually moves. As in Giddens’ notion, film expands the phenomenal world, penetrating it by distant influences. The same can be found in the response to the film *You’ve Got Mail*, expanding the viewer’s knowledge of the use of technology for personal relationships.

But perhaps the most clear suggestions of the incidence of the mediated experience of film and its relevance in contemporary society corresponds to the responses that point to their use for the consolidation of a sense of self. These patent indications of Giddens's notion of the formation of a self-identity in modernity, as informed by the film representation, occur in relation to different existential concerns which the individual may experience in the contemporary world (Giddens, 1991a:74-80)

One way this occurs is shown by the responses in which film is related to a significant personal experience. These can be seen corresponding to Giddens’s recognition of the concern by the individual in the contemporary world to consolidate a sense of identity by ascribing it to the development of a trajectory. Most clearly the responses to *Cast Away* and *Ghost*, show the individuals’ attempt to trace and rework significant episodes in their lives and view them in the form of a past that gives way to a future, according to the coherence which the narrative of the film provides. That is, the isolated event is viewed as having continuity in the future.

For instance Jimena's mode of relating to *Cast Away*, illustrates this form of consolidation of a sense of self, with a significant event of her personal experience interpreted in terms of what is yet to come. As a fragmented event in her life, of the isolation and struggle in a foreign place, via the

experience of the film can be assimilated as an event of the past that allows her to think about what the future might bear. To think of "... what the tide could bring?", as the protagonist of the film expresses.

In an explicit manifestation of the working of the experience of the film into the narrative of his life, Matthew expresses this contemporary concern for thinking of the project of the self as a trajectory and in relation to mediated experiences: "And someone asked me the other day 'why Spanish?' and I could list a bunch of reasons you know, there's a bunch of fantastic reasons to learn Spanish, it's a great language, but after the conversation I looked back and I realised that it was actually the movie *The Motorcycle Diaries*, that is what triggered that change" As Giddens maintains there is in the individual the conscious reflexive stance to build the self-identity for which s/he draws from different sources, including the mediated experiences (in this case the filmic). As Matthew says he engages in "looking back" into past live events attempting to work out how they have given place to a "certain direction" in his life.

This response is also suggestive of another concern that Giddens notes in the formation of the self in contemporary society: the adoption of life plans (Giddens, 1991a:80). According to him in a sense modern culture can be characterised as one that confronts the individual with a complex diversity of choices, that challenge her/him with having to decide from all the possibilities to guide their behaviour. In this respect, film as mediation of experience, can be seen as a source of advice for conducting their lives. The responses to *Motorcycle Diaries* and *You've Got Mail* show the potential of film, given the circumstances, to provide the viewer with choices on a future to follow. With an undefined pre-given aim of living, as in pre-modernity, the individual builds for her/himself an aim that gives order to her/his existence. The responses to these films, suggest that in doing this the individual is open to influence, including those of film, to materially alter the course of their lives, to take on learning a second language or finding a love relationship. As Giddens says, in obvious or subtle ways, the mediated experience influences the pluralism of choice (Giddens, 1991a:84)

If not all the responses obtained in this work can be seen linking with the thought of Giddens, the ones referred to are an indication of the relevance which the mediation of experience through film has for the viewers to assign some order and give a sense to their existence in contemporary society, mostly related to building an identity. In the face of modernity's failure, with all its forms of rationalisation affecting all spheres of life, to bring enlightenment to the everyday, film can have the potential to illuminate the individual in the understanding of her/himself and the world around. Echoing Simmel, Benjamin, and Kracauer, Giddens holds that modernity has not been successful in guaranteeing a sense of certitude for the individual, in providing her/him with answers to the nature

or the purpose of her/his existence, and s/he is left to her/his own to decide on fundamental existential questions (on the nature of the world, others, and oneself). As in Husserl's view, modernity excludes in principle the most burning questions: of the meaning of human existence.

In the context of the transformations of experience brought on by the development of modernity, film makes it possible to gain an alternative form of access to the world that is relevant for the individual's life, that helps her/him address the problematic of existence. Film expands the individual's perspective of the world by returning her/him to the qualitative properties of the world, and challenges her/his acquired rationalised understanding of the world. As the responses suggest the engagement with films, as Kracauer maintains, make of film a significant productive force, not for its artistic or technological value, but in terms of the significance it has for the relationship of the individual to reality.



## Chapter 4

### Analysis of the practical component: *The Spectator of Modernity*

The present chapter explores the practical component of the thesis, which takes the form of a film titled *The Spectator of Modernity*. The film is the result of the attempt at producing a piece that probes via the audiovisual language the considerations which have been made in the theory and the results obtained from the qualitative study of the viewers' memorable film experiences. This chapter presents the rationale behind the authoring of the film, and its link to the phenomenological view developed of film as a particular and defining form of experiencing the modern everyday.

The point of departure of the film has been the creation of a piece built around the inclusion of the testimonials gathered for the qualitative analysis presented in Chapter 3. Following the commitment of phenomenological analysis to examine how individuals make sense of their experiences in their own words, the film makes the experiences of concrete audiences its central element. This is in the effort to construct an audiovisual piece on the film experience, where the actual film viewers' accounts that inform it, remain recognisable.

The film has been thought then first of all as a way to make a coherent piece that arises from the most significant fragments of audio and images from the recording of the individuals' responses, according to the findings in the analysis of the previous chapter. In this respect it follows Martin Barker's reflections on the necessity to bring the study of film closer to the experiences of film in the everyday, to the emotions which movies provoke and the meanings they produce for viewers.

Around the inclusion of the testimonials, the film develops a narrative line to facilitate the viewer's engagement with the work and to invite her/him to reflect on the testimonials according to the perspective of the film experience here developed in the theory. This is, to conceive film as an instrument that in the context of the modern era is capable of illuminating the viewer's perception of the everyday and of transforming her/his world-view. By doing this the film attempts to position the film experience represented by the testimonials, beyond the individuated responses that they constitute, as the result and the reflection of wider processes of social and cultural transformation brought on by modernity.

With the testimonials of real viewers' experiences at its centre, *The Spectator of Modernity* has been built around the story of a fictional character who maintains a certain relationship with this actuality material, which he listens to as he wanders through different locations in the urban environment and watches when he stays at home. As we learn from the film, the relationship between the character and the viewers' accounts is marked by an existential crisis experienced by

the character, who in his attempt to make sense of himself and the world around him, has turned to investigate the possibility of deriving existential meaning via the experience of film. Initially detached from his surroundings and suspicious of the possibility of having a meaningful engagement with reality, the fictional character considers by the end of the film the prospects of a different future for himself.

#### **4.1 *The Spectator of Modernity and the city film***

Crucial to building the film around the testimonials has been the recognition by Andre Bazin of the importance which the selection of the setting plays in the command of a film, and the acknowledgement, as Bordwell and Thompson state, that this element can come to the forefront of the cinematic representation (Bordwell and Thompson, 2001:159). According to Bazin, while man can be an accessory in film, the cinematic representation is bound up with the choice of its setting (Bazin, 1967:102) In this respect the decision has been to contain the narrative of the wandering character of *The Spectator* in the raw location of the city and, furthermore, to employ this setting as a counterpoint to the discourse of the viewer's responses and the character's own reflections.

The metropolitan environment contextualises the phenomenon of the film experience (represented by the testimonials) in the setting of the material development of modernity. Being the city the key site of display of the cultural transformations introduced by modernity, as observed by Baudelaire, Simmel and Benjamin, among others, it appears as the most appropriate setting to represent the materiality of the context in which this research locates the film experience. As in Walter Benjamin's thought, the city features as "the crucial showplace of modernity" (Frisby, 1985:224).

The film thus employs the motif of the city, recurrent in the writings of modernity, to depict the qualitative and quantitative transformations of experience brought about by this historical period. Along the characterisations of the urban setting in theory, this is depicted in the film as a site of heightened visual stimulation, provided among other sources, by the architecture, street and shop signs, advertisements, monuments, artistic expressions, commodities, and the mass media. Uninterruptedly bombarding the individual, they are presented as giving place to an environment which is not immediately intelligible and that demands from the individual an active effort to interpret it.

Furthermore, by choosing the city as the setting for the film, this resorts to utilising the "strong and well established" relationship between the cinema and the city that dates from the birth of the motion pictures itself (Alsayyad, 2006:1). As has been observed, having originated from the material conditions and the emerging culture of the early 20th Century cinema would share its

origins with those of the modern metropolis. According to Giuliana Bruno the new spatio-visibility of the modern city with its arcades, railways, glass houses, etc., incarnated a new geography of modernity which prepared the ground for the invention of the moving image. Cinema, she says, “emerges out of this shifting perceptual arena, partaking in the architectural configurations of modern life” (Bruno, 2008:14).

Linked from its origins at a formal level with the new urban condition, from the early work of the Lumiere brothers in Paris, Mark Shiel indicates that film has been all along fascinated with the representation of “the distinctive spaces, lifestyles, and human conditions of the city” (Shiel, 2001:1). A recurrent theme and dominant setting in film, it has been observed that the city would leave one of its most manifest marks as a subject in the cinematic representation of the 1920’s, in various key films such as *Manhatta*, *Metropolis*, *Rien que les heures*, *Rain*, *Berlin: Symphony of a City*, and *Man with a Movie Camera* (Bruno, 2008:15). Continuing on the early captivation of cinema by the metropolitan experience, which had most notably adopted the form of the panoramas and the travelogue films, these films of the 1920's would also represent a development of more complex narrative fictional and non-fictional depictions of the rising metropolitan modernity.

Located in the metropolitan context *The Spectator of Modernity* is moved by the interest for the same setting which early on fascinated cinema, and can be more closely linked to the development of the non-fictional representations of the city films of the 20’s that serve to guide it with their narrative and visual techniques. As in them, the film is concerned with the depiction of the city setting as a central character of modern everyday reality that has an effect on the range of experiences of its inhabitants; that is, in the city as the emergence of experiences brought on by the process of modernisation. More specifically *The Spectator* is in this respect influenced by the portraits of the most developed kind of non-fictional city film: the city symphony.

Characteristic of the classic city symphony film of the 20’s is their representation of life in the modern city by assembling images of everyday events, infused with a sense of rhythm and movement alike the musical counterpart in their name to evoke the tempo of the city. In their depiction of the metropolitan experience the nascent city symphony employed different techniques that would become defining of the subgenre. Among them we have their reliance on candid and occasionally staged scenes of the city, a lack of voice-over narration, the use of associational montage, visual patterns, recurrent motifs and other techniques and formal experimentations which allow for the fragmentary nature of their actuality material to be shaped into a coherent and expressive piece for the viewer to experience.

Approaching actuality with elements of avant-garde, the city symphony, as exceptionally represented by *Berlin* and *Man with a movie Camera*, would also be frequently charged with being

excessively formalist - Kracauer would call Ruttmann's work as limited to a "surface approach" (Kracauer, 1947:184) while Eisenstein dismissed Vertov's as "formalist jack-straws and unmotivated camera mischief" (Eisenstein, 1929:43). The films in the subgenre have often been regarded as lacking in political commentary and historical contextualisation, and accused of being just an exercise in style for its own sake (Beattie, 2006).

Yet in the view of Michael Renov depictions of reality like the city symphony which undertake a poetic manner of documentation that renders them challenging or innovative should not disqualify them as nonfiction. As he recognises, all attempts at rendering reality in the documentary imply a series of authorial choices (Renov, 1993:35). Furthermore, he adds that "the ability to evoke emotional response or induce pleasure in the spectator by formal means, to generate lyric power through shadings of sound and image in a manner exclusive of verbalisation, or to engage with the musical or poetic qualities of language itself must not be seen as mere distractions from the main event" (Renov, 1993:35). Instead they can be seen as an element that serves to convey a message about the actuality material which is not evidently observable in the raw material alone.

According to Renov the city symphony, while committed to documenting the historical world is also representative of the expressive function of the nonfiction film: they "declared their allegiance in varying degrees to the powers of expressivity in the service of historical representation" (Renov, 1993:33). That they stress the expressive dimension by exploring formal means does not imply an abandonment of the representation of historical reality. It is simply, following Renov, that the expressive function has "consistently been undervalued within the nonfiction domain" (Renov, 1993:32).

As it has been recognised in Chapter 1, for instance, although Ruttmann's film may not allow for its reading as a systematic critique of metropolitan modernity and it stresses the formal over the meaning of the images it assembles, *Berlin* can be said to succeed in documenting some of the ambiguities in capitalist society. The film is suggestive -among other situations- of the turning of the individuals into undifferentiated and lifeless entities with its juxtaposition of mannequins and the human body, of the inequalities reflected in the possibilities which the city offers for individuals of different social classes as in the lunch break sequence, the prevalence of mass and mechanised production of goods, and of the over-stimulating visual nature of the metropolis. The reality it depicts is highly suggestive of the characterisations of the city and the criticism of the thinkers of modernity referred to in Chapter 1. Whilst *A Man with a Movie Camera* is recognised as developing different themes, including the manipulative powers of cinema, the vestiges of capitalism in Soviet society, and the process of mechanisation and industrialisation of the Soviet Union (Bordwell and Thompson, 2001:379; Roberts, 2000:94).

Recognising the expressive tendency of the city symphony, Bordwell and Thompson identify as a particular trait of the subgenre its treatment of the images of the city life by associations in order to suggest emotions or concepts (2001:378). The city symphony in its poetic mode does not strive to produce an objective account of the metropolitan topography, but with the treatment of the documentary material of events, attempts to capture an inner truth of the metropolitan experience that is expressed through the manipulation of actuality by film technique. As Bordwell and Thompson say, even Vertov's symphony is shaped from "tiny scenes from everyday reality" through the manipulation of editing and cinematography "into a highly idiosyncratic" documentary film (2001:376).

Seeking to explore the nature of the transformation of modern experience, *The Spectator of Modernity* has been thus informed by the city symphony in its interest for representing the reality of the modern era as it is observable in the daily immediate surroundings – according to Grierson it was *Berlin* that initiated the "fashion of finding documentary material on one's doorstep" (Grierson, 1932:99). Ruttman's film follows the principal association by the city symphony of the observable transformation of the metropolitan landscape and the development of modernity and its processes of industrialisation, development of technology, the advent of capitalist economy, the emergence of a visual culture, the concentration of individuals and a mass system of communication.

That is, the film is informed by the city symphony as a form of documenting the physical dimension of daily metropolitan life. The interest in this respect is guided by the focus of Kracauer and Benjamin on film's potential to capture the culture, or materiality of the world which produces it, to bring it to the attention of the viewer for the possibility of exploring the detail that would otherwise escape and remain unknown. For Kracauer, as Bruno observes, the affinity between the cinema and the city resides in the transient, "for the street - like the cinema - is the site where fleeting impressions take place" (2008:16).

The film is in this sense employed as an instrument to engage with the fragmentary nature of the reality manifest in the multiple stimuli which populate the city; to rescue from the everyday the distinct images and bring out the common across the unexceptional, in order to depict the city as the showplace of modernity. Secondly, the representation from which the material emerges is further oriented to contextualise the fate of modern subjectivity and of the film experience.

In this respect, the film resorts to images evocative of the classic city symphony, in order to convey the sense of its setting as the showcase of modernity. We observe the multiplicity of stimuli which emanate from various sources and call the attention of the individual, be it from the advertisements on the streets, the traffic signalling, the news circulating through the radio and the papers, or the historical sites. The locations from the areas which the character visits are

predominantly composed of images of public places, including the streets depicted as sites of transit, and locations such as markets, parks, the shopping mall, city gardens and squares. They feature candid shots of common people engaged in their daily living and serve too as setting for the staged scenes with the fictional character.

These images of the city in the film correspond to footage obtained from locations in the city of London of the 21st Century, an exemplary modern metropolis. The decision for the setting of the film is motivated by the connection of London with a pioneering literary tradition that examines the relationship between the city and the behaviour of its inhabitants (Coverley, 2006:14) - another major influence in the narrative of *the Spectator* that will be commented on later.

The film employs footage from different sites of the city to construct the diegesis, including images of the borough of Camden, West Smithfield, Barbican, at the River Thames, Wandsworth, Central London, Bethnal Green, and Hackney. Images from each of these areas are employed on the one hand to create the impressionistic view of the city proper of the symphony subgenre, and on the other hand, to develop the narrative of the character and his relationship to the testimonials. Since the film is developed as a series of successive expeditions to specific sites within these locations, *The Spectator* assembles the images according to their geographical continuity.

Following the form of representing metropolitan reality in the city symphony the film explores the reworking of this actuality material to create a depiction of the city setting that expresses the perspective of this work on modern experience. While the film is founded on the documentary material of the testimonials and the images captured from the ordinarily ongoing activity in the city, it recognises the potential of authorial decisions and attempts to direct them at suggesting a certain perspective of the experience of the urban topography: the unintelligibility of reality that arises from the material transformations of modernity. To achieve this, the film resorts to the techniques of the symphony film that enhance its expressive dimension.

From the actuality material of fragmentary nature gathered at the locations, the film builds as in the style of the city symphony, a set of themes, by resorting to the repetition of some of its images throughout the diegesis. These serve to characterise the nature of modern experience that arises from the series of material transformations that are brought on the city life. In this sense, *the Spectator* employs the city symphony's recourse to suggesting emotions and concepts through the association and repetition of images (Bordwell and Thompson, 2001:378). Following this technique, three central motifs are presented: the notion of mobility, the continuity between the filmic representation and the everyday, and the individual's permanent quest for meaning.

The motif of mobility is proposed to the audience, according to the considerations in Chapter 1, as a driving force in the new geography of modernity affecting our modes of relating with the

environment. The notion links to the early conceptions dating from Baudelaire that modernity infuses things with an elusive character that challenges the individual to secure stable and permanent references for her/his existence. As Giddens notes, this is given by the development of capitalist society and its rationalised organisation of the world which reconfigures our notions of space and time, affecting thus our mode of experiencing reality (Giddens, 1991:17)

In the film the sense of mobility is manifest through images of the city as the site of transit, with the repetition of shots of pedestrians traversing the streets and through the depiction of all modern forms of transport. Opening the film with an image of the interior of the London underground and ending with a shot of one of its trains, depictions of transportation are recurrent throughout the diegesis. Invariably present as a backdrop to the action, their significance is emphasised through the scenes of interaction of the fictional character with the buses and the underground. Another source for the motif of mobility resides in the device of the wandering character that will be commented further on when referring to the journey device.



*One of the motifs the film develops is of mobility through images of transportation and the wandering character*

Besides serving to represent the city as quintessentially modern, the notion of mobility is furthermore aimed at tracing a connection between the experience of the city and the filmic experience. It is oriented to observing the film viewing experience as analogous to that of traversing the urban landscape, in virtue of its ability to reconfigure our sense of time and space. As Giuliana Bruno observes, cinema is an outcome of the age of travel culture that has in common with the urban geography the production of a new spatio-visibility. “[T]he architectures of transit prepared the ground for the invention of the moving image, the very epitome of modernity” (2008:14)

The sensing of this reconfiguration of time-space in the film representation is also manifest in the analysis of the testimonials of this work. As has been observed in the previous chapter, some of the respondents refer to the film experience as allowing them to feel as if they were encountering

events that fall outside of their immediate surroundings, as if they had been transported to another place and time. To help bring out this notion, the fragments of the testimonials referring to the experience of displacement have been included in the film. These correspond to the account of Nikhil, at the beginning of the film, who emphasises the sense of realism and feeling of being in another world with *The Last King of Scotland*; and it is presented as one of the closing thoughts of the work with Matthew's reference to wanting to be *there* with “Che and his friend” in their journey.

Besides the development of the motif of mobility through the images assembled, the film employs as in the city symphony, the creation of a sense of rhythm and movement through editing and cinematography. Suggestive of the fluidity of life in the metropolis, this is also employed as a means to facilitate spectatorial engagement with the work, by providing the fragmentary nature of the events of the diegesis with the feeling of a unified experience. The images are assembled with a persistent slow tempo generated by the length of the takes and the internal movement of the events within the frame, which is reinforced by the ambient music that accompanies the image track throughout.

By doing this *The Spectator* invites the viewer to assume a reflective stance upon the narrative, and consider the events depicted from the perspective of the alienated fictional character, with the suggestion of a contemplative view that challenges the frenzy and fragmentariness of the surroundings. That is, the rhythm built on film technique and the accompanying music track is employed as a distanciation technique, as form of making the viewer feel detached from the events of the film and reflect upon them.

Embedded in the context of daily life, the film presents another set of images which *The Spectator of Modernity* visits in order to characterise the filmic experience, according to its phenomenological understanding in this work. The presence of film in daily life is materialised with the depiction of the architecture that houses the movies of the same type which have given place to the experiences in the testimonials and which surface in the urban fabric, for instance with the inclusion of images at the entrance of the Odeon in Camden Town and the cinema at the Barbican Centre. Along with them other graphic references to film, like promotional billboards, are included to indicate the visibility of cinema in the everyday.





*A second cluster of images are indicative of the presence of cinema in the daily activities in the city*

Their inclusion is suggestive of the continuity between the filmic representation and the everyday world by their juxtaposition with the rest of the public places which the fictional character visits, such as the markets and the parks, and with the rest of the images ordinarily present in the urban landscape such as those emanating from advertising. In this sense the work attempts to depict the film experience, along the lines of its phenomenological characterisation in Chapter 2, as *another form of accessing* the world that is available for the consideration of the individual. It aims to represent the notion that “as a rule, viewers experience the ‘real’ world before they enter and learn to understand the ‘world of movies’”; and it is primary experiences of the life-world that shapes interest in, and interpretation of, films” (Stadler, 1990:45)

Or as Clarke puts it, that the cinema has the potential to leak out onto the streets, and vice-versa, that events of the city will find their way onto the cinematic representation (1997:3); a sentiment which is echoed by Giuliana Bruno when she states that “[a]s the street turns into a movie house, the movie house turns into a street” (Bruno, 2008:16) . This is the realisation that we see the character come to as he wanders in and out of the cinemas and the streets, becoming aware of the influence of film in the viewers' everyday lives and its operating within the limits of their personal and cultural contexts. This is manifest by the end of the inclusion of the sixth testimonial in the film, when the character concedes that perhaps there is no higher truth to search for, but that he might only need a new way to think of his ordinary living: “Maybe after all this is all there is, but something I haven't been able to observe that reveals the truth about things. Or maybe I lack the imagination to dress them up in colour ”



*The interaction of the character with the cinemas signals the centrality of film in the narrative*

The centrality of the presence of film in daily life for the narrative of *The Spectator* is further emphasised, as it is done with the motif of mobility and public transport, through the instances in which the fictional character is presented interacting with the movie houses. More clearly, this is observed towards the second half of the film, when motivated by the memorable film experiences, the character is drawn to visit the cinema, as we see him wandering at the entrance of a movie-theater, collecting a ticket at the box office, and furthermore, when the film follows him to the interior of a screening room where he watches a film.

Lastly, the film resorts to include disseminated in the diegesis, images that point to Anthony Giddens' observations on the reflexive project in which the modern individual must build a notion of the self and of the world. According to him, the modern being is on a permanent search for meaning, to find continuity with the world around and provide her/his actions with some sense. Instances of these images correspond to references to making sense of existence, as in the billboard which reads "Is this it?", inviting to reflect on the nature of reality and the afterlife; another which questions the existence of God, a governing source of ontological security from pre-modern cultures; or at the end of the film with a sign at a bus stop expressing that "the more we walk the clearer the problem", which encapsulates the activity carried out by the character, of making sense of things by searching for answers in his explorations of the city.



*A number of images point to the reflexive thinking of modern humanity on existence*

By suggesting the active engagement of the modern individual in interpreting her/his existence and surrounding reality with the inclusion of these illustrative images, the film intends to view the memorable experiences of the testimonials – as it is indicated in Chapter 3 – as another form of experiencing the world which provides the individual with elements for his or her quest for meaning. In other words, to suggest that film constitutes a source of recommendations to act in the world, which confirm or challenge the conceptions which the viewers possess. As Jarvie says – and the analysis of the testimonials indicate – film brings at a mass level the possibility for the modern individual to philosophise upon their sense of reality, including the most transcendental matters (Jarvie, 1987:121).

This conception of the meaningfulness of film is understood as invested with particular significance in the context of the multiplicity of stimuli which bombard the individual. As it is manifest through the incorporation of the testimonials, film is viewed as an instrument with the potential to counter the unintelligibility of the city, which Frisby identifies following Baudelaire as emerging from the qualitative and quantitative transformation of modernity which require from the individual an active process of their interpretation (Frisby, 1997:2). The link between the filmic representation and the interpretation of the surroundings and the self is more clearly suggested in the film with the inclusion of an image found at a bus stop which promotes a book about testimonials of individuals whose life was 'inspired by music'. This suggests the active interpretative task of the modern individual, who may draw from mediated representations of reality for her/his quest for meaning, as it is exemplified by the testimonials in the film.

The potential of film to inform the individual's self-identity and world-view is further reinforced by a trait in the fictional character which the film employs as a narrative device. With the recourse of inner monologue, *The Spectator* presents the case of a modern man going through an existential crisis, and which is remedied at the end of the piece with the illumination provided by his research into the memorable film experience. Along with the images from the city that suggest the interpretative task of the modern individual, the character acts in this respect as a representation of the feeling of meaninglessness of life experienced in modernity.

#### **4.2 The journey device and *The Spectator of Modernity***

Brian Winston observes that city films like the ones inspiring *The Spectator*, such as *Berlin* and *Man with a Movie Camera*, are indicative of the reliance of the documentary film on organising principles to give coherence to the diversity of events it sets out to depict (1995:104). In order to shape the fragmentary modern world, he points out that the city film resorted to devices that provided it with logic, and one of which it adopted was the diurnal structuring: “This became

documentary's preferred way of capturing the urban experience of film. Shots [...] were organised into thematic clusters and those clusters into a chronological progression. The chaos of the modern world was thereby shaped into a day in the life of a city" (Winston, 1995:104).

As he notes, particularly telling in this respect is the case of *Man with a Movie Camera*, because Vertov vehemently opposed the use of narrative on ideological grounds (Winston, 1995:105). In spite of his commitment to catching life unawares, even he could not avoid adopting a narrative form by organising the film by the diurnal pattern, as the film shows the progression of a day in the life of a city as it is captured by the camera of the man in the title. Winston says that Vertov proves the rule of the seductiveness of organising the documentary by a narrative trajectory (Winston, 1995:105).

Another organising device noted by Winston, employed by the documentary, and adopted by the city film, is that of the journey. According to him "[j]ourney films solved actuality's big narrative problem – closure. How should such films finish? Obviously, a journey film ends with the end of the journey" (Winston, 1995:104). This principle, which would become standard in the documentary tradition as a way to instil coherence, he points out, was in fact already present at the origins of cinema in the travelogue film - a form which presented trips to exotic places in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Arctic circle (Hagener, 2007:226).

Furthermore, he points to this device popularised by the travelogue film as a fundamental presence in the foundations of the documentary film with the work of Robert Flaherty, who had employed the journey in two sequences in his seminal *Nanook of the North* (Winston, 1995:104). From that point on, according to Winston the journey as a model would become a convention of the documentary as a means to infuse the actuality material with a dramatic narrative. This is the result, as he indicates following Bordwell and Thompson, of the documentary film as its fictional counterpart being driven by an impulse to tell stories: "Narrative is never absent in documentary films" (Bordwell and Thompson, 1990, cited in Winston, 1995:119).

Winston claims that what John Grierson recognised in Flaherty was the dramatisation in his treatment of the everyday world and with it Grierson would inform his conception of documentary (Winston, 1995:99). As Grierson conceived it, the documentary film, as opposed to other "lower" forms of non-fiction such as the newsreels, lecture films, travelogues, etc., was distinguished for its dramatisation of factual events. According to Winston, what he meant by *treatment* of actuality was its dramatisation (Winston, 1995:99).

In this sense, the notion of the journey can be seen as instrumental in the conception of the documentary film which adopted the device in order to introduce a narrative logic in its actuality material. As with the diurnal structure, the journey device was employed as a form of experiencing

the everyday, according to modes that were culturally well defined and would therefore provide the narrative closure which the raw material of the documentary did not have in itself.

The resort to the journey device as narrative principle is exemplary present in *Man with a Movie Camera*, which also adopts the diurnal device as has been previously observed. From the opening, the film signals the centrality of the cameraman that features in the first shot and soon after attends the screening of a fiction film. The “little man” with his camera, in the words of Vertov, “leaves the little fake world of the film-factory and heads for life” (1984:286). Having departed from the cinema and heading towards the world in the streets, the film is developed as the voyage of Vertov’s *kinok* out from the fantasy world of the fiction film and onto the experience of unstaged events.

To achieve his capturing of life in all its complexity “unlike the film-factory where the camera is almost stationary”, indicates Vertov, “the man with the camera must give up his usual immobility [...] in order to keep pace with life’s fleeting phenomena” (Vertov, 1984:287). Images of this central element of the mobile man with his camera marching apace with life in the city, going through, arriving at and departing from the locations, are recurrent all throughout *A Man with a Movie Camera*.

In her considerations on the journey device, Stella Bruzzi indicates that the principle which originated in the travelogue film and was adopted by city symphony films like Vertov’s, has further developed into a new form of journey (Bruzzi, 2000:103). From its initial interest in the actual physical displacement from one location to another, she suggests that the documentary journey has shifted interest towards the notion of journey as a metaphor for discovery (Bruzzi, 2000:104).

This new form of journey film which Bruzzi identifies plays with the idea of the traditional travel film, and shifts away from the sense of documentary as an explanatory form and towards exploring the subjectivity of its author and participants (Bruzzi, 2000:104). That is, it serves to build the documentary as a vehicle for the expression of personalised perspectives that challenges the sense of completeness of the traditional notion of the documentary genre.

Exemplary of the modern use of the journey device is, Bruzzi suggests, Patrick Keiller’s *London*. Eponymous of the city it explores, the film visits various locations of the English capital and ceremonies, in what the film claims constitutes one of the characters’ academic study of the roots of English Romanticism. In his research of London, the character of Robinson is accompanied by a second character who narrates their progress in the journey, neither of which features physically in the film.

Although structured as a journey of the two men, upon viewing it is evident the lack of interest of *London* in the development of their travelling in a linear form. In agreement with Bruzzi

(Bruzzi, 2000:117) the film seems to suggest that the journey's destination is ultimately unimportant, and that it functions more as a vehicle for a critical view by Keiller of the political, economic and cultural development of London. The film evolves through an associational rather than linear logic, in which one idea or event calls forth another to form the highly suggestive and idiosyncratic perspective of the film.

For Bruzzi the evolution of the journey film as represented by *London* exhibits the tendency of the documentary film in general towards exploring the personal and the uncertain, as opposed to the traditional conception of documentary as an explanation of the world represented. She suggests that "non-fiction films are now more likely to be constructed around such instabilities as memory, subjectivity and uncertainty. The new journey film is indicative of this trend, taking the traditional documentary concerns of enquiry (itself a type of journey) and travel to create a loose subgenre of the observational mode" (Bruzzi, 2000:103).

Adopting this narrative device that is present in early city films such as *A Man with a movie camera* and which has evolved with modern films like *London, The Spectator of Modernity* is modelled as a journey focalised on the progression of a fictional character traversing the city, interacting with the fragments of the real life testimonials in Chapter 3. The significance of the journeying character for the film is manifest by the inclusion of images of a person playing the character all throughout the narrative; he goes through, lingers in, arrives at, and departs from the different locations of the film. In combination with its personification, the film conveys the sense of character by resorting to an internal monologue that externalises his state of mind.

The decision to opt for structuring the film as a journey of a character functions on the one hand, in the tenor of the city symphony, as an attempt to instil coherence to the film, and facilitate thus the viewer's engagement with it. This is effectuated in relation to the assembly of the unscripted and fleeting events captured in the city, for which the character functions as the element that connects them by moving from one place to another, observing them develop, and reacting to their presence. Thus we see the character feature from the first scene, arriving at the locations, observing the events, expressing his feelings associated with what he experiences, and close the film with the character's departure.

Equally, the journey device serves in this sense to bring together the viewers' testimonials. To achieve this the film presents the character in a first instance as the spectator of the testimonials which the film collates, and further on it suggests that it is the fictional character who has gathered them in his interest on film as way to reengage with the everyday. For this reason the film develops the relationship between the character and the testimonials in a way that suggests that they are directly connected. If the greater part of the viewer's accounts appear as non-diegetic sound

juxtaposed with the material documenting the city, there are crucial moments in which the character is shown directly interacting with them.

They occur, in the first instance, when the narrative reveals near the midpoint of the film that the apparently unmotivated presence of the viewers' responses in the diegesis is the result of an investigative task that occupies the character, by virtue of having him and the recording of one of the viewers' responses sharing the same room and him commenting on it; in the scenes that present the character interviewing people on the street, suggesting that he is the one producing the material; and near the end of the film when the character is again shown sharing the same space with a testimonial playing back on the TV as he types his final observations on the transformative power of film.

In this sense the wandering persona serves to *give place to* the encounters of *The Spectator* with the viewers' memorable film experiences, in the same way it serves to give place to the actuality of the city. In other words, the journeying character is employed in one respect, as a central force that weaves together the images of the metropolis and the material of the viewers' accounts. This provides the film, as Bruzzi states is the function of the journey device, with a narrative cohesion for what might otherwise appear as disconnected events captured on film (Bruzzi, 2000:99).

Oriented to function as a cohesive principle for the film, *The Spectator* is ultimately not centred on the displacement of the character from one specific location of London to another, or with him reaching a final destination to accomplish something, but with the very act of traversing the city and the interaction with actuality. In this sense the film follows Stella Bruzzi's observation of the modern journey film as structured around the encounters and meetings among characters, uninterested in reaching a final destination. (Bruzzi, 2000:99).

This way the journeying character acts predominantly as a superficial narrative device whose presence is subordinated to the images and experiences he collates – the images of the urban space and the experiences of the viewers' testimonials – but whose development allows to bring the material reality of the city and the testimonials in *the Spectator* before an audience. Starting out with the arrival of the character at the first location and closing with his departure to an unknown site, throughout *The Spectator* we observe the actuality material by means of the fictional character, in a tenuous storyline which sets up a problem at the beginning of the film that we follow through to a resolution: the tale of a character living through a phase of existential crisis which he attempts to overcome in the course of the film with the enlightenment that his investigation into memorable film experiences might bring upon him.

Following Bordwell and Thompson, the fictional character features as in the art film as an

individual without well defined goals – they are only suggested vaguely. This infuses the narrative with a “drifting episodic quality” (2001:96). According to them, if not completely random, the art-film character follows a “rough shape” itinerary, such as a trip or a survey form of narrative. Bazin, say Bordwell and Thompson, praised such kind of loose narrative structure for its resemblance to the unexpected in real-life, as he identified too certain stylistic devices – long takes, deep-focus, deep space, the moving camera – appropriate for the realist representation of life .

With its use of the fictional device and drifting plot to explore the documentary material and its recourse to realist aesthetics, *The Spectator of Modernity* can thus be seen to fit into the category of the art film. This is, as Bordwell and Thompson point out, the film can be distinguished from the classical narrative mode for its “commitment to both objective and subjective verisimilitude” (2001:97) The former is reflected in its realist aesthetics – which are commented on at the end of this Chapter – and the latter on the use of the sensitive character and his reactions to modern life.

As in the art-film the main character is thrown into a loose causation plot, in order to explore the feelings and psychological states of the individual as a reaction to her/his circumstances. The art-film say Bordwell and Thompson is an attempt to reflect on the human condition, to formulate a judgement on modern life, by expressing the reactions of the character to her/his surrounding events and the search for their causes (Bordwell and Thomspson, 2001:96)

### **4.3 *The Spectator of Modernity, flanerrie and spectatorship***

Operating as a cohesive element for the documentary material, the inclusion of the journeying character serves also as an expressive device. It allows the film to convey the point of view of this work on how the experiences of film narrated in the testimonials can be seen arising from the transformation of experience by modernity pervading the everyday. To achieve that, the film resorts to position the journeying individual within the practise of psycho-geography and to shape his persona as an embodiment of the figure of the *flaneur*.

Largely understood as a practise linked to the urban environment with origins in the Surrealist tradition, psycho-geography has been more specifically defined by Guy Debord as “the study of the specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organised or not, on the emotions and behaviour of the individuals” (Coverley, 2006:10) In other words, it points to the intersection between psychology and geography; on how the place impacts on the mind of those who experience it (Coverley, 2006:10).

Among the most recognised of the practises of psycho-geography we have the ones belonging to the tradition of Surrealism, from which the notion emerges. Furthermore, as has been pointed out in Chapter 1, this tradition has informed the perspective of thinkers like Walter Benjamin on the



exploration of the metropolis. Benjamin, according to Frisby (1985:188) was influenced by Surrealism; he was familiar with its most recognised psycho-geographic examples in literature, Breton's *Nadja* and Louis Aragon's *Paris Peasant*.

Broadly characterised according to Coverley (2006:10) these two novels set in Paris, with their absence of plot and a digressive style that mirrors the aimless journeys they recount, constitute the blueprint for the psycho-geographical novel. Their accounts are explorations of the city which juxtapose autobiographical elements, local history, politics, and philosophical debate in a digressive style (Coverley, 2006:10).

In this sense *The Spectator* is influenced by the practise of psycho-geography, in respect to the inclusion of a journeying character exploring the city of London, whose state of mind is both directed by and guides his interactions with the locations that he visits. Aimlessly exploring the city, he juxtaposes elements from discourses emanating from varied sources, to inform his sombre view on existence, mixing elements from factual and fictional narratives, including those of the films in the testimonials.

In the vein of the psycho-geographic exploration, the coalescing of discourses of fact and fiction emanating from varied sources, is driven by the desire to develop a subjective view on the material development of modernity according to the considerations in the theory. As Coverley indicates it is "the subjective reworking of the city" a crucial element of the psycho-geographical practice (Coverley, 2006:16).

While *The Spectator of Modernity* is founded on unstaged material – the testimonials and the images of the city – it attempts to explore the subjective apprehension of the materiality of the city, with the blend of fact and fiction. As in Bruzzi's reference to the evolution of the documentary film, rather than as an explanation of the world represented, *The Spectator* is constructed around the exploration of modern subjectivity, wherein the fictional element of the character acts as a vehicle for expression.

That subjective view of the character, on the city, existence and the film experience, is manifest through the representation of his thought processes following an associational logic, whereby the character juxtaposes events and ideas based on salient features which he perceives. This associational logic evokes the personal associations of the film spectator who draws for her/his interpretation of a film from her/his personal experience and cultural references. As the character of *The Spectator* associates varied images, events and ideas, to bring them into a new context, and through this practice of linking attempts to provide the world with some order, the film-viewer, as has been observed in Chapter 3, focuses on specific elements from the on-screen world and privileges certain themes in her/his interpretation of a film. The character, as the viewer, feeds from

their personal experience and the knowledge they possess for making sense of the film and city spectacle, respectively.

In conceiving *the Spectator* as a form of psycho-geographic journey the film also benefits from the existing link between this practise and the setting of the film in the city of London. According to Coverley, a tradition in London writing, exploring the motif of the imaginary journey that reworks the layout of the metropolis and records its observations on the streets, is pioneering of the psycho-geographical survey (2006:15) The initiator of it, he indicates is Daniel Defoe, with *Robinson Crusoe* and his *Journal of the Plague Year*, and can be more recently seen represented in the urban wanderer in Patrick Keiller's films (Coverley, 2006:15).

To materialise the psycho-geographic excursion in the film, I have resorted to modelling the wandering character as the figure of the *flaneur*. As the city appeared as the most appropriate setting for *the Spectator of Modernity*, since it features in theory as the prototypical site of the transformations set in motion by modernity, the motif of the *flaneur* appears as the fitting representation of its correspondent modern subjectivity. Frisby points out that if the city was the location of modernity, it is the character of the *flaneur*, as presented by Baudelaire, the representation of the subjectivity that experiences the city and provides philosophical insights into it (Frisby, 1985:228). While for Dana Brand as it appears in Walter Benjamin's *Arcades* the *flaneur* is a model of the relationship of the modern individual in her/his experience of the world, that functions as the indication of a new kind of human subjectivity in the modern era (Brand, 1991:7).

The *flaneur* is the individual consciousness that corresponds to the development - in terms of Simmel - of the disjuncture between the increase of material culture and its failure to signify an improvement to the subjective lives of the individuals (Simmel, 1908:45); where meaningful culture has been hollowed out by the logic of money. As the result of this imbalance, according to Frisby, capitalist society would affect the consciousness of a modern mankind that becomes estranged even in their relationship to the most immediate surroundings.

Set against the development of the material world in modernity, *the Spectator* employs the figure of the *flaneur* to model the fictional character, who appears as the gaze of the alienated person, positioned in the context of a historical era filled with contradictions. It acts as the representation of the modern individual for whom the material world poses a challenge to make sense of it, as it is experienced in the alienated surroundings. Finding himself in this context he has not chosen to live in, as the *flaneur* is depicted in Baudelaire, the modern subjectivity is represented in its heroic nature, attempting to actively resist the sense of being overwhelmed by the metropolitan setting and from leading a dissatisfied existence, rather than to accept succumbing to it. It is the representation of the possibility of transforming his surroundings in his ways of

exploring the streets and his attempts to extract meanings from the city stimuli.

Furthermore, the significance of the presence of motif of the *flâneur* in the film is given by its link to the principles of film. As Anke Gleber sees it, differing from the technical aspects of film-making, the *flâneur*, is moved through the city by “similar impulses and structures” as film (Gleber, 1999:156) –of collecting and structuring actuality material in the public spaces in the city.

She indicates that the continuity between film and flânerie can be observed for instance in Vertov’s *A Man with a movie camera* and in his declared notion of the “kino-eye”: “I am kino-eye. I am a builder... In bringing together shots of walls and details, I’ve managed to arrange them in an order that is pleasing... I am kino-eye, I am mechanical eye. I, a machine show you the world as only I can see it. Now and forever, I free myself from human immobility, I am in constant motion, I draw near, then away from objects” (Vertov, 1984:17) The cameraman in Vertov’s symphony is reminiscence of the wandering figure of the *flâneur* encountering the images of the city and offering an organising structure for them.

Gleber observes a correspondence between this figure and the film viewer, in their seeking to decipher and redeem the images of the everyday before them (Gleber, 1999:157). In this respect, she follows Kracauer, who identifies the affinity between the two in his *Theory of Film*: “The isolated individual’s longings [in the cinema] recall the nineteenth-century *flâneur* [...] in his susceptibility to the transient real-life phenomena that crowd the screen [...] Along with the fragmentary happenings incidental to them, these happenings – taxi cabs, buildings, passers-by, inanimate objects, faces – presumably stimulate his senses and provide him with stuff for dreaming” (Kracauer, 1965:170)

By resorting to the motif of the *flâneur* as a model for the fictional character *the Spectator* attempts to put on display the sensitivity that according to this perspective pervades in the modern individual, and which is archotypically manifest in the movie-goer as in the *flâneur*. Beyond a uniting device, the character is employed as a means to express the perspective of this work on film spectatorship as a form of experiencing modern life: a form of *flânerie* carried out inside the cinema, which seeks to derive existential security and aesthetic meaning from the fragmentary images observed on the screen.

Following these considerations the fictional character of the film is depicted with certain distinctive attributes to evoke the motif of the *flâneur*. It is embodied as a wandering male persona, as it features in Baudelaire’s classic portrayal in ‘The Painter of Modern Life’ in which “Baudelaire is quite explicit about the gender identity of the poet” (Tester, 1994:2); driven from the private onto the metropolitan spaces, for most of the narrative is developed in the public sites amidst the flux of the crowd; propelled by his desire to provide order, meaning and significance to the spectacle of the

public, as it is manifest through the internal monologue and the inclusion of the testimonials which the character investigates.

In the form of nondiegetic sound, the inner monologue of the *flaneur* in the film revolves around expressing the feeling in the character of experiencing an unsatisfactory life. At some point in his wandering, he confides: “Invariably I think that the best time has been left behind”. But as the film progresses, along with the presentation of the responses to film, his tone of despair alleviates, to admit the possibility of a way out of his sense of despair, rather than succumb to it; in the heroic sense that Baudelaire invests modern subjectivity with in the *flaneur*.

Another particularity of the internal monologue is that is delivered in Spanish, in contrast to the physical appearance of the character – a British native person – and to the language spoken in London, where the film is set. This characteristic has been thought as an element that furthers the continuity between the fictional device of the character with the film experiences in Chapter 3 which point to the identification of the spectator's personal experiences with events from the screen representation. As the account by Jimena more clearly shows, this identification may occur across differences such as those belonging to race and gender, to apprehend the film's events in one's own terms. The disjuncture between the language of the monologue and the appearance of the character points to how the personal informs the interpretation of the film, as it is shown by Jimena's identification with the male protagonist of *Cast Away*.

On the other hand, that disjuncture serves to connect the feeling expressed by Jimena of living in the city in the condition of a foreigner, with the experience of the city as represented by the *flaneur* in the film. According to Rob Shields, the flaneur is “a native who becomes like a foreigner” (Shields, 1994:68), a figure of the modern metropolis that finds himself displaced from the space he practises and feels as an outsider to it. For Vidler this sense of distantiation and individual isolation from the emergence of the modern metropolis, is a unique sensibility present throughout the work of Simmel, Kracauer, and Benjamin (Vidler, 2000:76-77), for whom the new urban configurations are associated to the social estrangement that permeates the metropolis. Iain Chambers suggests, that this condition of estrangement, of living between worlds as the migrant experiences it, is a condition that potentially exist in everyone of us (Chambers, 1994:6); furthermore, he proposes that the sense of rootlessness in the migrant “is perhaps the most fitting metaphor of this (post) modern condition” (Chambers, 1994:27).

Furthermore the condition of an outsider to the city, as expressed by the reviewer and represented by the language of the monologue, is one that has continuity with my own personal experience during my stay in London for the making of this thesis. Being from Mexico, having the monologue in my mother tongue owes as well to my experience in London, as in Jimena's

testimonial, as a life-defining period with particularly difficult moments, from which I feel I have emerged as a different person. As a foreigner in a prototypical modern metropolis, while at times fascinated with all it has to offer, one feels nonetheless distanced from the people and events around, maintaining an outsider status. The estrangement from the surroundings, of character of the film, a native of the location, draws then from my own living in the city as a foreigner.

Additionally, the embodiment of the *flaneur* in the film is guided by Frisby's consideration of the activities which comprehend *flanerie*: an activity of observing (and listening) of people and social types; a form of reading written texts, the city and its population (architecture and human configuration); and the production of literary texts, illustrative accounts, narratives, reports, or journalistic texts (Frisby, 1994:83). That is, as an activity of observing, reading and writing about the metropolis. This is effectuated in *the Spectator* with the presentation of the fictional character dedicated to the observation of everyday events in the city; the reading of texts emanating from the newspapers, the radio, verbal accounts, the references to the reading of the work of George Orwell and Daniel Defoe, and the investigation of the viewers' testimonials; and with the indication of the production by the character of a verbal account of his perspective on metropolitan existence as well as a report on his research on the film experience.

#### **4.4 The character's excursions in the city**

Built with the referred attributes, *the Spectator* presents the story of a *flaneur* of the 21st Century journeying the city of London, with a sombre perspective on existence and the particularity of his relationship with a set of spectators' accounts of their memorable experiences with film. As Frisby characterises *flanerie*, the character moves around observing all things that he encounters, including the architecture of the city, its monuments, the different texts that he comes across, and the memorable film experiences, to coalesce them into his outlook on life; at the same time he engages in the production of the verbal account that in the film is presented as internal monologue.

We witness his journey starting out with a visit to Camden, in North London, where he wanders through the streets, the Stables and Camden Lock markets, among other public places. The character is materialised through the indications of internal monologue which suggest an individual disenchanted with his experience of the everyday; and furthermore with the repetition of images of a male individual, whom is suggested is the stroller. He is observed gazing at the actuality of the city, moving across the space carrying a portfolio. As he wanders observing images of the metropolis evocative of the city symphony, we hear non-diegetic sound fragments of the testimonials analysed in chapter 3. The first testimonial we listen to is on *The Last King Of Scotland*.

Affected by what he sees and attempting to fuse it into his world-view – which is manifest in the monologue– the character has alluded to the figure of George Orwell, the vagrant in *Down and out in Paris and London* after passing a house where the writer once lived; and in the soundtrack as non-diegetic sound has played the fragment of a news report on the involvement of a relative of Idi Amin – the protagonist of the film of the testimonial – with a killing that has taken place in the area he visits. This way, the film introduces the associational linkage which the character follows to organise the images he collects in his excursions and his ideas about existence, where one thing in his mind summons another.

The sound extract from the report on Idi Amin's son's participation in the murder of a young man points to the character establishing links between the fictional accounts of the films from the memorable film experiences with real life events of which he can find traces in the everyday. The news report is connected with the narration by the viewer telling of his experience with *The Last King of Scotland* in which he recognises the entertaining and pedagogic value of the film based in real-life events.

While the cultural reference to Orwell's *Down and out* serves to announce the peripatetic exercise the character will engage in throughout the film, and points to the role which the repertoire of cultural knowledge that he carries with himself plays in his relating to and interpreting of the metropolitan events and the viewers' accounts. The character expresses: “I wander all day in expectation. Like the vagrant who keeps moving not by his own desire but because of the need to not to starve”; in allusion to Orwell's diary of the traversing of the cities of Paris and London and the series of casual encounters with the life of the penniless in the streets. Instead of economic, the need that propels the character in *The Spectator of Modernity* is to infuse his existence with a sense of meaningfulness.

After establishing the disenchanted point of view of an urban stroller and suggested a discourse related to film as a form of experiencing the world, *the Spectator* changes location to West Smithfield. Along with the character we are presented images from the meat market, a public garden, St. Bart's Hospital, Charterhouse Square, and other references tied to the location, evocative of a feeling of illness or pain. The inner monologue adopts then a tone of despair, with his reflecting on the possible reason of his difficulty to engage with reality: “Maybe it's all down to the changes in the weather, a seasonal disorder, or an illness that floats in the air”. The character suspects that his condition may be the result of an illness that could be endemic, which in turn is associated to him being affected by the atmosphere he senses from the history of the site: its bloody history of public executions and the location of plague pits.

In the form of nondiegetic sound are included fragments from the viewer's response to *Ghost*,

pointing to film as a provider of an interpretative frame to the personal experience and touching on the themes of ghosts, hauntings and the afterlife. The juxtaposition of the viewer's testimonial with the images of the location and the character's inner monologue, point to the character's process of linking what he knows, experiences in the environment and the discourses from the respondents' accounts. Informing the sensation of illness in the monologue is Daniel Defoe's *Journal of the Plague Year*, a fictional account of the historical event of the Great Plague. This event has been prompted in the mind of the character because of its link with Charterhouse Square which is located at a site that served as a plague pit and with the prominence with which the area features in Defoe's *Journal*, as well as the media references within the film to the Swine Flu.

The reference to Defoe is an indication of the shaping of the character as an embodiment of the sensitivity of the *flaneur*. This literary creation inspiring the monologue of the wanderer in *The Spectator*, is according to Coverley, a prototype of the psycho-geographical report in its exploration of London as an "unknowable labyrinth", through which the author established London as "the most resonant of all psycho-geographical locations" (Coverley, 2006:15) By linking the character in the film with Defoe and more specifically with *Journal*, the film points to its structuring as a psycho-geographic exploration of an individual moving across the city reporting his observations on his experiences, mixing the personal, the historical and the fictional.

Following the sequence at Smithfield the narrative of the film moves on to the adjacent location of Barbican. Continuing with the tone of despair in the monologue, the character wanders through the Barbican Centre, around St. Giles of Cripplegate. Inserted as non-diegetic sound, the review of *The Innocents* continues to touch on the theme of afterlife, and more specifically possession, while the character keeps wandering and makes a visit to the Museum of London where he observes images related to the Great Plague and the Fire of London, events which are directly linked to the locations he has visited.

At the end of this sequence, the relationship of the journeying character and the inner monologue is transformed to exhibit another dimension of the character. Cued by the noise of a tape rewinding, the film presents the image of the *flaneur* at Bunhill Fields. The inner monologue then turns diegetic for an instant, as it is suggested that it coincides with the actions of the character, and it is indicative of his engagement in the production of a reflexive account of his experience of the everyday. This serves to bring out the productive dimension of the *flanerie* in which the character engages, as Frisby points out that as well as an activity of observing and reading, it comprehends the production of an account by the *flaneur* (Frisby, 1994:83) through which he provides an interpretative view of fragmented modern reality.

The locations of St. Giles of Cripplegate and Bunhill Fields are employed for their psycho-

geographic resonance and in order to evoke the figure of Daniel Defoe, whose work informs the character's monologue and his own activity of producing an account of his excursions, inspired by the style of the author in both *Journal of the Plague Year* and in *Robinson Crusoe*. St. Giles features for it being the site of the birth of Defoe, while Bunhill Fields for the site of a memorial dedicated to him. Furthermore, Bunhill Fields, where *The Spectator* reveals this other dimension of the character, is what Iain Sinclair identifies as “the focal point” of London psycho-geography (Coverley, 2006:35). It is burial ground of Defoe, William Blake, and John Bunyan, figures whose work Coverley argues prefigures the predominant themes of the psycho-geographical practise (urban wandering, the effect of place on human behaviour, the reworking of the city, and the political dimension of it) (Coverley, 2006:31). The evocation of the image of Defoe anticipates too the discourse that permeates the following account of a memorable film experience.

After the suggestion of a more active involvement of the character in the production of the material that composes the film – the verbal account which has featured as inner monologue – the next sequence sees him retreat to an interior setting. In what is suggested is the living place of the character, *The Spectator* establishes a closer connection between him and the testimonials by placing them together in the same space. While the testimonial on *Cast Away* plays back on a TV, he sits down and types on a computer his observations on the film experience, following the account by the reviewer. This way the film reveals the origin of the discourse on film as emanating from ordinary viewers who narrate a planned account, and is also an indication of a further involvement of the character in the material of the film. As the inner monologue has been revealed to be an account produced by him, the presence of the testimonials is suggested to be connected to his interest in investigating them.

The insertion of Jimena's account at this point in the film is crucial to linking the sense of an existential crisis in the character and his interest in the filmic world, since this stands out from the viewers' testimonials as the one which more clearly articulates the possibility of deriving some kind of existential meaning from the on-screen representation. According to Jimena, the film she talks about deals among other relevant issues with that of the meaning of life, “why we are here, or what is the trial that you go through life”. By associating this account in particular with the idea of the engagement of the character in an investigative task, *The Spectator* suggests that the character's *flanerie* is a form of experiencing modern life, analogous to film spectatorship, both seeking to derive existential security.

From the location at the most intimate space of the character, *the Spectator* moves briefly to the most distanced view of the city with a set of panoramic images, including a view of the River Thames. These act as the setting to an inner monologue that is suggestive of a sense of isolation



among an overcrowded metropolis, as it continues to express the dispirited mood of the journeyer and his pessimistic view on the existence of anything beyond the meaningless reality that he experiences. At this point the state of mind of the character can be seen directly linked with the experience in the spectator's account of *Cast Away*, which in turn is connected to Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*.

It is *Robinson Crusoe* that informs the inner monologue referring to the feeling of isolation and the longing for a reality out of the character's reach. By doing this the film emphasises the link between the reality of the character and the experiences of the spectators, as represented by Jimena's. Furthermore, the association with *Robinson Crusoe* links back to Defoe's character, a key figure in the history of psycho-geography and *flanerie*, that has recurrently featured in the psycho-geographical literary and film production. This figure, Coverley says, encapsulates all the characteristics necessary for the urban wanderer walking the unfamiliar streets. (Coverley, 2006:36)

Nevertheless, soon after the internal monologue indicates the stroller's contemplation of another outlook on life, as the result of his contact with the testimonials he investigates. The film introduces the response to *A Clockwork Orange*, pointing to the function of film as a stimulant to philosophise about the events in the everyday and the theme of violence. Besides visiting public sites in Wandsworth in search for continuity between the filmic and ordinary life, the character is presented watching a film at the interior of a cinema, which acts as a further indication of the connection between the fictional character and the film experience by bringing them together, emphasising thus the significance of this relationship.

Furthermore, in this sequence the character establishes a continuity between the fictional world of film and the historical world, as the scene at interior of the cinema is evocative of the scene on the Ludovico treatment in *A Clockwork Orange* that touches on the idea of using film for the conditioning of human behaviour, the reverse opposite of what *The Spectator* suggests is the way viewers and film interact. In addition to this, among other sites which the character visits upon his exit from the screening is a subway beneath an advertising installation that features in *Clockwork* as the setting for its opening scene, where the character is observed taking notes on the findings of his expedition.

*The Spectator* next sees the wanderer transported to the central areas of the city, towards Leicester Square and Westminster, where he is shown to continue interacting with the representations of reality housed by the movie theatres. Furthering the suggestion on the previous development of the monologue, this element manifests the character's consideration that perhaps there is after all no reality beyond the one furnished by the things and people that he experiences in the everyday, and that it might be that he lacks a perspective to experience a meaningful reality:

“Maybe after all this is all there is, but something I haven't been able to observe that reveals the truth about things. Or maybe I lack the imagination to dress them up in colour ”

A key scene reveals a more active involvement of the character, when we observe him interviewing a man at the park, presumably producing the accounts of memorable film experiences that feature throughout the film. This further emphasises his role as a producer of the material *the Spectator* is made of, which serves to characterise him as the embodiment of the *flaneur*, actively engaged in researching and generating accounts on daily life. As he promenades in the area, in the form of nondiegetic sound, the film presents the testimonial on the experience of *A Thin Red Line*, which touches on theme of war and the function of film as a way to promote reflecting on the world.

The journey then moves on to Westminster where the character stumbles upon a ceremony paying tribute to the members of the British troops that have fallen in armed conflicts, which helps the character realise that the filmic representation, represented by the testimonial on the *Thin Red Line*, is composed by the same materials which constitute the everyday. At this point the monologue suggests the final moment of realisation by the character, of his difficulty of living a rewarding existence as the result of his deficiency to derive meaning from a fragmented reality: “Perhaps some certainty promenades in front of me and I'm the one who does not understand it”

These reflections propel the character to carry out quick searches on the internet on the power of film and to look up cases of people whose lives have changed by watching a movie. The event points to his understanding of the potential of film to illuminate the world of the viewer. In his search he comes across the account of the life-changing experience of *You've Got Mail*, pointing to the theme of the increase of technology-mediated human interaction and the transformation of experience with the modern notions of time-space. At the end of this sequence, it is suggested that the character has applied for a job as a camera assistant through an advertisement he has found online. His decision occurs as the result of his understanding how film can impact in the individual in her/his relationship with the everyday, and the character's own need to engage in a meaningful activity.

On the completion of his internet search for life-changing film experiences and following his decision to change his own life, the character goes back to the reality of the streets, in the area of Bethnal Green. There he wanders around derelict sites that contrast with the rest of the locations that feature in the film, and continues to observe the way in which film can reflect issues that are ordinarily manifest in the streets but may escape the inattentive eye. The film here presents the testimonial on *Requiem for a dream*, which deals with the issue of drug addiction and indicates the function of film as a reminder of a personal experience. Upon the completion of this last excursion

in the city, the stroller returns to his private space, in which he has been previously featured.

Back at home the character is shown composing his final thoughts on his urban excursions and his last observations on the memorable film experience. In the back of the room plays the testimonial on *The Motorcycle diaries*, which by the end of the sequence occupies all the frame. While concluding his investigation, the character has received on the computer a message that invites him to be interviewed for the position of camera assistant that he has applied for. That he sought this job manifests his decision to have a productive participation in the environment he has so far been shown only observing and detached from; and furthermore, his realisation about the significant reach film may have for modern individual's existence. This transformation of the character coincides with the ending of the film. At the end of the testimonial, the stroller is seen again taking to the outside, riding the London underground, with an unknown destination.

#### **4.5 *The Spectator of Modernity and realist aesthetics***

Motivated by the founding of the work in a phenomenological conception of film stemming from Siegfried Kracauer, the film is guided by a realist aesthetics in the technical choices made in order to translate the main events of the world of the film into their filmed version presented in *The Spectator*. The continuity with realism is found in its centrality in the thought of Kracauer, who according to Dudley Andrew, is the figure who has most fully contributed together with Andre Bazin to the development of a realist film theory (Andrew, 1976:104)

The adoption of a realist aesthetics for the film, follows the central notion in Kracauer -as in Walter Benjamin- of film's ability to record and reveal the world, on whose material composition film is ultimately dependent: "films come into their own when they record and reveal physical reality" (Kracauer, 1965:xlix). As Dudley Andrew says, in the view of Kracauer, cinema unlike traditional arts that transform life, exists as its most profound when it presents life as it is (Andrew, 1976 :108). And in order to accomplish this, the technical capabilities of film must be oriented to support that primary function of the medium. However cautious of falling to the extreme of absolute realism, Andrew asserts that Kracauer recognised that "the filmmaker should be both realistic and formative; he can both record and reveal, he must both let reality in and penetrate it with his techniques. But in all these cases it is the first term which must dominate" (Andrew, 1976 :113).

The film adopts this moderate version of Kracauer's realism, to what Dudley Andrew refers as a "human realism, a realism not of fact but of intention" (1976 :113) , in its attempt to reveal a sense of the experience of modern reality as it is observable in the everyday phenomena of the city. Subordinated to the aim of the film of depicting modern everyday along the lines of the theoretical notions of this work, the form and technique of *The Spectator* are oriented to supporting the

commitment of developing a sense of living in the modern everyday as it emerges from the materials which constitute our surroundings.

By doing this it attempts to represent the idea that the filmic representation is a form of approaching reality, which is correlated with objects that populate the everyday and is founded in the world of experience. That before any filmic rationale, it is our experience of the everyday the main motivator and sense giver of the filmic experience; from it the film representation feeds and also transforms it by formal means to make it meaningful for its audience.

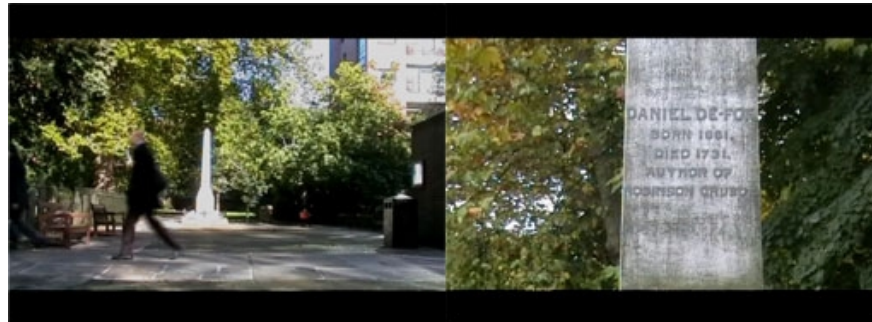
#### **4.5.1 Long takes, wide shots and deep focus photography**

One of the stylistic choices made for the filming of *the Spectator of Modernity* is the use of long takes, combined with wide shots and deep focus photography, to depict the location of the modern metropolis as a constellation of multiple signs which, as in Baudelaire's conception of modernity, transforms everyday experience into the discontinuous and fortuitous and infuses the everyday with a sense of fragmentariness. With long takes that allow the viewer of the film to contemplate and explore the sites which the film visits, wide shots which include multiple visual stimuli that impact on the modern individual, and a big depth of field to keep all elements in focus, *the Spectator* builds a depiction of the metropolis as the site of heightened stimulation that bombards the individual, and in turn demands an active effort for its interpretation.

In this sense, the film is built as a depiction of the location of the city, which invites the viewer to scrutinise it and to find by her/himself the references and images which are employed to present it as the quintessential site of modernity, through the development of the previously commented themes. As for the figure of the *flaneur* embodied in the character and the film-viewer represented by the individuals giving the testimonials on memorable film experiences, the film presents an image of metropolitan modernity which requires the attention of the viewer to capture the elements which out of the fortuitous and arbitrary *the Spectator* selects to make some sense of the experience of living in modernity.

For this reason the fragments which the character weaves into his discourse of modern existence are almost invariably introduced as existing in a space which they share with other ordinary events, and only featured after in close shots and short takes, to emphasise their significance for the character's discourse and the film's perspective on modernity and the film experience. As Bordwell and Thompson suggest, in a film primarily composed of long shots, close shots acquire a considerable force (Bordwell and Thompson, 2001:222). For instance the images of sites linked to historical characters as George Orwell and Daniel Defoe, are first presented in wide shots and long takes, as belonging to the wide space which they share with other elements and then

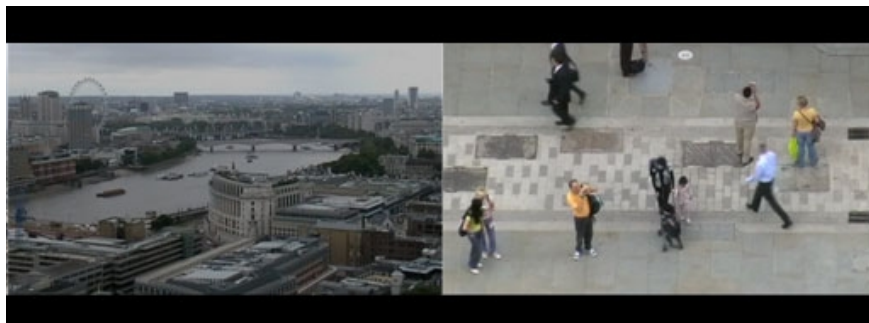
their significance for the discourse of the film is conveyed by their featuring in closer shots (and short takes).



*A wide shot establishes the presence of things as they exist in relation to the individual in the city, and the close-up allows the details to be revealed for the viewer.*

In many cases the inclusion of close shots also owes to the need of featuring images which are legible for the viewer, specially when they include written text which needs to be read for the reference to be understood, as with the images of items from the newspapers and of street signs. In the same manner, the images where the fictional character is present, also filmed in wide shots and long takes, are aimed at depicting him as one individual of the many which constitute the crowd that occupies the public places and gives place to an increase of nervous stimulation and new forms of human interaction.

The peak of this effort of the film to present the over-saturation of events in the city turning oppressive for the individual, with the use of wide shots, long takes and deep focus photography, is found at the mid-point of the film, following the first sequence with the character at an interior setting. It consists of a sequence of panoramic shots of the city of London, and an overhead of people wandering around, which coincides with the recognition in the character's monologue of his feeling of isolation amidst an over-stimulating metropolitan life which has become unmanageable for him and in response to which he has become indifferent about his surroundings.



*Wide shots dominate the film; their expressiveness is highlighted in this sequence in which the character articulates his feeling of isolation.*

The stylistic choice of long takes, wide shots and deep-focus photography used in combination, as they are employed in *The Spectator*, follows the realist aesthetics which the film adopts. According to Bazin, following this form of constructing of the diegesis, the film instils the reality it represents with a visible continuity, which allows the viewer to discern where the significance of the scene resides. (Bazin, 1971:28) This realist style aims at favouring the spectator's scrutinisation of the events depicted and to draw her/his own conclusions, which recalls the active role of the respondents in their interpretations of the films referred to in Chapter 3.

Furthermore, the adoption of this style that shows the fictional character belonging to the city location and its stimuli, makes of the film an effective representation of the relationship between the individual and the modern space s/he inhabits. The preservation of the spatial unity allows the depiction of the relationship of the individual with the architecture, street signs, advertisements, and other stimuli, as the individual may ordinarily encounter them. In this respect, the film differs from the aesthetics of the city symphonies, which in their exploration of the metropolitan environment are more montage oriented.

#### **4.5.2 Static tripod mounted shots**

Another technical choice for the filming of *the Spectator* is the framing of the familiar images of the city with a static feel, by not employing camera movements such as tilting, panning or zooming, and with all images invariably recorded on tripod-mounted shots. The dynamism in the film arises then from the natural movement found in the urban setting, in the traversing of the pedestrians, the various forms of transportation and the fluidity infused by other ordinary events depicted in the film.

Together with the use of wide shots and long takes, the static camera aims at presenting an image of the city, for the viewer to observe it and explore it. In this respect *the Spectator* is inspired by Patrick Keiller's *London*, which adopts a static point of view in its exploration of familiar images of London, so that the viewer is encouraged to see the familiar in a novel way. Keiller points out about *London* that “the whole point of making the film is to say: LOOK” (Bruzzi, 2000:120).

As in *London*, the static feel of the film is adopted as a strategy to reveal the ordinary of its events in a manner that invites the viewer to look at them and reflect upon the experience of living in metropolitan modernity following the alienated perspective of the character. As Bruzzi points out from *London* (Bruzzi, 2000:120), *the Spectator* attempts to depict the quintessential site of the fluid and fragmentary and at the same time it denies its sense of dynamism as a way to refuse celebrating

the modern city and evoke a sense of distancing, which in turn is linked to the state of mind of the fictional character. That is, it reinforces the notion of the character's permanent search to overcome his feeling of deterioration of personal experience in the modern world, suggesting his contemplative sensibility that runs against the ephemerality of the surroundings.

#### 4.5.3 Editing

Following the adoption of the technique of wide shots, long takes, and deep focus, which allow for a number of elements and actions to feature in the shots, the use of editing has been kept to a minimum, to prioritise the images recorded over their arrangement. Along the realist notion of editing of Andre Bazin (Ben-Shaul, 2007:13), this is employed as necessary transitions in space and time, between the slices of reality which the film presents. The style that dominates is then the use of direct cuts, and the utilisation of black leader to suggest a larger passage of space and time in the character's journey and occasionally between a wide shot and a tighter shot that reveals a significant detail. In few occasions, including at the beginning of the opening shot, a fade is employed as an indication of the beginning or ending of a sequence of the film.

In this sense editing is employed above all as a connective instrument to create a sense of unity of space and time in the world explored by the character and revealed by the film, with the multiple shots recorded. It allows the journey of the character to move forward, and the viewer to experience aesthetically the reality of the modern metropolis. It does not give to what we see in *the Spectator* an *a priori* significance, but it allows for the viewer to discern it from the images of the film.

According to Brian Henderson, while montage cultivates the relation between images, the inclusion of the long unedited piece is a way to structure a scene, like *The Spectator* attempts, that varies and develops without having to switch to other images (Henderson, 1976:315). He says that “[i]t is the time necessary for mise-en-scene space” Thus while instilling a sense of realism to the representation, the choice of the long take over editing, also make possible the variation of images and the development of the narrative.

Indicative of this function of the long piece of unedited film is the scene at Bunhill Fields in which we find out that the character has a closer relationship with the events in the film. As we listen to fragments of the inner monologue which the film has already presented, the image track shows the character pacing back and forth while talking to a tape recorder he is holding. While the character does this, he appears absorbed in thinking what he says and unaware of what goes on around him, similar to the passers-by in the foreground; but as the scene develops, the character's attention is suddenly drawn by the presence of a monument in his back, which he turns to see as he

has stopped walking. With a close-up it is revealed that the monument is the memorial to Daniel Defoe, a central figure informing this work. Thus built as a long take of a wide shot, the scene which functions in a first instance to reveal the character's engagement in producing a reflexive account on his view on life evolves to serve by its end as representation of the effect of fragmentary happenings in the mind of the individual. Built this way the scene represents how the metropolitan stimulation affects the unsuspecting passer-by.



*The scene at Bunhill Fields, filmed in a long shot evolves and serves to illustrate the unexpected effect of the metropolitan landscape on the city inhabitants.*

#### **4.6 Summary: *The Spectator of Modernity***

In this chapter I have presented the rationale behind the decisions I have taken in the process of making a film that reflects the theoretical notions developed in the previous chapters. In accordance with the conception of the filmic representation in this work, *The Spectator of Modernity* has been thought as a form of approaching reality – that of the metropolis – to reveal a sense of living in modern society and suggest the key role of film in rearranging the viewers' relationship to reality. Committed to this intention, the film starts from the testimonials of ordinary viewers on memorable experiences with films, which are juxtaposed with actuality material gathered in London.

By formal means I have shaped this representation of the city life as an expression of the deterioration of everyday modern experience, as it emerges from the authors on modernity considered in this work. The film resorts for this purpose to the inclusion of a fictional character modelled on the literary motif of the *flâneur* to function as a cohesive element and expressive device, to adopting the journey device as an organising principle, and in the style of the city film to presenting the unstaged material from the metropolitan topography by proposing three main motifs: the idea of mobility, the continuity between the filmic representation and the everyday, and the



individual's permanent quest for meaning. As a result of this, the film is built as a journey through the city of the fictional character living an existential crisis who investigates the possibility of infusing life with meaning with the aid of the filmic representation.

The notion which the film has aimed to express is the potential of the film representation to reduce for the viewer the unintelligibility of modern reality, by informing her/his self-identity and world-view. As the extracts from the viewers' testimonials included in the film indicate, film may be able to assist the individual in discovering something in the world which had remained invisible, or confront her/him with new perceptions on the ordinarily taken for granted. This is the realisation that the fictional character in *The Spectator* comes to at the end, in contrast with his initial disbelief in a possible meaningful engagement with reality.

For translating the ideas suggested by this work into their filmed version, *The Spectator of Modernity* follows the realist aesthetics originated in the theorising of Kracauer and Bazin. Among the stylistic choices for the film are the use of long takes with wide shots and deep focus photography, in combination with static tripod mounted shots, which are prioritised over the use of editing, that has been kept to a minimum. They follow the purpose of rendering the metropolitan reality as an environment in which the individual is immersed, and is surrounded by the multiplicity of signs that according to Baudelaire infuse the everyday with a sense of fragmentariness. This site of heightened stimulation, the film suggests, requires its contemplation and active exploration by the individual to overcome the sense of deteriorated experience; the stylistic choices of the film aim at favouring the same active role in the viewers, of scrutinizing and discerning where the significance of the ordinary events captured in the film reside.

## Appendix 1. Transcripts of Interviews

### Jimena on *Cast Away*

I would like to talk about *Cast Away*, which is a movie release in 2000 by the director Robert Zemeckis and the main character is played by Tom Hanks. I remember I saw this movie one year ago in a very cold and dark winter in 2008 and actually I was ill when I saw it so I just was, wasn't expecting really to watch a movie, I just saw something in the TV and start to watch and finally I really got caught by the story. I really liked it, especially, I don't know, there is something that maybe because it's just the story about the main character, what happened to him. Because, it's about a guy which is, his life is always ruled by the clock, and suddenly he had to survive on a crashing... on a crash landing on a desert island and he had to learn how to survive in this island. And at the beginning he was very shocked. It was impossible for him to eat or how to, because he was quite fat guy, somebody in the computer, so it was..the stuff in the island was really tough for him, and... But suddenly the time went by and he start to learn how to do fishing, how to run in the island, to know the time, to make fire, which is something very incredible for him. So there was all this physical trials that he overcome in the time... and then well... The story I think has touched me personally because when I saw it I think, the guy was four years in the island and also I felt that my staying in London, because I am South American, had been also four years, and during this time also I had to, I felt that I lost a lot of things and the main character as well, he lost everything he had. But at the same time he became in somebody different, somebody stronger. And I feel that I did myself, and I felt, because I wasn't expecting to stay alone in Europe and I had to do it like that. And also the beginning was very tough period but actually I had become in somebody different as I think as the character. But what happened in the movie at the end is like he really managed to go back to the civilisation, I mean he managed to build a boat because he is thinking into really to go back to to his world because he wants to find his girlfriend again, and the guy, it was very difficult, the sea, was very tough. And suddenly he lost his, I mean, the main friend he had was Wilson, was a ball. That was his only friend and in the sea he just lost Wilson, and he just felt so lonely and totally helpless and I think he feel he is ready to die, totally. And there is a night, I mean, there is a shot in the movie which is just him crying and the boat floating in the sea, and appears this incredible whale and you really think that he is gonna to die and he feels he is gonna die. But actually I think the presence of the whale in the movie means something like of God, this extremely overwhelming power of nature, which actually for the character... for me.. I mean in the character means like this

second opportunity that Chuck, the character, has to have other life. Because you think that the whale of course is gonna kill him, but actually the animal didn't kill him. So the animal just go away. It is amazing because he carry on in the boat... actually for me was the big trial that he got with the whale and in that moment he is rescued by a ship. And he has to face a second trial, emotionally, and emotion trial when he arrives to the civilisation because actually his girlfriend is already married and he feels he doesn't have anything again but actually he realised that he had became in somebody stronger and another kind of man and maybe that woman wasn't anymore suitable for him so his... it's gonna.. appear like a new character, maybe they're gonna be with him at the end... I don't know. And I think well, about the relevant issues that this movie touch. I think there is a religious issue and then there is this maybe philosophical issue about the meaning of life, about why we are here, or what is the trial that you go through life, and that's very, I think is very interesting. It's a very simple storyline but I think is very well done. And I always recommend this movie, though I'm careful about recommending this movie, because actually you know is a character in the island which is just alone all the time, so it's just one character. So of course, for no any people is gonna watch the whole thing. It might be quite hard. Maybe I would recommend it to somebody who is already, you know, into his thirties or something, who have already lived an experience like that one, and ready to see a movie like that. Maybe I could compare the movie with *Gladiator* maybe, because the storyline is quite similar, in the way that *Gladiator* as well lost everything that he had and he had to live other life and to find the way to his family, I mean in the death, and as well is quite religious stuff. And yeah, I think is a beautiful movie that I would have loved really created, is a really really beautiful story.

## Timothy on *Ghost*

Hello hello my name is Timothy and I am here today because I'd like to talk to you about a movie that I saw recently with a friend of mine, we rented the movie in recommendation by my mum and she said it was something I would enjoy and probably connect with. The movie entitled is *Ghost*, and the actors are Patrick Swayze, who just passed away, you know, God rest his soul. A wonderful, wonderful actor and person; and Demi Moore and Whoopi Goldberg. And for those who haven't seen the movie I'd like to talk a little bit about the story. The story is kind of personal to me and affected me in a personal way. I was with a good friend on a quiet night, in a fairly good mood and calm, when I first remember watching the film. The story is about a wonderful beautiful couple, Demi and Patrick Swayze, extremely in love and has a very tragic event in it were Patrick Swayze is killed, and unfortunately was killed by a good friend, of all things, and greed being the so called accomplice. And then it comes in a wonderful Whoopi Goldberg with medium capabilities, in the form of speaking as for clairvoyance and medium communication and such things like that. I was expecting from the movie, of course with Whoopi there has to be some kind of laughter and lightheartedness and with Demi there has to be passion, love and dedication and perseverance and with Patrick Swayze just an unbelievable performance; anything he does or has done, and total dedication to the character and making it very very very believable. So I was kind of expecting that, knowing the characters that were in it. I do watch the movie periodically, I bought one actually, and do recommend it to a lot of my friends and I bring the movie up in different conversations in different social events and private affairs. I always try to pass on some of the good feelings in me and kind of changed actually my perspective on things for permanent, actually permanently changed my perspective on things. Believing in spirit, kind of piqued my interest on a personal level and it reminds me when my brother died, and I was saying goodbye to him all alone. It was in a airless room, no air conditioning, no windows and I was saying goodbye to him and no longer than ten minutes was I in there and the door to a closet actually closed and to me that was kind of like a closing, you know, a closing to the event and it really affected me and I truly believe that he did this, 100% percent. That was an unusual experience, very unusual, it kind of scared me but it made me happy at the same time. And I believe I most identify with and compare my own experiences through my life with Patrick Swayze. As well I can relate with the capability to foresee things and events previous to them happening, several times through my life in different experiences. And like Whoopi Goldberg portrayed, I believe that the film will continue to inspire people to think more seriously about the possibilities of some of this events throughout this movie; prayer, dedication, and perseverance and belief, really goes a long way... well, I take my own personal experiences

very seriously and to heart now. This is something I have taken from the movie, and I truly believe what I experienced was true and was real. What else... I guess the more I watch the movie periodically, the more I pick up on events and emotions that I missed in the previous viewing. And there's a lot of little things that you miss and you would be amazed, just watch the movie two or three times, of several different things, that little tidbits that you missed on the first time. It only confirms to me the possibility of communicating with the spirits, it's true, and my own personal experiences are assurance that I'm not the only one with this perspective and belief. I truly believe that the movie will and does inspire people to indulge in the belief, in the possibilities of this events truly happening in their life as well. And I believe if you truly believe, hard enough, anything is possible, absolutely anything is possible. So this movie kind of lived up to my expectations. And you know there's tons of romance and true love with Patrick Swayze and Demi Moore, not only spoken, but love is there in abundance, and you can see that throughout the movie and it's filled with hopes and dreams and plans of the perfect future and then there's a dose of suspense. Who is the evil villain, you know, that inflicted such pain on this beautiful loving couple, and why? The ultimate question. At what cost? You know, why, why did the person do it. Whoopi Goldberg character was alarmingly humorous and added a lighter tone, overtone, and a pleasant break for wiping your tears and chills and goose bumps that you get. And in a strange way it confirms to most people that karma is really true, what comes around goes around. And your belief and your strength in belief will create situations for you and opportunities for you if you envision it and if you put that train of thought out constantly it will and can possibly come through or present itself in your life. And most of all there's always an opportunity to say goodbye. Through belief and prayers the spirit truly lives on. It has been not proven, but just in general, people, I would say 90% believe that the spirit lives on in the soul. I personally loved the movie, it hit me in my heart, it took me to places that I know. Now confirms to me the reality of the possibilities of the wonderful things that happen in this movie and a wonderful conclusion. They got to give a kiss goodbye, and you know, he went on to heaven and he took care of his business and he was in peace, and she was in peace and the drama was great, the action was great, the cinematography and the editing, fantastic. I just loved the movie. So that's about it, just wanted to say that and thank you for listening and again my name is Timothy and I hope to be talking to you soon about another film. I'll be renting something and see if it's interesting enough to make a little documentary on. Talk to you soon. Bye bye for now.

## Matthew on *Motorcycle Diaries*

Hi my name is Mathew and today I want to talk about the movie the *Motorcycle Diaries* and how it changed my life. If you haven't heard about the movie the *Motorcycle Diaries* is about Che Guevara, extensively about these diaries that he kept while he took this massive road trip with a buddy of his from Argentina over to Chile and then all the way up the west coast to South America. It was meant to be a sort of coming of age trip, but at the movie says he did more than come of age, he developed.. he strongly developed the political beliefs that would go on to lead him to his great revolutionary hearts. Personally I wasn't that taking about the politics of the film, is not too strong so I was able to ignore it. My politics are very much different so that's.. so although that's what the movie is markedly trying to foist on you I think there was other things I could think away from the movie, and I did take away from the movie and it has irreversibly changed the course of my life. ... Something I've realised with many movies and songs is that you don't really realise that they've changed your life until you look back through your personal past and try to figure out what exactly set you in a certain direction, and that's the case with the *Motorcycle Diaries*. Currently I'm spending a lot of time studying Spanish. I've dedicated this year to two goals; one of them is to develop an income from the internet and the other one is to learn Spanish. So I've been studying Spanish every day and also, not only that, I'm going to Spain for three and a half months from August until December, basically for the purposes of learning Spanish. I want to be fluent, basically fluent in Spanish by the end of the year, that's my goal. And someone asked me the other day why Spanish? And I could list a bunch of reasons you know, there's a bunch of fantastic reasons to learn Spanish, it's a great language, but after the conversation I looked back and I realised that it was actually the movie the *Motorcycle Diaries* , that is what triggered that change. After the *Motorcycle Diaries* I developed a bit of an interest in some of the cultural aspects of the film like the music for example, I went out and found the soundtrack. I also took a bit of Spanish language and found out what would it be like to travel to South America but the cost of it was so high, so completely high that I forgot about it... But this year I was kind of sitting around and trying to figure out what my goals were and I realised that I had the opportunity to go to Spain. I can save enough money and learn a language, and that's what I've done, all based on this initial state of interest that was placed in me by the *Motorcycle Diaries*. Now I guess the question has to be asked, like, I watch a lot of foreign language films, Spanish, French, German, whatever, I just love seeing how other cultures look at the world in terms of their film. However, what about this movie? Well, firstly I think the *Motorcycle Diaries* show that there's, like, Spanish language obviously, but it can be understood through all the countries in South America and some of the impression that I got was that the

Spanish of, to say Argentina, or Chile, or Peru, or Colombia, was so different that it was basically impossible for anyone else to understand and I realise now that that's a myth. And something I wanted to do is learn a language that could be spoken in many countries around the world, not just confined to one, like Italian. Secondly, something that made Spanish language attractive in that film was I saw that the language had quite a close relationship with English and I realised that it wouldn't take an extreme amount of time like learning another language might would, just say Chinese or Arabic, where you have to spend a couple of years in the country. Something else that I found very attractive was the extremely rich depths of cultural history that exist, because there's like I guess so many countries that speak Spanish that have a rich a cultural heritage from that, and in the movie a couple of times you get them, you get the characters quoting different poets and they try to play a game to try and see which poet it was, and I found the poetry very beautiful, although I couldn't understand it in Spanish, I remember wishing at the time "I wish I could", you know, I wish I could rate that in its original language and appreciate it for what is worth. I've only been studying Spanish since January so I'm not even anywhere near that goal, but I can read a lot of Spanish now and speak quite a bit as well, which I'm very happy with. I've watched *Motorcycle Diaries* probably four or five times since then, mostly for the purposes of showing other people because I love it, it's a fantastic movie. It's very well shot, in a beautiful location and the dialog is also quite funny and very well written as well. I think that's part of the reason why I found Spanish language attractive, was because probably because the dialog between the characters almost make you feel like, you wish were in a trip with them, you wish you were buddies with Che and his friend, whose name I forget. You wish you were there with them and laughing along with their jokes as well, which is a very effective piece of filmmaking really to think about it. Yeah and that's about all I have to say about this film.

## **Nikhil on *The Last King of Scotland***

Hello I'm here to tell a review about a movie, that is *the Last King of Scotland*. I remember watching the poster of this movie, at the Liverpool Street Station where I was about to go for my work, and I remember an African guy sitting on a chair, with his army uniform, and the name of the movie is *The Last King of Scotland*, and I was like surprised, what would be this movie. And then I saw the ratings and it was like three point five, four, and I was really excited to watch the movie. And when I when I went to work I just had a word with a friend, a colleague, and I just told him what I had seen on the poster and even had watched the movie and was really excited, and he wanted me to watch the movie. So I just went home and after a couple of weeks I remembered a friend of mine had the DVD and we just watched the movie and was really really out of the world man, right from the beginning. It was a doctor, that's doctor Garrigan, which is played by James McAvoy, and he is really adventurous guy and he takes a globe and he revolves the globe and finds a place to go and start his work and he lands up in Uganda, and right from the beginning of the movie you are in an entirely different world. The camerawork that has been done is fabulous, the music is so authentic that it really takes you close to the culture of the Uganda. The lifestyle that is that has been shown in the movie, it's spectacular, it's so in detail work and then you start to get closer to the main lead character of the movie which is played by Forrest Whitaker, and that is the character of Idi Amin, a dictator who ruled Uganda during 1970's and how he ruled the country and how patriotic he was for his nation and how possessive he gets about things and it well end up suffering lots of people. But overall the movie is really a great artwork to watch. And especially I like the music part to begin with, it is so authentic, I mean it is quite hard to find a movie that will show the lifestyle, the culture through its, not just through its pictures, but also through its music. I remember the first scene that I had seen, about Idi Amin's entry. It's like a group of people in a village waiting for their new dictator, the president to come, and the combos, the drums their playing and people with those tribal clothes and they are literally for him to come and he comes and there is a roar of people and you literally feel you around over them, you literally find them around you. And then he comes and he delivers his speech saying that he is one of them, and the accent that he speaks in, the way he speaks in, it's just so genuine. I believe Forrest Whitaker must have taken lots of efforts to develop that accent. Even the make-up that has been done to him. It's so different from his previous movies. I mean it is someone, I never felt like it is Forrest Whitaker, it's someone from the people, within the people. And I believed they have achieved what they wanted to do with his clothing, his uniform, those badges that are being shown. They are really fine, I really liked that work. Now from moving music, make-up, I really liked the camerawork as well. Lots of places, I



find, I believed that they must have used some filter to get to that 1970's mood, but I really liked that, it really took me to that mood. And in lots of instances I found that the camera is unsteady a bit unsteady, and like real, real to me, something genuine. Apart from the camerawork I really liked the editing as well, I don't remember any instant where I was taken back out of the movie, every now and then there was something different and I really liked that. The editing is fine. Now apart from the editing work, I'm really fine with the concept. Like it's the movie, shows you something like history, something has happened about thirty years back from now, but is not a history lesson, and has been portrayed so artistically that I believe everyone should watch. And there's another movie that is coming out, I would pretty much find resemblance with *the Last King of Scotland*, and that's *Valkyrie*. It's a Tom Cruise based movie and it is quite similar, even in the same movie they have a historic character which is played by Tom Cruise, but again, I'm quite assuming, I haven't watched the movie and I think is going to be a real nice work again, a worth watch as well. Apart from all these aspects like music, cinematography, editing, I think I would recommend people this movie because it's a historic based movie but there is always an adventure, a thrilling part of it because of this character James McAvoy who always lands up in some thrilling things and you would literally find him doing something strange and I'm sure, I won't disclose it right now, I want you to watch what is the thrilling part in it. And he is always up to do something adventurous. So it's not just history not just adventure, it's really blended together, and the climax literally holds your breath man. You just wait to watch the climax, and he eventually gets what he has to achieve. So if I had to rate this movie, I would have rated this movie like four or five. But it's being quite long I have seen the movie for the first time, and the again I watched it again, say about three months after watching my first time. And I had slight changes in my view after watching it for the first time and the second time. In some instance I found that Forrest Whitaker, the Idi Amin character, he speaks with his local people, his close ones, like his ministers and his bodyguards in English, and I felt that it would have shown it in some of the local language, the conversation between them and they would have shown some subtitles in there, that would have made it more genuine, more real to me. But it's fine because there are quite instances where you find people speaking in the local language. That gets me closer to it and that's what I want to watch in the movie. I don't want them to shoot the entire movie in English just for the people to know what they're speaking. You can show it in the local language and you can show the subtitles in there. That makes it more real. So that's what it is, a spectacular, thriller, fiction, and a historic based movie which I would definitely want people to watch and to know what people have suffered at that time. Also maybe we can take the best part out of Idi Amin, that he was really a patriotic guy but he was so excited that he failed to see the negative side of his dictatorship and people landed up in suffering. Thanks for watching the review.

## Steve on *A Clockwork Orange*

I would like to talk about a film that I saw when I was fifteen years old. I went to see it with a friend of mine in the local cinema in Uxbridge. That film was the *Clockwork Orange*, and always had mixed reviews over the years and it disappeared for a long long time because the director withdrew from release in the UK. When I went to see it at the age of fifteen, I think all I saw was a film glorifying violence. The violence was very stylised in it and at that age I was very immature. This all seemed fantastic, this violence, there was fantastic music in it. There were lots of elements to pick from it, like the uniforms that the boys in the gang wore. It almost washed over me, this film, with this collage of color, it used a number of special effects. It was, by the way, the very very first film to use dolby sound. Basically it's a film about a chap called Alex, who has a gang of three other people and it's set in the future, although the film was made in 1969, it's set in the future, we're not quite sure when in the future, and it's not a science fiction at all. And it's about this feral gang roaming the streets, just causing trouble. Alex gets caught and gets sent to an institution jailed for life, and he finds he can get out of this jail sentence if he subjects himself to a course of therapy, and that therapy consists of watching violent films whilst being given drugs which will make him vomit every time he sees anything violent of any type. So the message of the film really is, that this young man, although he's been cured from his unsocial behaviors, he doesn't have any free choice in what he does, because we see then him tested and every time he tries to retaliate against an attack he starts to feel sick and he vomits and he can't do anything. So I guess you're asking yourself, or, you know, the message of the film is: does it matter? He's not know being a nuisance, he's not hurting anyone anymore, because in fact he goes to prison for murdering somebody. The fact that he's got now no choice, do we care? Do we really care? Is it important? And that's really the message behind the film. I saw the film many many years later, and I think I saw it in a slightly different way. The violence is quite extreme, but never I don't think, to the point of being the point of the film. The violence is not the point of the film. The message really comes across, it is a violent film, he does commit a number of very violent acts in the film. There isn't blood all over the place, it's not that type, but it's quite clear in the way that the film is framed that the violent is quite extreme. We seeing him kicking someone and we see him smash a large piece of ceramic, in fact it's in the shape of a penis, into a woman lying on the ground. We don't see any blood, and in fact the filming is a collage of colorful images, but certainly you get the message that it is quite violent. And I think having seen the film many many years later, the message, or the prediction made in the very late 60's, and to what's happening today does not that extreme, which sort of makes the film quite relevant today. The predictions that are made in the film, the book was written by Anthony Burgess

and the predictions that he makes are not that farfetched. It was certainly very violent in 1969, 1970, when it came out, and in fact the world was a different place back then, so it would've appeared to be more violent in itself, certainly some of the acts that are performed in the film probably don't seem that violent if you read about them in a newspaper today you wouldn't think anything of it. So perhaps a little bit of the message has got lost within the film or the message of what life would be like has got lost. The film would've seen a lot more extreme, a lot more violent on its release. The film has certainly got a real quality feel about the way it has been made, the brilliant use of color, the brilliant use of classical music. It has a very, although it's got lots of violence in it, is not made to seem unnecessary. The violence is almost sectioned. This is a piece of violence, look at it, this is a piece of violence, look at it, this is a piece of violence, look at it. This is how bad this person is, look how he's gone through these separate stages of violence to become a murderer and now he's gone to prison for committing this murder. So we have seen the buildup of Alex's behavior and how he eventually gets caught, in fact he gets betrayed by his gang members. In fact, the dynamics within the gang are quite violent. On his release from prison, after he has gone through his treatment, he gets to meet his fellow gang members. Two of them are now in the police force. And he suffers more abuse on their hands, of course now with the treatment he is not able to defend himself. So again we come back to this message, you know, he doesn't have any free choice anymore and he is not able to defend himself, but, do we really care? He is not a violent individual anymore. Certainly I think the message is as true today, or the warning if you like, from the film, is as true today as it was back then. Perhaps it needs to be made in a more extreme way. I do very much fear for the way society is going. Because, the film when I first saw it as I said it seemed a stylish film, it was full of violence, it was quite enjoyable if you like, at the age of fifteen from that purely fairly low level. But now I look at it, and I don't see anything enjoyable about it at all, the violence is quite horrific, as I said is not explicit violence, is nothing explicit about it, you don't see any bloods or guts or anything like that. And it's quite sad, in many ways, that you see that we are not ridiculously away from the predictions that are made in that film. I feel the childhood that I had, is totally different to the childhood that children have today, and in many ways this violence becomes part of their lives. Again, part of what was predicted in the film, I mean Alex and his gang are very violent and they don't question this at all, so there's no point trying to, I guess, give them any other type of treatment other than the treatment that they get to prevent them from being like they are.

## Chris on *Requiem for a Dream*

Hello my name is Christopher and I'm here to talk about the *Requiem for a Dream* movie. I would like to recommend this movie to everybody, to everybody, and especially to those who just like a number of us who came upon a drug addiction of any sort in his life, or has got a friend with related troubles or seen it in a family or somewhere. *Requiem for a dream* isn't exactly a junkie movie or a drug movie, it's more like addiction in men's behavior, as addiction for us could be anything. You can get hooked up to escape reality, at work, television, sex, emotions, hope and things like that, which are not exactly drugs. And then we can get hooked up on legal drugs, like alcohol, television, cigarettes, caffeine. And then we have those illegal ones, cocaine, and LSD and DMA, weed, just to name the most common ones. So the story of the movie is, follows the destiny of five characters and their experiences over 3 seasons, summer, winter and fall. Two characters are friends who live in this drug kind of suburbs of Coney Island in New York. Another character is one of the friends' partner, his girlfriend, and also his mother is another character. They all at some point get hooked up on drugs or get affected by drug related behavior somehow. The boys decided to run some drug business and buy some cocaine and try to sell it on the streets, which works in the beginning but then it fucks itself up. To get more money the girlfriend is forced into prostitution, and the mother's character follows completely a separate line but she also gets hooked up on the drugs. She gets a call from the television that she is gonna be on the telly, and she tries to fit in her dress from 20 years ago, and after failing some of the diet she gets hooked up on taking pills to stop her from feeling hungry, and she gets hooked up and loses her mind and loses her sanity and her life, and actually she loses her son as well, and she ends up in the hospital with electroshocks. The two boys end up in the jail and one of them is losing his arm as it gets infected by shooting through his veins. There is a big, there is a great technical approach to this movie, which uses too much of split screen and repetition, also music, the soundtrack it's based upon that, also uses lots repetition for each emotion they repeat. And the story is written by Hubert Selby, whose another book, *Last exit to Brooklyn*, made a huge impact on me when I read it the first time, but I didn't know anything about *Requiem for a Dream*. I do collect movie soundtracks so I heard the soundtrack before, and it got my interest because it's a combination of Kronos Quartet with electronics, which I think is a great combination, a great work of modern classical art. I also did knew that the movie won a couple of prizes, one of them was an Oscar for Ellen Burstyn. Ellen Burstyn is one of my most favorite actors when it comes to mothers characters; she played mother on an Scorsese and she played a mother on another movie which I can't remember the name of, but they all were strong dramatical studies of a mother's character. Well, this mother's character gets its worst. The reason why I'm pointing at to

the mother's character is that this movie has got a personal impact on me because my mother did use to get hooked up on pills, antidepressants and other kind of crap, and to watch this character actually losing it and losing it all and go through this martyrdom of electroshocks in the hospital stuff, it was just heartbreaking for me. As well because she is the only one who gets into the drug addiction as an innocent person, not knowingly, not willingly. So I think this movie is very, is actually one of the most important movies that has been done in the recent ages and I would recommend it to everybody, not even people who's got drug related problems, or experience with the drug use, but to everybody because it could help actually, it could help save lives to show you the repetition of a wrong behavior you have taken that leads to addiction, and also gives you one hell of a big kick in the nuts as how the things could end at the end, where they could lead, and what is the aftermath of all as I said one loses their arm, the mother loses her sanity and the girlfriend loses her pure self by getting hooked up on prostitution to get the drugs. And I would also recommend this movie for its technical side, which is very innovative and very revolutionary, for the music, for the characters, for the work of the actors in it, like not only Ellen Burstyn but everybody's character is perfectly matched. But the most important thing is the emotional impact of the movie, even on a larger scale. We had seen with a couple of friends having a spliff and just getting on with a nice evening and we've been deeply depressed for several days or even weeks after watching this movie. Just to compare a couple of movies, I would compare this movie to *Traffic* and *Trainspotting*, as *Traffic* being a little brother of this *Requiem for a Dream*, as showing the life of each junkie and effects which drugs takes upon on them and would also refer to *Traffic* movie which is also a kind of mosaic complex movie showing different characters but talks more about the social and political background of drug business. So watching those three movies together you get a complete point of view of the drug life and drug addicted behavior, but *Requiem for a Dream* is the most strongest one and the most emotional, it's got the most psychical background and also just everybody can relate to this movie really. So, that's pretty much all, *Requiem for a Dream*, Darren Aronofsky, Ellen Burstyn, Jared Leto, I recommend everybody to watch.

## Edward on *the Thin Red Line*

Hello my name is Edward. I'm going to be talking about a film called *the Thin Red Line*. Is a film that I chose from several others that I could've talked about, but there were many reasons I chose this film. Is now 10 years old, which kind of surprises me to think that is 10 years since I saw it. I saw it in London, at the Screen on The Green in Islington, which is a very lovely cinema, that's a very intimate atmosphere. My memory of the film itself, the atmosphere of the film is very specific. There was a real hush in the cinema, there seemed to be a real reverence from the very beginning of this film, some rapport that the audience had with the film. I read reviews of it , and I also knew Terrence Malick's work - it's directed by American Terrence Malick. He had only made two films in the previous nearly 20 years. His first film was *Badlands* with Martin Sheen and Sissy Spacek followed 8 years later I think by another film called *Days of Heaven*. He's renowned for the fact that he really, he is a real "author" as they call them. He doesn't make very many films and when he does make them there seems to be a stampede for actors and actresses to take part in the films because he just seems to have this magnetism and his films are just outstanding, they're atmospherically astonishing. And, I hadn't thought about this, but he works with a Japanese-American cinematographer whose name escapes me at the moment. There's a real continuity in all the films, of atmosphere, and I think that's what distinguishes *the Thin Red Line* from other war films. For those who don't know the film or haven't seen it, it's a film set in I think it's 1941 or 42 on a Pacific Island called Guam or based on that, and it starts, it opens with the main character called Witt who is a white American soldier, who's presumably been drafted to fight along with other soldiers against the Japanese in the Pacific, and he's gone awol and he is with another soldier and they're on this very paradise like island with black native black population. It just has this really dream like atmosphere, it's very beautiful. Then it very rapidly changes because he is picked up by a patrol boat and then it switches very rapidly to him and all the other soldiers in a troop carrier boat which is actually going to be part of the first wave of assaults on the Island of Guam. And story unfolds and follows.. there isn't much of a story in the sense of action and in the sense of ... events. It simply follows this group of soldiers or several troops of soldiers through the action, as they land on the beach they all are forced to go up the mountainside, there is effectively a massacre. The Japanese [...] have a bunker on the hillside with a machine gun, so they are so strategically placed that whatever the American troops do they just get manded down. So it could easily have been a very run of the mill film it someone else's hands but because of Terrence Malick and also the cinematographer, it was described in the review that finely I read, which I was really struck by as a zen war movie and I'm very interested, well I was then particularly interested in Buddhism and

eastern philosophy and I thought well that's a interesting combination; I wonder how those two things will work together. And I think for me the way that it stands out from other war films is for example during this first wave of attacks, which is really, is quite graphic, I mean there are limbs flying everywhere. You see people dying, being shot to pieces. In the midst of this chaos of men dying and quite familiar war images of death and destruction and injury, you see things like a young soldier is lying on the grass, taking cover, and he strokes this piece of grass, which is, I don't know the name of the plant but there's a plant that when you stroke it closes up. And it's beautifully observed. And then in the same series, cut between men running, dying, being blown to pieces, you see a baby bird that's falling out of the nest. And it somehow brings in this wider context of the fact that war doesn't just affect the men involved. It's actually, in this instance, it was assault on nature. And I've never seen that before, I've never seen the way that a war actually seems to impact on the environment. So that's one scene that really stands out. There's another scene when they're further up the hill, they actually taken out the Japanese machine gun emplacement and they're going all out to attack on this Japanese camp and it's one of the most moving scenes. I remember in the cinema particularly, although I've seen it three or four times since on DVD. What's astonishing about it, the noise of the battle is audible but is very quiet, it's very much in the background and what you actually hear is the soundtrack which just builds and builds. It's a very subtle soundtrack by Hans Zimmer who's now become an extremely well known score writer. But it builds to this climax and it's just so emotional. You know, again there is this very familiar chaos of war films, but also, I don't know who wrote the script, I think it must've been Malick, throws these very humans moments. You see one Japanese guy meditating in the midst of this chaos around him as people are being shot... his colleagues... colleagues? comrades I mean, are being shot to pieces and they, everyone just ignores him. So it has this sense of enclosure around certain people, having certain energy. It is very philosophical, it's very... it cuts very successfully between... the archetypal war scenes and what's actually going on in the soldiers' minds. There are two characters in particular I really relate to in the film. One I think is the sort of character that everyone watching the film would probably like to be like, who is the main character, I mentioned at the beginning, called Witt. And he... is, it's an interesting combination, he is very masculine but at the same time he has this very feminine side, very nurturing. He's, at one point he is volunteering as a Red Cross man and you just see the tenderness with which he handles the man who is either dying or very seriously injured and washes the blood off with his bottle, strokes his hair and it's just beautifully done [...] And the other character who I related to, and I thought was more accessible as a human in terms of his fallibility and his flawed character is a lawyer called Captain Staros, played by Elias Koteas, a Greek or Armenian-Canadian actor I believe he is. And he is in charge of a battalion of men who

are supposed to be one of the first waves who would've effectively be massacred. And he refuses to let them go up there, and he has this extraordinary encounter on the field telephone with Nick Nolte, who is the psychotic General or Coronel, I'm not sure of which rank, but quite senior man who is basically yelling down the phone to him: "Send your men out, they've got to be there". Elias Koteas' character, Captain Staros, is very matter of fact and he says "the time is such and such and I'm refusing to obey your order", because obviously this could be a court martial offence. Later Nick Nolte arrives, the attacks finished and he is ultimately, he is sent home with honors, because this captain Nick Nolte says to him "you're just not tough enough". And I remember thinking, again is extraordinary in a war film to have this exchange between a very typical soldier figure, Nick Nolte's character, and Captain Staros' character, who really doesn't understand why men have to die. And it's extraordinary, because it really made me question, absolutely, why would you go to war, why would people fight. Because if you go, you're gonna die probably or be injured. And to actually have a character, a male character, who's a strong male, masculine character who refuses to let his men die, I found this extremely profound. There is a sense of story unfolding as well in the film, so there are these main characters and strands to it. And as I said it ends with a shot of a coconut. It is very very beautifully filmed, the music is absolutely stunning, there's a lot of well known actors in it but they all have this very short cameos, and I remember reading at the time that there literally was this fight from very well known A list Hollywood male stars. There's only one female character, briefly, who doesn't even speak I think. So it's a very sort of male dominated film. That's one of the things that I like about it, it shows to me the real camaraderie of men, and is not necessarily that they're suffering, but the fact that they're just these ordinary men in an extraordinary situation. I would thoroughly recommend, anyone who likes philosophy and war, to see this film, because it brings the two together in a way that I have never seen in another war film, and I've seen quite a lot. It takes the war movie genre to a completely different place, and his work it's just outstanding, so if you haven't seen this film I thoroughly recommend that you either watch it, preferably in the cinema, if you ever get a chance to see it in the cinema, because it's a very big film. Watch that film.



## **Polis on *the Innocents***

I first heard about Jack Clayton's *Innocents* in 1998, I was thirteen, I just got the Internet so I was really thrilled with my 56 gig in action and spent the whole day researching films, which is not what most thirteen year olds did, but that was me. And I somehow came across this film *The Innocents*, and I had been hearing that it was a great British chiller and was really looking forward to watching it, and five years later I got my wish. I was eighteen now, was at school, and I just saw that it was going to be on TV one night, just by accident, and stayed up late on a school night to watch it. And I was completely thrilled and hooked since then, I watch it at least three times a year. I've shown it to so many people, I just tell everybody about it, because more people need to know it. It is sadly neglected. I mean, most people tend to think of crime dramas and gangster thrillers with Cockney guys and funny names when they think British Cinema. They don't necessarily think psychological horror or even ambiguous drama, because ambiguous it is, that's one thing that I really love about *the Innocents*, it speaks on that level, my love of the things that are unexplained in cinema. I don't necessarily like to be told what is going on and what to think and what to make of characters, and *the Innocents* does this perfectly. It's an adaptation of Henry James novella the *Turn of the Screw*, which I actually read before seeing the movie, which was good I think, it was a good way to go. And it's about a nineteenth century governess who has to look after some orphan children when their uncle decides he rather enjoy the world than be about to live and look after them. And this character Miss Giddens is quite sexually repressed and she begins to suspect that the children are being possessed by the ghosts of the previous governess, Miss Jessel and her brutish lover Quint, and that through the children are now somehow continuing their sort of affair. Which is very kinky stuff, I mean, is a good way to spend a lonely rainy afternoon. But yes, things are definitely sinister and the kids are definitely precocious but it is ultimately left up to the viewer to decide whether this is a ghost story or whether it's just a portrayal of a repressed woman losing her mind. Jack Clayton reflects it through the soundtrack a lot as well, *The Innocents* has a brilliant layered soundtrack. And I marvel at its filmmaking, I mean as a filmmaker myself, it means a lot to me, because of the way it is made, it is so beautifully turned out. And so well written, the script by Truman Capote, is ingenious, I mean he infuses with this southern gothic element as well, so you have the image of a spider coming out of a cherub's statue's mouth and other crazy stuff like that. And it still shocks, really; I mean the people I have shown it to I think weren't really expecting much of it because it is from 1961, but everybody is completely stunned in certain segments, like when Miles, the boy, kisses Miss Giddens, the governess and the camera just lingers on the lips, so you think, does he

know what he is doing? Is he toying with her? Is he not so innocent? And does she like it? That's a very controversial statement now, but this film does come from a time when British cinema was brave, it didn't just stick to the rules that it had created for itself. And the ending, in particular, something that greatly appeals to me because it makes you go what the hell did I just see, you have no idea. Just as in the book, you don't know, it's a very ambiguous ending; no one knows what happens in it, but you know, you feel shocked to the core, and it's a testament to the film's ingenuity that it still carries so much weight. Every film I make, I would want to have the same emotional as well as intellectual impact of *the Innocents*. It does affect the viewer, it's a very powerful film, and it definitely haunts you. And every film I make, I will definitely have Jack Clayton and *The Innocents* in spirit with me. It's amazing, everybody should watch it. Thank you.

## **Kevin on You've Got Mail**

Hi, my name is Kevin and I'd like to tell you how the show You've Got Mail changed my life. It was December 1998 and I had been divorced about a year. I was at a point in my life where I was looking to move forward, to find love again. But I really wasn't too much for the bar scenes, there wasn't anybody at work that I was interested in. I went to see the show You've Got Mail, I'm not sure why I went to see that, other than maybe I was really bored. But I sat there in the theater and I watched as these two people, Meg Ryan and Tom Hanks, developed this relationship online with one another. The story is a very interesting one; how these two people had, were involved in relationships with other people but those relationships were not meeting their needs so they both turned to the chat rooms and found each other, and they developed a strong relationship with one another just online without ever having met. The story is an interesting one, it's funny, but the story itself isn't what really changed my life so to speak, but it's the idea of the technologies they were using. At the time I was a bit of a Luddite. I didn't have a computer, I knew nothing about being online I didn't have a cell phone, much less a pager. I couldn't afford those technologies and I also felt that being online was a big waste of time and I didn't want to get myself over that. But I watched this unfold and I thought this is kind of interesting. I'm not much for the bar scenes, maybe this is a way that I can get out there and put myself out to get to meet people. And so in a few weeks of watching the movie I had my computer and my little AOL disk, internet on training wheels, and popped it in the computer and soon found the chat rooms and soon grew tired of the chat rooms. They were not really meeting my needs, I wasn't finding anybody there really connecting. But I noticed one day a link on AOL's homepage, called Digital Cities. I clicked on that and it opened up to a bunch of personal ads from people all over the Country or you could narrow it down to your city. And I narrowed it down to the Metro area here in Minneapolis and I started getting some connections with some people, and exchanging emails. I had a date within a few days of trying the site I set up a date with a woman named Christy and we went out, and there was no connection and it bombed. But that didn't deter me, it just made me more determined that I was going to make this work and I answered some more ads and I then got a response from a woman on the north end of the city whose name is Tammy and we met online and chatted, exchanged some emails and chatted some more and then later in the week we talked on the phone, for a couple of days later we talked for a few hours on the phone and we really got to know each other. That was part of the sort of treatment that you get, before you ever met this person, you can really get to know them, rather than just being taken by their looks or whatever, you would actually get inside this person's head and get

to know them in a more personal way. So Tammy I did that over the course of about a week and we arranged for a date that weekend. It was in March of 1999, and we haven't looked back, we were married four and a half months later after meeting. It's over 9 years ago now that we married and we owe it all to the show You've Got Mail. Had it not been for that movie I wouldn't have gotten online when I did; that's what prompted me to do what I did at the time when Tammy was out there looking for love, so, I thank the show and I thank God for bringing us together the way he did.

## Appendix 2. Units of General Meaning in Interviews

### Jimena on *Cast Away*

1. Remembers watching the film one year before, in a very cold dark winter, while being ill
2. Was not expecting to watch a movie
3. Just saw something on TV and got caught by the story
4. Really liked it, doesn't know why
5. Maybe because it is the story of what happened to the main character?
6. It is the story of a guy whose life is ruled by the clock and suddenly has to survive on a desert island after crashing.
7. At first the character was shocked. It was impossible to do things in the island like eating.
8. The time went by and he learned to fish, to run in the island, to know the time, make a fire, which was very incredible for him.
9. There was physical trials he overcome in the time
10. Thinks the story "touched" her "personally"
11. Because the character was four years in the island, like she, who being a foreigner, had also been for four years in London at the time.
12. During that time she felt she had "lost a lot of things", and the main character as well, "he lost everything he had"
13. But at the same time he became in "somebody different, somebody stronger". She feels she did the same herself.
14. She wasn't expecting to stay alone in Europe and had to do it.
15. Also for her at the beginning was a "very tough period" but she became "somebody different", she thinks, like the character.
16. (But) What happened at the end in the movie is that he managed to go back to the civilisation.
17. He managed to build a boat because he is thinking of going back to his world to find his girlfriend.
18. It was very difficult, the sea was very tough.
19. Suddenly he lost his main friend, a ball.
20. He felt so lonely and totally helpless. She thinks "he feels he is ready to die"
21. There is a night, a shot in the movie of him crying and the boat floating and appears an incredible whale and you 'really' think that he is going to die, and 'he feels he is going to die'.
22. The presence of the whale means something like God, an extremely overwhelming power of

nature.

23. “For the character...for me... I mean in the character” means a second opportunity for the character to live.

24. It is amazing, because he carries on in the boat.

25. He got a big trial with the whale and in that moment is rescued by a ship.

26. He has to face a second trial, an emotional trial when he arrives to civilisation.

28. He realised he had become somebody stronger and another kind of man, and maybe she was not suitable for him anymore; maybe a new character will appear for him at the end.

29. The film touches on relevant issues: a religious, and a philosophical about the meaning of life.

30. Why are we here and what is the trial we go through life. She thinks that is very interesting.

31. It is a very simple story but very well done.

32. She always recommends this movie, but she is careful about it.

33. Since it is only one character alone all the time, so not just anyone will watch it in the whole. It might be quite hard.

34. Maybe would recommend it to someone in their 30's who has “already lived an experience like that one, and ready to see a movie like that”.

35 The movie can be compared to *Gladiator* for the storyline, since *Gladiator* also lost all he had to live another life and had to find the way to his family. It is as well quite religious.

36. She thinks it is a beautiful movie which she would love to have created. It is a “really really beautiful story”

## **Timothy on *Ghost***

1. Saw the movie recently with a friend
2. They rented the movie in recommendation by his mother. She said it was something he would enjoy and probably connect with.
3. The actors are Patrick Swayze, who just passed away, Demi Moore and Whoopi Goldberg.
4. The story is personal to him and affected him in a personal way.
5. Was with a friend on a quiet night, in a fairly good mood and calm when he remembers first watching it.
6. The story is about a couple, extremely in love, and in a very tragic event “Patrick Swayze” is killed.
7. Unfortunately was killed by a good friend, greed being the accomplice.
8. In comes Whoopi Goldberg with medium capabilities.
9. Was expecting from the movie, with Whoopi “of course” some kind of laughter and lightheartedness, with Demi passion, love, dedication and perseverance and with Patrick Swayze an unbelievable performance.
10. He was expecting that, knowing the characters that were in it.
11. Watches the movie periodically and actually bought one.
12. Recommends the movie and brings it up in conversations.
13. Always tries to pass on some of the good feelings in him.
14. The movie changed his perspective on things permanently.
15. Believing in spirits, it piqued his interest on a personal level.
16. It reminds him of when his brother died. He was saying goodbye to him alone in a room, when a door to a closet closed (apparently by itself) and he believes his brother did this 100% percent.
17. That was a very unusual experience that scared him and made him happy at the same time.
18. He identifies and compares his own experiences through life with those of Patrick Swayze.
19. Can also relate to the capability of anticipating events as in several times through different life experiences.
20. Believes the film will continue to inspire people to think more seriously about the possibility of some events in the movie.
21. Prayer, dedication, perseverance and belief, go a long way.
22. Now takes his own personal experiences very seriously and to heart. This he has taken from the movie.
23. Truly believes what he experienced was true and was real.

24. The more he watches the movie, the more he picks up on events and emotions missed on previews viewings.
25. It confirms the possibility of communicating with spirits.
26. He is not the only one with this perspective and belief.
27. Truly believes the movie will and does inspire people to indulge in the belief, in the possibilities of this events happening in their lives as well.
28. If you truly believe, hard enough, anything is possible.
29. The movie kind of lives up to his expectations.
30. There is tons of romance and true love with Patrick Swayze and Demi Moore, not only spoken but you can see it throughout the movie.
31. It is filled with hopes and dreams, and plans for the future.
- 32 There is a dose of suspense: who is the evil villain and why did he do it.
- 33 Whoopi Goldberg's character was humorous and added a lighter tone and a pleasant break for wiping your tears, and chills and goose bumps that you get.
34. Confirms that karma is true, what comes around goes around.
35. Your strength in belief will create situations for you and opportunities for you. It can possibly come though or present itself in your life.
36. Most of all, there is always and opportunity to say goodbye. The spirit truly lives on.
37. Personally loved the movie, it hit him in the heart, it took him to places that he knows.
38. It confirms the reality of the things that happen in the movie.
39. They kissed goodbye, he went on to heaven, took care of his business and he was in peace and she was in peace
40. The drama was great, the action was great, the cinematography, the editing.
41. He loved the movie.



## Matthew on *Motorcycle Diaries*

1. *Motorcycle Diaries* is about Che Guevara, extensively about his diaries that he kept while he took a road trip from Argentina to Chile, up the way coast of South America, with a buddy of his.
2. It was meant to be a sort of coming of age trip, but as the movie says he did more than come of age.
3. He developed the political beliefs that would lead him to his great revolutionary hearts.
4. He wasn't personally that taking by the politics of the film. It is not too strong so was able to ignore it.
5. His politics are very much different.
6. Although the politics is what the movie 'markedly' tries to foist on you, there was other things he thinks he could take away from it, and did take.
7. It has irreversibly changed the course of his life.
8. With many movies and songs you don't realise they have changed your life until you look back through your personal past and try figure out what set you in a certain direction.
9. That is the case with *Motorcycle Diaries*.
10. He is currently spending a lot of time studying Spanish.
11. Has dedicated the year to two goals: develop an income from the internet and to learn Spanish.
12. Someone asked him the other day "why Spanish?"
13. He could list a bunch of reasons to learn Spanish, but after the conversation looked back and realised that it was the movie *Motorcycle Diaries* that triggered that change.
14. After the movie he has developed a bit of an interest in some of the cultural aspects of the film, like the music for example, he went out and found the soundtrack.
15. Took a bit of Spanish and searched what it would be like to travel to South America but the cost was too high that completely forgot about it.
16. This year was kind of sitting around trying to figure out what his goals were and realised he had the opportunity to go to Spain.
17. He could save enough money and learn a language, and that's what he has done.
18. All based on the initial state of interest that was placed in him by the movie.
19. He guesses the question has to be asked.
20. He watches a lot of foreign language films.
21. He loves seeing how other cultures look at the world in terms of their film.
22. "However, what about this movie?"
23. Firstly, he thinks *Motorcycle Diaries* shows that Spanish can be understood through all

countries in South America.

24. He got the impression that the Spanish of Argentina, Chile, Peru, Colombia, was so different that it was impossible for anyone else to understand.

25. He realises now that that is a myth.

26. Something he wanted to do was learn a language that could be spoken in many countries around the world, not confined to one.

27. Secondly, he saw that Spanish had a close relationship with English and realised that it would take an extreme amount of time to learn it, like other language might.

28. Something else that he found attractive was the rich depths of cultural history that exist (in South America)

29. In the movie you get them, you get the characters quoting different poets and they try to play a game to try and see which poet it was.

30. He found the poetry very beautiful, although couldn't understand it Spanish.

31. He remembers wishing he could, wishing he could rate it in its original language and appreciate it for what its worth

32. Has only been studying Spanish since January and is not near that goal

33. Can read a lot of Spanish and speak quite a bit as well.

34. Has watched the film four or five times since then, to show it to other people because its a fantastic movie.

35. It is very well shot, in a beautiful location and the dialogue is quite funny and it is very well written.

36. He thinks part of the reason he found Spanish an attractive language was because the dialog between the characters makes you feel like you wish you were in a trip with them, with Che and his friend.

37. You wish you were there with them and laughing along with their jokes.

38. It is a very effective piece of filmmaking really, to think about it.

## **Nikhil on *The Last king of Scotland***

1. Remembers watching the poster of the movie at Liverpool St. Station when going to work.
2. Remembers an African guy sitting on a chair with army uniform.
3. The name of the movie is *the Last King of Scotland*.
4. Was surprised, “what would be this movie?”
5. Saw the ratings and they were 3.5 and 4.
6. Was excited to watch the movie.
7. When he went to work had a word with a colleague, told him what he saw on the poster and he had watched the movie. The colleague wanted him to watch the movie.
8. After a couple of weeks he remembered a friend of his had the DVD and they watched the movie.
9. It was “out of the world” right from the beginning.
10. It was a doctor, doctor Garrigan, which is played by James McAvoy.
11. He is really adventurous, takes and revolves a globe and finds a place to start his work.
12. He lands up in Uganda and right from the beginning of the movie you are “in an entirely different world”
13. The camerawork is fabulous, the music is so authentic that it really takes you close to the culture of Uganda.
14. The lifestyle that is shown is spectacular, so in detail.
15. You start to get close to the main character, played by Forrest Whitaker.
16. That is the character of Idi Amin, a dictator who ruled Uganda during the 1970’s
17. How he ruled the country and how patriotic he was for his nation, how possessive he gets about things and lots of people end up suffering.
18. The movie is a great artwork to watch.
19. He likes the music to begin with, which is so authentic.
- 20 It is so hard to find a movie that shows the lifestyle, the culture, not only through its pictures but through its music.
21. Remembers the first scene, about Idi Amin’s entry.
22. A group of people in a village are waiting for the new dictator to come, playing drums, wearing tribal clothes.
23. He comes and there is a roar of people and “you literally feel you around over them, you literally find them around you”
24. He comes, delivers his speech speaking in a way that is so genuine.
25. Believes Forrest Whitaker must have taken a lot of effort to develop that accent.

26. Even his make-up is so different from the one in his previous movies.
27. Never felt like it is Forrest Whitaker, it is someone from the people.
28. Believes they have achieved what they wanted with the clothing, the badges. He really liked that work.
29. He really liked the camerawork as well.
30. Believes they used a filter to get a 1970's mood, and really liked it, it took him to the mood.
31. Found the camera unsteady and "like real", "something genuine"
32. Also liked the editing, does not remember any instant of being taken back, out of the movie.
33. He is also fine with the concept of the movie.
34. The movie shows you something like history, something that happened thirty years back, but it is not a history lesson.
35. It has been portrayed so artistically that he believes everyone should watch it.
36. There is another movie, *Valkyrie*, that is coming out played by Tom Cruise that he would find it has resemblance with.
37. Thinks he would recommend the movie because it is historically based but there is always adventure, a thrilling part because of the character of James Mcavoy who always lands in thrilling things.
38. He is always up to do something adventurous
39. It is not just history not just adventure, it is really blended together.
40. The climax literally holds your breath.
41. If he had to rate the movie would rate it a 4 or 5
42. It has been long since he saw the movie for the first time.
43. When he watched it again three months later had slight changes in his view.
44. Felt that the character of Idi Amin should've spoken in the local language when speaking with his local people, and shown subtitles. That would've made it more genuine, more real.
45. That is what gets him closer to it and what he wants to watch in a movie.
46. It is a spectacular thriller, fiction and historic based movie.
47. Would definitely want people to watch it and to know what people suffered at that time.
48. Maybe we can take the best part of Idi Amin, that he was really patriotic but failed to see the negative side of his dictatorship and people ended up suffering.

## Steve on *A Clockwork Orange*

1. Saw the film when he was 15 years old.
2. Went to see it with a friend of his in a local cinema.
3. The film was *Clockwork Orange*.
4. It always had mixed reviews and it disappeared for a long time because the director withdrew it from release in the UK.
5. Thinks that all he saw at the age of 15 was a film glorifying violence.
6. The violence was very stylised
7. At that age he was very immature.
8. It all seemed fantastic, the violence, the music in it.
9. There were a lot of elements to pick from in it, like the uniforms the gang wore.
10. It “almost washed over” him, with its collage of colour.
11. It was the first film to use dolby sound.
12. It is about a chap called Alex, who has a gang of 3 other people.
13. It is set in the future, although it was made in 1969. We are not sure when in the future.
14. It is not science fiction at all.
15. It is about a feral gang roaming the streets just causing trouble.
16. Alex gets caught, sent to an institution jailed for life.
17. Finds out he can get out of his sentence if he subjects himself to therapy.
18. It consists of watching violent films whilst being given drugs which make him vomit every time he sees anything violent.
19. The message of the film is that although he has been cured from his unsocial behaviour, he doesn't have any free choice in what he does.
20. The message of the film is “does it matter?” He is not a nuisance. Do we care that now he has no choice?. “That is really the message behind the film”
21. Saw the film many years later and thinks he saw it in a slightly different way
22. The violence in the film is quite extreme, but not the point of the film
23. The message really comes across, it is a violent film. It is quite clear in the way the film is framed that the violence is quite extreme.
24. We see him kicking someone and smash a large piece of ceramic into a woman in the ground.
25. You get the message that it is quite violent.
26. Having seen the film many years later, the prediction made in the late 60's with what is

happening today does not look that extreme. Which makes the film quite relevant today.

27. The predictions in the film, based on the book written by Anthony Burgess are not that farfetched.

28. It was very violent when it came out, and the world was a different place back then.

29. Some of the acts in the film probably do not seem that violent if you read about them in a newspaper today you wouldn't think anything of it.

30. Perhaps a little bit of the message has got lost, of what life would be like.

31. It has a real quality feel about the way it has been made, with the brilliant use of colour, the brilliant use of classical music.

32. The violence in it is not made to seem unnecessary.

33. The violence is almost sectioned, "look at it".

34. We have seen the build up of Alex's behaviour and how he eventually gets caught, in fact betrayed by his gang members.

35. On his release he meets his fellow gang members; two of them are in the police and suffers abuse on their hands.

36. He does not defend himself

37. We go back to this message, that he doesn't have any free choice anymore and is not able to defend himself.

38. But, do we really care? He isn't violent anymore

39. Thinks the message is as true today as it was back then

40. Perhaps needs to be made in a more extreme way.

41. Fears very much for the way society is going.

42. When he first saw it it seemed a stylish film, full of violence, quite enjoyable at the age of fifteen "from that purely fairly low level"

43. Now looks at it and does not see anything enjoyable about it at all, the violence is quite horrific.

44. It is quite sad in many ways that we are not ridiculously away from the predictions made in the film

45. Feels the childhood he had is totally different to the childhood that children have today.

46. Violence becomes part of their lives.

47. Alex and his gang are very violent and they don't question this at all, so he guesses there is no point in trying to give them other type of treatment than the one they get.

## **Chris on *Requiem for a Dream***

1. Would like to recommend the movie to everybody, especially those who “like a number of us” came upon a drug addiction of any sort in their life, or to whom as a friend with these troubles or to whom has seen it in a family.
2. *Requiem for a dream* is not exactly a junkie movie.
3. It is more (about) addiction in man’s behaviour.
4. You can get hooked up to escape reality, at work, television, sex, emotions, hope, and things like that which are not exactly drugs.
5. We can get hooked up on legal drugs like alcohol, tv, cigarettes, caffeine.
6. We have the illegal ones: cocaine, LSD, DMA, weed, to mention the most common.
7. The story of the movie follows the destiny of 5 characters and their experiences over 3 seasons (summer, winter, fall)
8. Two characters are friends who live in the drug suburbs of Coney Island in New York.
9. Another character is of the friends’ girlfriend, and also his mother is another character.
10. All get at some point hooked up on drugs or are affected by drug behaviour.
11. The boys decided to run a drug business which works in the beginning but then fucks itself up.
12. To get more money the girlfriend is forced into prostitution
13. The mother follows completely a separate line but also gets hooked up on drugs.
- 14 She gets a call from the TV to be on the telly, tries to fit in her dress from 20 years ago and after failing the diet she gets hooked up on pills to stop feeling hungry.
15. She loses her mind and her sanity and her life, and loses her son.
- 16 She ends up in hospital with electroshocks.
17. The boys end up in jail and one is losing his arm as it gets infected.
18. There is a great technical approach to the film, uses a lot of split screen and repetitions, and also the soundtrack is based on the repetition of emotions.
19. The story is written by Hubert Selby, whose other book *Last exit to Brooklyn* made a “huge impact” on him.
20. He collects movie soundtracks, and had heard the soundtrack before. It got his interest because of the combination of Kronos Quartet with electronics, which he thinks is a great combination.
21. Knew the movie had won a couple of prizes; one Oscar for Ellen Burstyn, one of his favourite actresses for mother characters.
22. She played a mother on an Scorsese movie and on another film whose name he can’t remember. They were all dramatical studies of a mother’s character.

23. This is the worst mother character
24. The reason he points to the mother character is that the movie made a personal impact on him because his mother used to get hooked up on pills, antidepressants and other kind of crap.
25. To watch this character losing it all and go through this martyrdom of electroshocks was heartbreaking for him.
26. Also because she is the only one who gets into drugs as an innocent person, not knowingly, not willingly.
27. Thinks this movie is one of the most important movies made in recent ages.
28. Would recommend it to everybody, not only to people with drug related problems.
29. But to everybody because it could actually help save lives, showing the repetition of a wrong behaviour that leads to addiction.
30. It gives you “one hell of a big kick in the nuts” on how things could end, where they could lead, and what is the aftermath of all.
31. One loses their arm, the mother loses her sanity, and the girlfriend her pure self by getting hooked up on prostitution.
32. Would also recommend it for its technical side, innovative and revolutionary, for the music, the characters, the work of the actors.
33. The most important thing is the emotional impact of the movie.
34. He had seen it with a couple of friends having a spliff in a nice evening and were “deeply depressed for several days or even weeks after watching this movie”
35. Would compare it to *Traffic* and *Trainspotting*.
36. Watching the 3 movies together you get a complete point of view of the drug life and drug addicted behaviour.
37. *Requiem for a dream* is the strongest and the most emotional. It’s got the most psychical background and every can relate to this movie.
38. Recommends everybody to watch it.



## Edward on *The Thin Red Line*

1. Chose the film from several other he could have talked about, for many reasons.
2. It surprises him that the movie is now 10 years old, to think is 10 years since he saw it.
3. Saw it in London in a lovely cinema with an intimate atmosphere.
4. His memory of the atmosphere of the film is very specific.
5. Was a real hush in the cinema, seemed to be a reverence from the beginning of it.
6. Knew Terence Malick's, its director, work.
7. He had made only 2 films in the previous nearly 20 years. Made *Badlands* and 8 years later *Days of heaven*.
8. The director is renowned for being a real 'auteur'
9. The director seems to have some magnetism and his films are outstanding, they are atmospherically astonishing.
10. There is continuity in all his films, of atmosphere, and he thinks that distinguishes *the Thin red line* from other war films.
11. It is set in 1941 or 42 on a pacific island called Guam, or based on that.
12. It starts with Witt, an American soldier, who has been presumably drafted to fight with other soldiers against the Japanese in the pacific.
13. He has gone awol, is with another soldier and they are in a very paradise like island.
14. It has a dream like atmosphere, very beautiful.
15. He is picked up by a patrol boat and switches rapidly to him and other soldiers in a carrier boat that will be part of the 1st wave of assaults on Guam.
16. The story unfolds and follows... there isn't much of a story in the sense of events.
17. Simply follows the group of soldiers through the action.
18. It could have easily been a run of the mill film in someone else's hand but with Terrence Malick and his cinematographer, as it was described in a review he read and was struck by, as a zen war movie.
19. He was then particularly interested in Buddhism and eastern philosophy and thought that was an interesting combination.
20. Wondered how those two things would work together.
21. Thinks that the way it stands out from other war movies is for example in the first wave of attacks, which is really graphic, with people dying, and familiar war images of death and destruction, you see a soldier stroking a piece of grass that closes up.
22. It is beautifully observed.

23. In the same series cut with men dying and being blown into pieces you see a baby bird fall of a nest.
24. It somehow brings in the wider context of the fact that war does not just affect the men involved. In this instance it actually was an assault on nature.
25. He had never seen that before, the way war seems to impact on the environment.
26. That scene stands out.
27. Another scene when they are further up the hill, and they are all going to attack a Japanese camp and it is one of the most moving scenes.
28. Remembers it particularly at the cinema, although has seen it 3 or 4 times on DVD since then.
- 29 It is astonishing that the noise of the battle is very quiet, in the background and you actually hear the soundtracks which builds and builds.
30. A very subtle soundtrack by Hans Zimmer, now a well known score writer.
31. It builds to this climax and it is just so emotional.
32. There is the very familiar chaos of war films but it also throws very human moments.
33. You see a Japanese guy meditating in the midst of the chaos.
34. It has a sense of enclosure around certain people, having certain energy.
35. It is very philosophical.
36. It cuts successfully between archetypical war scenes and what goes on in the soldiers' minds.
37. Relates to 2 characters in the film, in particular.
38. One is the main character, called Witt, whom he thinks everyone watching the film would like to be like.
39. He is a very interesting combination; very masculine but also has a very feminine side, very nurturing.
40. You see the tenderness with which he handles a dying or injured man, it washes the blood off of him, strokes his hair. It is beautifully done.
41. The other character he related to, accessible as a human in terms of fallibility and flawed character is a lawyer called captain Staros.
42. In charge of a battalion supposed to be of the first waves who would be massacred, he refuses to let them go up there.
43. Finds extraordinary in a war film to have an exchange between a typical soldier figure and captain Staros, who doesn't understand why men have to die.
44. It is extraordinary because it really made him question "why would you go to war, why would people fight. Because if you go, you're going to die probably or be injured"
45. Found "extremely profound" to have a strong male character who refuses to let his men die

46. It is very beautifully filmed, with absolutely stunning music, well known actors.
47. It is a very male dominated film with only one female character.
48. To him it shows the real camaraderie of men, of these ordinary men in an extraordinary situation.
49. Would recommend to anyone who likes philosophy and war to see this film because it brings the 2 together in a way never seen in another war film.
50. It takes the war movie genre to a completely different place.
51. Watch it, preferably in the cinema if you get a chance because it is a very big film. Watch it.

## **Polis on *the Innocents***

1. First heard about *the Innocents* in 1998 when he was thirteen.
2. Had just got the internet, and thrilled with it, spent the whole day researching films
3. That is not what most 13 year olds did.
4. Somehow came across *the Innocents*
5. Had been hearing that it was a great British chiller and really looked forward to watching it.
6. Five years later got his wish.
7. Now eighteen, was at school, and just saw it was going to be on TV one night, just by accident.
8. Stayed up late on a school night to watch it.
9. Was completely thrilled and hooked since then.
10. Watches it at least 3 times a year.
11. Has shown it to so many people, just tells everybody about it, because more people need to know it. It is sadly neglected.
12. Most people think of crime dramas and gangster thrillers with Cockney guys and funny names when they think of British Cinema.
13. They don't think of psychological horror or ambiguous drama.
14. He loves about *the Innocents* that speaks to him at the level of his love of things that are unexplained in cinema.
15. Does not necessarily like to be told what is going on and what to think and make of characters. *The Innocents* does that perfectly.
16. It is an adaptation of Henry James' novella *the Turn of the screw*, which he read before seeing the movie and he thinks was a good way to go.
17. It is about a 19th century governess who has to look after some orphan children when their uncle decides to enjoy the world rather than to look after them.
18. This character, Miss Giddens is quite sexually repressed and begins to suspect that the children are possessed by the ghosts of the previous governess and her lover, and that through the children they are continuing their love affair
19. It is very kinky stuff, a good way to spend a lonely rainy afternoon.
20. Things are sinister and the kids precocious
21. But ultimately is left up to the viewer to decide whether it is a ghost story or the portrayal of a repressed woman losing her mind.
22. It also has a brilliant soundtrack
23. He marvels at Jack Clayton's filmmaking, as a filmmaker himself.

24. It is so well written, the script by Truman Capote, infused with Gothic elements as well.
25. You have the image of a spider coming out of a cherub's statue's mouth and other crazy stuff.
26. It still shocks, really.
27. People he has shown it to he thinks were not expecting much because it is from 1961.
28. Everybody is stunned in certain segments like when the boy kisses the governess the camera lingers on the lips. You think "what is he doing?" "Is he toying with her?" "Is he not so innocent" "And does she like it?"
29. That is very controversial now but this film is from a time when British cinema was brave.
30. The ending in particular greatly appeals to him, because it makes you go "what the hell did I just see, you have no idea"
31. It is a very ambiguous ending, no one knows what happens in it, but you feel shocked to the core.
32. Every film he makes would want it to have the same emotional and intellectual impact of *the Innocents*.
33. It affects the viewer, it is a very powerful film, "it definitely haunts you"
34. Everybody should watch it.

## **Kevin on *You've Got Mail***

1. It was December 1998, he had been divorced about a year.
2. Was at a point in his life where he was looking to move forward, find love again.
3. Was not really too much for the bar scenes and wasn't interested in anybody at work.
4. Went to see *You've got mail*, not sure why
5. Maybe was really bored.
6. He sat in the theatre and watched as these 2 people, Meg Ryan and Tom Hanks, developed a relationship online with one another.
7. It is a very interesting story, of how these 2 people were involved with other people but those relationships were not meeting their needs so they both turned to chat rooms and found each other.
8. They developed a strong relationship with one another without having ever met.
9. The story is interesting, it is funny.
10. But the story didn't changed his life, but the idea of the technologies they were using.
11. He was at the time a bit of a Luddite, without a computer, knew nothing about being online, no cellphone, no pager.
12. Felt that being online was a big waste of time.
13. But watched this unfold and thought it was kind of interesting.
14. Maybe this is a way to get out there, put himself out and meet people.
15. In a few weeks of watching the movie he had his computer and his AOL disk, internet on training wheels
16. Soon found the chat rooms and soon grew tired of them. They were not meeting his needs. Wasn't finding anybody really connecting.
17. One day found a link called digital cities, clicked it and opened a bunch of personal ads from people all over the country, narrowed it down to the metro area in Minneapolis and started getting connections and exchanging emails.
18. Had a date within a few days, went out and there was no connection.
19. That didn't deter him but made him more determined to make it work.
20. Answered some more ads and got a response from a woman whose name is Tammy, they met online, chatted, exchanged emails and chatted some more, and later in the week talked on the phone and got to know each other.
21. That is part of what you get, you can really get to know the person before you ever meet them.
22. Rather than being taken by their looks you actually get inside the person's head and know them in a personal way.

23. They did that for about a week and arranged for a date.
24. It was in March of 1999, and they haven't looked back.
25. They married four and a half months later after meeting.
26. Over 9 years ago now that they married and they owe it to You've got mail.
27. Had it not been for the movie he wouldn't have gotten online when he did.
28. That prompted him to do what he did when she was out there looking for love.
29. He thanks the film and God for bringing them together.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

ADORNO, Theodor W. *Prisms*. Translated from German by Samuel and Shierry Weber. Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press, 1997 (Original work published 1955).

AITKEN, Ian. 1996. "Distraction and redemption: Kracauer, surrealism and phenomenology", *Screen*, vol. 39, no.2, pp. 124-140.

ALSAYYAD, Nezar. *Cinematic urbanism. A history of the modern from reel to real*. New York;London:Routledge, 2006.

ANDREW, Dudley. *The major film theories. An introduction*. New York:Oxford University Press, 1976.

ANDREW, Dudley. 1985. The neglected tradition of phenomenology in film theory. in Bill Nicholls, ed. *Movies and methods: an anthology. Vol.2*. Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1985. pp. 625-632.

BARKER, Martin. 1998. Critique: audiences R us. in Roger Dickinson et al, eds. *Approaches to audiences: a reader*. London:Arnold, 1998, pp 184-191

BARKER, Martin and Kate Brooks. *Knowing audiences. Judge Dredd. Its friends, fans and foes*. Luton: University of Luton Press, 1997

BAUDELAIRE, Charles. *The flowers of evil*. Translated by Cyril Scott. London : Elkin Mathews, 1909 (Original work published 1857).

BAUDELAIRE, Charles. *The painter of modern life, and other essays*. [London]:Phaidon, [1964]

BAZIN, Andre. *What is cinema. Vol 1*. Berkeley; Los Angeles; London:University of California Press, 1967.

BAZIN, Andre. *What is cinema. Vol 2*. Berkeley; Los Angeles; London:University of California Press, 1971.



BEATTIE, Keith. 2006. "From city symphony to global city film: documentary display and the corporeal", *Screening the Past*, no. 20, 2006. latrobe.edu.au. Available from: <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/screeningthepast/20/city-symphony-global-city-film.html>

BENJAMIN, Walter. 1936. The work of art in the age of its technological reproducibility. in Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, eds. Translated by Edund Jephcott and others. *Walter Benjamin. Selected writings. Vol. 4, 1938-1940*, Cambridge, Mass; London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002. pp. 251-283

BENJAMIN, Walter. 1939. On some motifs in Baudelaire. In Hannah Arendt, ed and intro. Translated by Harry Zohn. *Walter Benjamin Illuminations*. New York: Schocken Books, 1968, pp. 155-200.

BENJAMIN, Walter. *The arcades project*. Translated by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin; prepared on the basis of the German volume edited by Rolf Tiedemann. Cambridge Mass: Belknap Press, 1999.

BEN-SHAUL, Nitzan. *Film. The key concepts*. Oxford;New York:Berg, 2007.

BERMAN, Marshall. *All that is solid melts into air: the experience of modernity*. London:Verso, 1983

BOBO, Jacqueline. 1994. The color purple: black women as cultural readers. in John Storey, ed. *Cultural theory and popular culture: a reader*. Harlow, England:Pearson Longman, 1994. pp 237-245

BORDWELL, David. *Making meaning: inference and rhetoric in the interpretation of cinema*. Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 1989

BORDWELL, David and Kristin Thompson. *Film art. An Introduction. Sixth edition*. New York:McGraw Hill, 2001.

BRAND, Dana. *The spectator and the city in the 19<sup>th</sup> century American literature*.

Cambridge:Cambridge University Press, 1991.

BRUNO, Giuliana. 2008. Motion and emotion: film and the urban fabric. in Andrew Webber and Emma Wilson, eds. *Cities in transition. The moving image and the modern metropolis*. London:Wallflower Press, 2008, pp.14-28.

BRUZZI, Stella. *New documentary: a critical introduction*. London;New York:Routledge, 2000.

CHAMBERS, Iain. *Migrancy, culture, identity*. London;New York: Routledge, 1994.

BUCK-MORSS, Susan. *The dialectics of seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades project*.

Cambridge, Mass.; London: MIT Press, 1989

CHARNEY, Leo. 1995. In a moment:film and the philosophy of modernity. in Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwartz, eds. *Cinema and the invention of modern life*. Berkeley:University of California Press, 1995, pp. 279-294.

CLARKE, David. 1997. Introduction. Previewing the cinematic city. in David Clarke, ed. *The cinematic city*. London:Routledge, 1997, pp.2-18

COHEN, Margaret, 1995. Panoramic literature and the invention of everyday genres. in Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwartz, eds. *Cinema and the invention of modern life*.

Berkeley:University of California Press, 1995, pp. 227-252

COHEN, Margaret. 2004. Benjamin's phantasmagoria: the *Arcades Project*. in David S. Ferris, ed. *The Cambridge companion to Walter Benjamin*, Cambridge;New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004

COVERLEY, Merlin. *Psychogeography*. Harpenden:Pocket Essentials, 2006

DICKINSON, Roger. 1998. Modernity, consumption and anxiety: television audiences and food choice. in Roger Dickinson et al, eds. *Approaches to audiences: a reader*. London:Arnold, 1998, pp 257-271

EISENSTEIN, Sergei. 1929. *Film Form: essays in film theory*. ed. and trans. Jay Leyda.

Cleveland: The world publishing company, 1957.

FERGUSON, Priscilla Parkhurst. 1994. *The flaneur on and off the streets of Paris*. in Keith Tester, ed. *The Flaneur*. London: Routledge, 1994, pp 22-42

FRISBY, David. *Georg Simmel*. London: Routledge, 1984.

FRISBY, David. *Fragments of modernity: theories of modernity in the work of Simmel, Kracauer and Benjamin*. Cambridge: Polity, 1985.

FRISBY, David. 1994. *The flaneur in social theory*. in Keith Tester, ed. *The Flaneur*. London: Routledge, 1994, pp 81-110.

FRISBY, David. 1997a. Introduction to the texts. in David Frisby and Mike Featherstone, eds. *Simmel on culture: selected writings*. London: Sage, 1997, pp. 1-28

FRISBY, David. 1997b. "The metropolis as text: Otto Wagner and Vienna's second renaissance", *Culture, Theory and Critique*, vol. 40, no. 1, 1997, pp. 1-16.

GIDDENS, Anthony. *Modernity and self-identity: self and society in the late modern age*. Cambridge: Polity, 1991a

GIDDENS, Anthony. *The consequences of modernity*. Cambridge: Polity, 1991b

GILLOCH, Graeme. *Myth & metropolis: Walter Benjamin and the city*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997

GILLOCH, Graeme. 2007. "URBAN OPTICS: FILM, PHANTASMAGORIA AND THE CITY IN BENJAMIN AND KRACAUER". *New Formations*. FindArticles.com. Available from: [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_7671/is\\_200707/ai\\_n32253634/](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_7671/is_200707/ai_n32253634/)

GIROUX, Henry A. 2001 "Breaking into the movies: pedagogy and the politics of film", *JAC: A Journal of composition theory*, vol. 21, no. 3 (Summer, 2001) pp. 583-598

- GLEBER, Anke. *The art of taking a walk: flânerie, literature, and film in Weimar culture*. Princeton, NJ:Princeton University Press, 1999
- GREEN, Maxine. 1975. Review of Reflections on the screen, by George Linden, *Studies in philosophy and education*, vol. 9, no. 1-2, pp. 61-65.
- GRIERSON, John. 1932. First Principles of Documentary. in Kevin Macdonald and Mark Cousins. *Imagining reality: the Faber book of documentary*. London:Faber and Faber, 1996 pp.97-101
- HAGENER, Malte. *Moving Forward, Looking Back. The European avant-garde and the invention of film culture, 1919-1939*. Amsterdam:Amsterdam University Press, 2007
- HENDERSON, Brian. 1976. The long take. in Bill Nicholls, ed. *Movies and methods: an anthology. Vol.1*. Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1976. pp. 314-324.
- HUSSERL, Edmund. *The crisis of European sciences and transcendental phenomenology: an introduction to phenomenological philosophy*. Evanston(Ill.): Northwestern University Press, 1970.
- HYCNER, Richard. 1985. "Some guidelines for the phenomenological analysis of interview data", *Human Studies*, vol. 8, 1985, pp. 279-303
- JARVIE, Ian. *Philosophy of the film: epistemology, ontology, aesthetics*. London;New York: Routledge, 1987.
- KRACAUER, Siegfried. 1922. Those who wait. Translated by Thomas Y. Levin in Thomas Y. Levin, ed. *The mass ornament. Weimar essays*. Cambridge, Massachusetts;London:Harvard University Press, 1995, pp. 129-140
- KRACAUER, Siegfried. 1928. Film 1928 . Translated by Thomas Y. Levin in Thomas Y. Levin, ed. *The mass ornament. Weimar essays*. Cambridge, Massachusetts;London:Harvard University Press, 1995, pp. 307-320.
- KRACAUER, Siegfried. *From Caligari to Hitler. A psychological history of the German film*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947

KRACAUER, Siegfried. *Theory of film. The redemption of physical reality*. New York:Oxford University Press, 1965

KUHN, Annette. *An everyday magic: cinema and cultural memory*. London;I.B. Tauris, 2002

LEVIN, Thomas 1995. Introduction. in Thomas Levin, ed. *The mass ornament. Weimar essays. Siegfried Kracauer*, Cambridge, Mass.; London:Harvard University Press, 1995, pp.1-30

LINDEN, George. *Reflections on the screen*. Belmont:Wadsworth, 1970.

MAYNE, Judith. *Cinema and spectatorship*. London: Routledge, 1993

MOORES, Shaun. *Interpreting audiences. Ethnography of media consumption*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.;London;New Delhi: Sage, 1993

MORAN, Dermot. *Introduction to phenomenology*. New York:Routledge, 2000.

MORLEY, David. *Television, audiences and cultural studies*. London:Routledge, 1992

MOUSTAKAS, Clark. *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.; London: Sage, 1994.

MYERS, Anne and Christine Hansen. *Experimental psychology, Seventh edition*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Cengage, 2011.

NIGHTINGALE, Virginia. *Studying audiences: the shock of the real*. London; New York: Routledge, 1996.

PACI, Enzo. *The function of the sciences and the meaning of man*. Evanston(Ill.):Northwestern University Press, 1972.

RENOV, Michael. *Theorizing documentary*. New York; London:Routledge, 1993.

- ROBERTS, Graham. *The man with the movie camera*. London;New York:I.B. Tauris, 2000.
- ROBERTSON, Fran. (2006) *Capturing Idi Amin*. [DVD] UK: Two step Film/BBC Scotland.
- ROTHERMEL, Dennis. 1998. "Forays into philosophy and film", *Film-philosophy*, vol. 2, no. 27, September 1998, Available from: <http://www.film-philosophy.com/vol2-1998/n27rothermel>
- SAVAGE, Michael and Alan Warde. *Urban sociology, capitalism and modernity*. London:Mcmillan, 1993
- SCHLUPMANN, Heide. 1987. "Phenomenology of film: Siegfried Kracauer's writings of the 1920s", *New German Critique*, no. 40, Winter 1987, pp. 97-114
- SHIEL, Mark. 2001. Cinema and the city in history and theory. in Mark Shiel and Tony Fitzmaurice, eds. *Cinema and the city: film and urban societies in a global context*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001, pp. 1-18
- SHIELDS, Rob. 1994. Fancy footwork: Walter Benjamin's notes on *flanerie*. in Keith Tester, ed. *The Flaneur*. London:Routledge, 1994, pp 61-80
- SIMMEL, Georg. 1903. The metropolis and mental life . Translated from German by Hans Gerth. in David Frisby and Mike Featherstone, eds. *Simmel on culture:selected writings*. London:Sage, 1997, pp. 174-185
- SIMMEL, Georg. 1908. On the essence of culture. Translated from German by Peter Lawrence. in David Frisby and Mike Featherstone, eds. *Simmel on culture:selected writings*. London:Sage, 1997, pp. 40-45
- SIMMEL, Georg. 1911/12. The concept and tragedy of culture . Translated from German by Mark Ritter and David Frisby. in David Frisby and Mike Featherstone, eds. *Simmel on culture:selected writings*. London:Sage, 1997, pp. 55-75
- SIMMEL, Georg. 1916a. The crisis of culture . Translated from German by D.E. Jenkinson. in David Frisby and Mike Featherstone, eds. *Simmel on culture:selected writings*. London:Sage, 1997,

pp. 90-101

SIMMEL, Georg. 1916b. The change in cultural forms . Translated from German by Mark Ritter and David Frisby. in David Frisby and Mike Featherstone, eds. *Simmel on culture:selected writings*. London:Sage, 1997, pp. 103-107

SIMMEL, Georg. 1918. The conflict of modern culture . Translated from German by Mark D.E. Jenkinson. in David Frisby and Mike Featherstone, eds. *Simmel on culture:selected writings*. London:Sage, 1997, pp. 75-90

SIMMEL, Georg. *The philosophy of money*. Translated by Tom Bottomore and David Frisby, David Frisby ed. London; New York: Routledge, 1978 (Original work published 1900).

SMART, Barry. 1994. Digesting the modern diet. Gastro-porn, fast food, and panic eating. in Keith Tester, ed. *The Flaneur*. London:Routledge, 1994, pp 160-180

SMITH, Jonathan A. *Interpretative phenomenological analysis. Theory, method and research*. Los Angeles, Calif.; London: SAGE, 2009.

SOBCHACK, Vivian. 1993. Toward a phenomenology of nonfictional film experience, in Jane Ganes and Michael Renov, eds. *Collecting visible evidence*, Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999

SOKOLOWSKI, Robert. *Introduction to phenomenology*. Cambridge, UK;New York:Cambridge University Press, 2000.

SPINELLI, Ernesto. *The interpreted world: an introduction to phenomenological psychology*. London: Sage, 1989.

STADLER, Harald. 1990. "Film as experience: phenomenological concepts in cinema and television studies", *Quarterly Review of film and video*, vol. 12, no. 3, 1990, pp.37-50

STAIGER, Janet. *Interpreting films: studies in the historical reception of American cinema*. Princeton, NJ; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1992.

SWEENEY, Kevin. 1994. "The persistence of vision: the re-emergence of phenomenological theories of film", *Film and philosophy*, vol. 1, 1994, Available from: [http://web.archive.org/web/20010213211936/http://www.hanover.edu/philos/film/vol\\_01/sweeney.htm](http://web.archive.org/web/20010213211936/http://www.hanover.edu/philos/film/vol_01/sweeney.htm)

TESTER, Keith. 1994. Introduction. in Keith Tester, ed. *The Flaneur*. London:Routledge, 1994, pp 1-21

TOMASULO, Frank. 1990. "Phenomenology: philosophy and media theory - an introduction", *Quarterly Review of film and video*, vol. 12, no. 3, 1990, pp.1-8

VERTOV, Dziga. 1896-1954. *Kino-eye: the writings of Dziga Vertov*. ed. with an introduction by Annette Michelson; trans. by Kevin O'Brien. London:Pluto, 1984

VIDLER, Anthony. *Warped Space: art, architecture, and anxiety in modern culture*. Cambridge, Massachusetts;London, England: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2000.

VINEBERG, Steve. 2005. "Bigger than Life", *The Threepenny Review*, no. 101 (Spring, 2005), pp 18-21.

WEBBER, Andrew. 2008. Introduction. in Andrew Webber and Emma Wilson, eds. *Cities in transition. The moving image and the modern metropolis*. London:Wallflower Press, 2008, pp.1-13

WINSTON, Brian. *Claiming the real: the Griersonian documentary and its legitimations*. London:British Film Institute, 1995.

WIRED (1998) *You've got product placement* [Online] Available from: <http://www.wired.com/culture/lifestyle/news/1998/11/16046>