Subjectivity in the New Hollywood Cinema: Fathers, Sons and Other Ghosts

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introduction
Why the New Hollywood Blockbuster?

From the beginning of this project there was one question that people who avoid watching blockbusters would ask me, “why blockbuster films?” To them, the answer to the question “what is a blockbuster and how does it work” seemed self-evident—blockbusters are those highly commercial films that pose a threat to everything: to the canon of the “classical narrative,” to “art cinema,” to European cinema and by extension its cultural and national heritage, and even to the representation of history, as in the case of Schindler’s List. I often feared that if I were to give the impression of being fascinated with these objects, I too would be sneered at. Just like millions of viewers around the globe, I too would be considered a dupe of the special effects of an imperializing apparatus.¹

On the one hand, these respondents had every right to be suspicious. The production of blockbuster films presupposes a mobilizing of economic, technological and industrial forces. It is a hit-driven industry based on budgets, production values and marketing strategy.² This industry has ample means, then, to market particular world-views embedded in its high-cost, high-tech and high-speed films.³ On the other hand, in different historical and political conditions, the “special effects” of a dominant ideology could be perceived in another light. Having grown up under a Communist regime, I remember only too well that the effectiveness of the apparatus was not contingent on gorging people with popular Hollywood films. Indeed, from the position of the guardians of a non-Western regime, a dupe of Hollywood cinema and the ideology of the West it promoted could be perceived as a potentially subversive element, a threat to the Party. Paradoxically enough, a fascination with Hollywood cinema can be understood as politically incorrect from both positions.

There is a difference, however. Promoting Hollywood cinema in a one-party system was considered reactionary. Within Western society, reaction would imply precisely the opposite, a dismissal of Hollywood cinema. In this respect I would argue, the answer to the “why” question is contingent not only on the object itself, but on the historical, economic or ideological conditions which determine its place within a given culture. Accordingly, instead of just marvelling at an object’s effects, or defining these a priori as a cultural problem, we can rather examine the ways the former are entwined
with the latter. This makes even more sense when we take into account the changing social, political, economic and philosophical dimensions of the global community. IV In the present state of technology and communication, the blockbuster has emerged as a prototype of a film that can fulfill the international and commercial imperatives of contemporary culture - it circulates in the West and the East. V

In my study, the main thrust will be placed on the connection these films effectuate between cinematic representation and narrative. The emphasis on representation implies that the purpose of narratological analysis is not only to demonstrate that, their simplicity notwithstanding, these films are narrative. VI More importantly, the analyses will enable me to explain that the preoccupation with fathers and sons traceable in a wide range of new Hollywood blockbusters is dependent on those invisible subjective views - the “ghosts” - various narratorial authorities which determine the ways our reality is “told,” framed or symbolized. These aims call for a theory that “defines and describes narrativity, not narrative; not a genre or object but a cultural mode of expression” (Bal 1997: 222). Engaging with these objects critically will ultimately sharpen our awareness that we too have a role to play in the production of the new Hollywood’s “special effects.”

Narrativity, or Mobilized Subjectivity

According to André Gaudreault, there are two types of narrative in the cinema. The first level is the micro-narrative, and the second level is the macro-narrative, which is generated on the basis of the first level, and constitutes a filmic narrative in the generally accepted sense (Gaudreault 1987: 29-35). VII The second level of the filmic narrative is the product of a dialectical combination of the two basic modes of narrative communication: monstration and narration. According to this view, any film made in one shot comprises a single narrative layer attributed solely to the discourse of the monstration, between one frame and the next. VIII Gaudreault's theorizing is focused on the films of the “primitive” mode that would seem deficient if analyzed according to the parameters set up by classical Hollywood films. IX Gaudreault reexamines Christian Metz’s concepts regarding the duality of cinematic language. According to Metz, every shot tells a story merely by means of iconic analogy, and one-
shot films only develop into a narrative through a second complex of codified instructions that are achieved through editing. Gaudreault contends that the two levels of narrativity correspond to the two “articulations” linked to the double mobility characteristic of cinema: the mobility of the represented subjects, made possible by the sequence of frames, and the mobility of the spatio-temporal segments, made possible by the sequence of shots. Gaudreault adds that although these two levels of narrative are concomitant, they tend to cancel each other out. That is, the second level tends to cover up the first: spectators are not aware of watching a huge number of micro-narratives (shots) being linked together and accumulating piece by piece to create a macro-narrative (a feature film) (Gaudreault 1992: 68-76).

Gaudreault’s discussion, however, is not only important because it demonstrates that the films from 1895 can be characterized on the basis of their specific narrativity. It also reminds us how difficult it is to decide which texts are narrative, and the basis on which the specificities of one narrational mode can be distinguished from another. To engage in a discussion about the difference between single and double mobility, described by Gaudreault as the difference between two levels of narrativity, implies taking on a challenge, a similar kind of challenge that a discussion on narration in the new Hollywood blockbuster poses. The analysis of one-shot films which depict the simplest of events - the arrival of the train, the workers leaving the factory, or a baby having breakfast is extremely useful, for it brings up one of the crucial issues regarding filmic narration, namely the problem of differentiating showing from telling, or to put it in Gaudreault’s terms, monstrating from narrating. Even though Gaudreault has introduced the term “monstrator” which refers to the entity who “shows/monstrates” rather than the agent who “tells,” he has nevertheless designated an entity who is responsible for the choice of the event as well as the position of the camera from which the event will be filmed. If the narratives of the primitive mode (the one-shot films) can be described as conditioned through the articulation of frames, and the narratives of the classical Hollywood period depend on the additional mobility of the shots, my argument is that the new Hollywood blockbusters need to be observed as cases of triple mobility, as a simultaneous articulation of frames, shots, and subjectivity.
According to Bal, the subject is implicated in diverse features of narrative semiosis, or rather, in a “complex body of semiotic events which it is possible to analyze in terms of its elements” (Bal 1991: 158). This is a semiotic approach to narrative where special emphasis is placed on the agency that is imputed to a network of subjects - a subject of narration, a subject of vision and a subject of action. In that respect, the structuring of subjectivity is bound up with the structuring of narrative. If we take all this into consideration, including the fact that interpretation itself is subjective and susceptible to cultural constraints and framings, we can “turn narrative analysis into an activity of cultural analysis” (Bal 1997: 11). This move is crucial for distinguishing the third mobility of the narrative, for it is on this level that we can not only disclose but also engage with the political, cultural and ideological determinations which promote a particular vision of the world.

This argument regarding the third mobility can be complemented with Steven Heath’s discussion on mobility in film. Heath sees mobility as that which is possible in film. In his view, film can be held within a certain vision that can have historical, industrial or ideological implications. “Cinema is not simply and specifically ideological ‘in itself’,” Heath states, “but it is developed in the context of concrete and specific ideological determinations which inform as well the ‘technical’ as the ‘commercial’ or ‘artistic’ sides of that development” (Heath 1981: 23-33). Since ideological determinations are bound up with that “certain vision” they inevitably affect cinematic representation. To disclose this source of signification as well as its effects, which are often blurred, it is necessary to examine the structuring of subjectivity across several levels.

Film, Story, Fabula
There are three levels we need to discern at the outset: the text, the story and the fabula, which correspond to Bal’s definition of narrative as composed of these three layers. “A narrative text is a text in which an agent relates - tells a story in a particular medium...a story is a fabula that is presented in a certain manner...a fabula is a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by the actors” (Bal 1997: 5). In a study of the story, the major focus is on the character, whereas in a study of the fabula, we deal with the anthropomorphic figure called the actor or diegetic
agent. The new Hollywood cinema has its own fabulas, but very often it draws on the already well-established ones. Through the storytelling process, and this is frequently the case in the new Hollywood cinema, old fabulas are revised, re-told, re-produced, re-cycled, re-made. As I will demonstrate through analyses of specific films, fabulas are also “repaired” or “improved.” This is closely related to the tendency traceable in the new Hollywood blockbusters to redefine but also re-institute patriarchal myths, to give a new face to history, to repair the father or, simply to improve the male subject.

I would argue that in the films in question, ideological determinations that inform the “certain vision” of a film, in the first place involve the fabula. The process whereby subjective vision is mobilized through the fabula I will call fabulation. Even though ideological determinations always involve the fabula, and although in broader terms fabulation can be understood as telling or narrating, I will be using this term to emphasize a specific process - a way of storytelling where fabula collapses with the story. The most prominent effect of that collapse, as the analyses of the films will show, is that the structure of meaning traceable on the level of the macro-unit (the fabula) comes to reflect the micro-unit (a scene, or even a separate image). In these films, we principally cannot determine the narratorial authority by means of stylistic/cinematic devices, to use Bordwell’s definition of the term. We can, however, determine the ideological, and even personal concerns of the “invisible” narratorial authority. Fabulas of narrative texts, as I am suggesting in accordance with Bal’s theory, are dependent on critical concerns derived from the outer world. The theory of elements, which involves the layer of the fabula, as Bal asserts, “even more generally than that of the aspects, makes describable a segment of reality that is broader than that of narrative texts only” (Bal 1997: 178).

Needless to say, the separation of the fabula from the story or the text is only theoretical because the functioning of the narrative involves a simultaneous interaction of all three layers. Furthermore, each of the levels affects the structuring of subjectivity. When taking into consideration the level of the text, the crucial concern is the identity and the status of the narrative agent - the narrator - the subject of narrating that constitutes a function, rather
than a person, and that expresses itself through the signifiers that constitute the text. As far as filmic narratives are concerned, the signifiers that constitute the text are also expressed through framing, duration, angle, shot/reverse shot, or camera movement; or, more precisely, through the signifiers that are specifically cinematic. Therefore, a connection needs to be established between the formal aspects of the image, as well as the ordering of images, and the three layers of the narrative. The aspects and the elements of the filmic narrative are dependent on the specifically cinematic signs, and conversely, the way these signs are expressed is dependent on the aspects and elements of narrative. For this reason, I will principally work with Bal's concepts of narrative, but I will complement her theory with Metz's cine-semiotics. This will enable me to trace a complex play of subject positions while maintaining focus on the textual system.

Hence, the main purpose of textual analysis in this study is to trace the co-dependency between the cinematic signifiers and the subject of narrating that expresses itself through these signifiers. The analysis of the text is thus necessarily joined with the two other layers, the story and the fabula. The way a narrating subject or "person" is expressed in a filmic text is closely related with the way the story is told, but it is also dependent on the fabula which always conveys some form of understanding of the world: for example, that the hero needs to be goal-oriented, or that happiness entails a union of a heterosexual couple (as is most often the case in the classical Hollywood cinema), or that there are struggles for authority in which the place of the father and the place of the son are particularly heavily marked, whereas that of a woman is far less defined, (as in the so-called "classical German cinema").

The story determines a specific rhetoric that has direct implications on the epistemological value of the text; the way the events are ordered into a story, the way a fabula is framed or re-framed through the process of storytelling enables us to draw conclusions about the concerns that are embedded into the fictional world. Therefore, even when vision cannot be explicitly attributed to a specific agent, we still need to be aware of its implicit value. In other words, even when the authorial vision is dominated by the production practices and technology, as is the case with classical Hollywood cinema, or when it appears immersed in the process of
fabulation as is most often the case in the new Hollywood blockbusters, there are still world-views to be accounted for.\textsuperscript{xvii} We need to be aware of that "something," the "I," behind the "he," which suppresses, but also imputes personal visions.\textsuperscript{xviii}

**Narration or Focalization**

The crucial aspect of this study is the problem of the narrator and the specific ways in which it can be distinguished from the focalizor. The term focalization was introduced by Gérard Genette to distinguish the agent who "narrates" from the agent who "sees."\textsuperscript{xix} Genette's theory is divided into three principal categories: tense, mood, and voice. The two categories that are of interest for the moment are mood and voice; Genette draws on the grammatical meaning of "mood" as a "name given to the different forms of the verb that are used to affirm more or less the thing in question, and to express the different points of view from which the life or the action is looked at" (Genette 1995:161):

Indeed, one can tell *more or less* what one tells, and can tell it *according to one point of view or another*; and this capacity, and the modalities of its use, are precisely what our category of narrative mood aims at. Narrative "representation," or more exactly, narrative information has its degrees: the narrative can furnish the reader with more or fewer details, and in a more or less direct way, and can thus seem (to adopt a common and convenient spatial metaphor, which is not to be taken literally) to keep at a greater or lesser distance from what it tells. (Genette 1995: 162)

In referring to the category of "voice," Genette designates the narrating agent, the enunciator, or in other words, the narrator. The narrating agent is related to the categories of time of narrating, narrative level, and "person" (215). In his discussion of the typology of narrative situations, Genette distinguishes three types of narrative. The first type is the omniscient narrative, "vision from behind," with the following formula: Narrator > Character (where the narrator knows more than the character, or says more than any one of the characters knows). According to Genette, this type, generally represented by the classical narrative, is a non-focalized narrative, or a
narrative with zero focalization. The second type has the formula: Narrator = Character (the narrator says only what a given character knows). This type is also described as the narrative with "point of view," with "restricted field," or "vision with." This second type is a narrative with internal focalization. The third type has the formula: Narrator < Character (the narrator says less than the character knows), and it can also be described as "vision from without" (189).

In Genette's model, focalization is closely related to the distribution of knowledge and thus, vision determines the epistemological value of each of the three terms. It is not difficult to recognize the usefulness of Genette's approach for film, and his theory has helped film theorists to differentiate amongst narrative agents and levels in a concise way. Nevertheless, there are particular aspects of Genette's theory that pose limitations for the study of subjectivity in filmic narratives, particularly those of the new Hollywood. In her extensive commentary on Genette's narratology, Bal takes issue with the problem of subjectivity as it is bound up with the notion of focalization (Bal 1991: 73-108). While Genette restricts this term to the level of the diegesis, to the fictional world of the text, Bal contends that focalization has implications which exceed the field of vision that is restricted only to the characters. Her interventions into Genette's concept of focalization, I would argue, can prove to be an important contribution in the development of film narratology.

Bal explains that in a narrative with external focalization, "characters are also focalized, but that they are focalized from without. That means that the narrative's center of interest is a character (as is with internal focalization), but its development is seen only from the outside" (Bal 1991: 83):

It is true that in moving from the first type to third, the narrator's "knowledge" diminishes, and in this sense it is homogenous. But that difference does not have to do with point of view or focalization. The difference between the non-focalized narrative and the internally focalized narrative lies in the agent who sees: is the agent the narrator who omniscient - sees more than the character, or (in the second type) is the agent the narrator who sees "with" the character, sees as much as s/he does? Between the second and third
types the distinction is not of the same order. In the second type, the “focalized” character sees, in the third type, s/he does not see, s/he is seen. [Bal’s italics.] The difference this time is not between the “seeing” agents, but between the objects of that seeing. (Bal 1991: 83)

By not making a distinction between “focalization on” and “focalization through,” Genette, as Bal argues, ends up treating both the subject and the object alike as focalized (Bal 1991: 84). Narration always implies focalization and focalization taken in its widest sense, constitutes the object of narrating (Bal 1997: 19). The relation between who perceives and what is perceived colors the story with subjectivity (Bal 1997: 8). Accordingly, the focalized content or the object of focalization cannot exist without the subject of focalization. But by the same token, focalization cannot take place without the act of narration. To determine who sees, we must take into account the medium through which we perceive that sight: the narrating (Bal 1991: 87).

Hence, even if we are dealing with vision “from without,” or external focalization, that is, even when there is vision on the characters rather than through the characters, we cannot fail to acknowledge the subject of narration. Once we have become aware that there is a narrator, albeit an external one, we will realize that there is an object of narration. Since narrative presupposes a text, or more precisely, a specific medium such as film, in which a story is told, it is impossible for the spectators to perceive the narrated content directly. This content is subjectivized, presented, framed, or filtered through a certain vision. (Italics are mine.) In that respect, as far as the status of narration is concerned “I” and “he” are both “l” (Bal 1997: 21). The difference between the two involves the level of narration, because, technically speaking, it is always the “invisible” external narrator who delegates narration to a character, that is, to an internal narrator.

When we take into consideration that seeing and narrating, which play such a crucial role in the structuring of subjectivity, are additionally bound up with a critical perspective we can begin to understand that even Gaudreault’s monstrator has something to tell.
Can the Film Tell itsefl?

Despite such shortcomings, Genette's concepts have remained influential in film studies, and one of the most successful applications of Genette's model is certainly Edward Branigan's *Narrative Comprehension and the Fiction Film* (Branigan, 1992). Following Genette, Branigan has translated his concepts for film, implying that he has retained the category of zero-focalization, which in fact proves to be the defining aspect of the classical Hollywood cinema in Branigan's study. In Branigan's view, a narrator offers a statement about, an actor/agent acts or is acted upon, and a focalizor has an "experience of" (Branigan, 1992: 161-174). He objects to Bal's concept of the focalizor, because in his view a focalizor can only be a character, whose experiences we are to share. Having adopted Genette's position that vision is restricted to the characters, Branigan likewise argues that, subjective vision is only expressed through, and can only be attributed to the characters. Hence, subjectivity is discussed in terms of the subjectivity of the camera, as opposed to the so-called objectivity of the camera, which he calls non-focalization.

This implies precise borders between, for example, the "normal" state of the character and his drunken state, where the camera would simulate such a subjective experience, or between "reality" and fantasy, or between the state of being awake or dreaming. In his critique of Bal's concept of the focalizor, Branigan objects to her view that unidentified and undramatized narrators as well as characters can focalize events. Branigan asserts that if experiences are not attributed to a particular individual but rendered in the "third person," we risk dissipating the distinction between narration and focalization (161-74). Branigan can come to this view because he principally defines focalization on the basis of characters' vision, and opposes this to non-focalization, hence, to non-vision. And in fact, there is no risk involved here, certainly not for the one who is responsible for the world-view that is represented through the narrated content, for the film seems to be "telling itself." There is even less risk involved for the one who interprets the film, his or her personal vision is suppressed for the purpose of obtaining an "objective" analysis.

Branigan's is a cognitivist approach. This means that it is concerned with spectators' engagement with the text, with their
capacity to recognize cognitive schematas, or rather narrative schemas, which help them to process the data, and enhance the film's intelligibility. The spectator is the central figure here, the one who "constructs the film" since he or she is cued to apply various schemas. But this spectator is an abstract one. Therefore, not taking the risk of considering unidentified or undramatized narrators, implies ultimately letting go of the critical perspective, setting aside the question of what it is that shapes our cognitive schematas. Why and how are we "cued" to think and, especially, to see the way we do? And, most importantly, can we learn to see the world differently? 

My choice of Bal's critical narratology, in contrast, is not only based on the necessity to turn narrative analysis into an activity of cultural analysis - it is first of all a theoretical and a practical choice.

One of the consequences of Branigan's approach is that subjectivity appears to be a unified investment that is either visible or invisible. This has direct repercussions, not to say serious limitations, for the study of filmic narratives other than those of the classical Hollywood. Therefore, while they may function to explain the working of the "classical" narration, his concepts are problematic in a filmic text where such distinctions between subjectivity and objectivity are not so clear. As I will demonstrate through the analyses of specific films, subjectivity in the new Hollywood narratives is emphatically decomposed. When we additionally take into consideration the conflicting modes of telling, the correlations of formal features which spring from heterogeneous domains, the transgression of generic boundaries, or the staging of interdiscursive clashes, we can grasp how difficult it is to work with Branigan's concept of subjectivity.

The most prominent theorist working within the cognitivist approach, David Bordwell, admits to the limitations that his cognitivist project *Narration in the Fiction Film* poses:

This theory will not answer every interesting question we might ask about cinematic storytelling. Being an account of narration, it will not necessarily help define matters of narrative representation or narrative structure. Dependent upon a perceptual-cognitive account of the spectator's activity, it will not address issues such as sexuality and fantasy, for which
psychoanalytic theories are better suited (Bordwell 1985: 335).

Bordwell’s cognitivist account is informed by Russian Formalist concepts. His theory of narration hinges on three major concepts: fabula, syuzhet and style. The formal definition of narration is as follows: “In the fiction film, narration is the process whereby the film’s syuzhet and style interact in the course of cueing and channeling the spectator’s construction of the fabula” (Bordwell 53). Again, the film seems to be telling itself. To better grasp the limitations Bordwell’s theory poses for the study of those Hollywood narratives, which cannot strictly be defined, as classical, it is important to consider his definition of “style”:

Style [...] constitutes a system in that it too mobilizes components - particular instantiations of film techniques - according to principles of organization. [...] in this context, "style" simply names the film’s systematic use of cinematic devices. Style is thus wholly ingredient to the medium. [...] The syuzhet embodies the film as a “dramaturgical” process; style embodies it as a “technical” one. (Bordwell, 1985: 50)

Bordwell’s concept of style is useful when it comes to distinguishing the norm, as well as spotting a deviation from the norm: classical Hollywood cinema functions as the norm, and art cinema, for example, is a deviation from that norm. Within this line of thought stylistic devices are bound up with a mode of production and consumption and thus, in classical Hollywood, the style is more or less uniform. “In the ‘normal’ film, that is, the syuzhet system controls the stylistic system - the syuzhet is the ‘dominant’” (52). In opposition to the "normal" film, one of the tendencies of art cinema, as Bordwell points out, is [...] “deviation from classical norms” (213). He explains that in art cinema stylistic devices “gain prominence with respect to classical norms - an unusual angle, a stressed bit of cutting, a striking camera movement [...]” (209). In spite of the fact that the general distinctions are logical and operative, however, Bordwell’s principles prove reductive when we attempt to account for the differences within the “norm-al” itself.

In his theory of narration, “style” refers to the film as a technical process which pertains to a mode of production and con-
sumption, and it is therefore very difficult to account for those (stylistic) differences which do not in the first instance have to do with the film's technical aspect. Debates, which emerged in the 70s regarding the distinction between the classical and the new Hollywood cinema, are indicative of this problem. In his article "The Pathos of Failure: American Films in the 70s - Notes on the Unmotivated Hero," Thomas Elsaesser argues that what characterizes the Hollywood films of this period are heroes who are not psychologically or morally motivated, a structure that is looser, and a narrative that is open-ended (Elsaesser, 1975). These features, in his view, call for a departure from the narratives of the classical Hollywood style. Even though Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson acknowledge Elsaesser's findings in their historiography, they nevertheless contend that the classical period extends from the mid-1910s, into the 1970s. In their view, the films emerging in the late 60s and 70s can be taken as an example of stylistic assimilation and a continuation of the classical tradition. "The New Hollywood can explore ambiguous narrational possibilities but those explorations remain within the classical boundaries" (Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson, 1991: 377).

Such a totalizing view of Hollywood cinema has evoked a plethora of critical comments, and Murray Smith perhaps best sums up the thrust of the critique:

For all the wealth of historical detail contained in their work, the description of the classical mode becomes an ahistorical one. The classical system they posit becomes so abstract, generalized and encompassing that anything can be assimilated and nothing can make a difference. (Smith, 1998: 15)

I would argue that one of the crucial reasons why this system may appear generalized and ahistorical has to do with the choice of theory. Bordwell's theory of narration does not account for the subjects who partake in the process of telling; instead, as I have already noted, he treats narration as an interaction between syuzhet and the cinematic devices. Even if, according to his definition of narration, classical style does in fact extend to such lengths, we are still left at an impasse. First, as Bordwell himself admits, his theory does not enable us to explore the ways narrative affects the representation of
gender, ethnicity, race or other social markers in cinema. Moreover, if there is no possibility for studying the relationship between cinematic representation and narrative, one can easily lose track of how the former affects the latter, and vice versa. As a result, the possibility for change is obliterated - other (‘s) concerns and themes can emerge in time, as well as alternative world-views. We can trace these signs, I would argue, even when they seem embedded in narratives that correspond to Bordwell’s definition of the classical style.

Therefore, the fact that I am using the term “new Hollywood” does not imply that I am searching for new boundaries based on a new mode of narration, or a new mode of production and consumption, for that matter. The term “new” already refers to at least two different periods in the Hollywood film industry: in the first instance, it refers to the late 60s and the early 70s, the turbulent years of the industry when the “Hollywood art films” and its “unmotivated heroes” emerged. Secondly, it refers to the period after 1975 when, according to Thomas Schatz, Hollywood industry achieved a new stability. The (new) new Hollywood is a beginning of an era of “high-concept,” “film as event,” or rather, blockbuster mentality, marked additionally by the arrival of a “new generation” of directors such as Francis Ford Coppola, Steven Spielberg and George Lucas.

Keeping in mind the slippery definition of the term, I will be referring to “new Hollywood” as a complex web of forces - industrial, economic, technological, historical, or ideological, as they relate to both narration and representation in contemporary Hollywood cinema. Furthermore, I will examine a group of new Hollywood films in terms of their specific narrativity. Narrativity, as I have stated at the outset, is a mode of cultural expression. It presupposes a network of subjects who all take part in the process of telling.

Subjectivity in Filmic Narratives

The problem of subjectivity in cinema is very much related to the problem of enunciation in cinema, or rather, with the various attempts to come to terms with the relationship between cinema and language. Relevant here is the long-term preoccupation of cinema studies with the work of Emile Benveniste. In terms of my study, Benveniste’s concepts regarding subjectivity in language will be discussed in the light of Bal’s semiotics of narrative. With respect
to this, my aim is not to demonstrate that linguistic categories can be applied to film. Instead, and in accordance with Bal's theory of narrative, I am exploring the ways that the specific linguistic terms put forward by Benveniste, can be extended to hold for cinematic texts. To comprehend this, recall the three layers that constitute a narrative - the text, the story, and the fabula. Keeping these in mind implies that I am neither applying a "literary theory" nor a linguistic model to film; rather, I am concerned with the effects that the two levels, the story and the fabula, generate at the level of the filmic text.

The problem of subjectivity in cinema became radicalized via the so-called "second semiology." Its most important theoretical intervention concerning the relation between film and semiotics was the inclusion of the spectator as part of the structure and meaning of a film. Here the linguistic theories of Benveniste became crucial, particularly his distinction 

\[ \text{histoire}/\text{discours}, \]

as well as his concern with the enunciation and utterance (\text{énonciation}/\text{énoncé}), (Benveniste, 1971). The process of enunciation can be distinguished as pertaining either to \text{discours}, where enunciative marks are emitted, or to \text{histoire}, where the intervention of the speaker is elided. In that respect, Metz has argued that the classical Hollywood film presents itself as \text{histoire} because it effaces the marks of enunciation, that is, it presents \text{discours} in the guise of \text{histoire} (Metz, 1990).

In his critique of accounts of enunciation that draw on the linguistic model, Bordwell contends that the greatest problem with these theories is that they fail to justify their recourse to linguistic terms and categories (Bordwell 1985). Bordwell argues, for example, that the category of person has no equivalent in cinema because it is impossible to find pertinent marks of the second person. His critique is aimed at Mark Nash's analysis of Carl Theodor Dreyer's film \text{Vampyr}:

Seeking to find marks of discourse in the film, Nash must reject nearly all of Benveniste's "means of enunciation" as inapplicable. Only the category of person, Nash hypothesizes, has a cinematic equivalent. Yet the comparison breaks down when he fails to find filmic equivalents for the second person function. He asserts that in the cinema the "you" function bears the
marks of the author's address to the implicit reader. His only examples are two expository titles in the film which present questions addressed (perhaps) to the viewer. But what would a second person image look like? (Bordwell 1985: 21-26)

The objective of Nash's analysis is to establish the filmic equivalent to the hesitation in enunciation, which Tzvetan Todorov has shown to be at work in the literary genre of the fantastic (Todorov 1975).xxxv In his analysis, Nash proposes an analogous cinematic genre, the cinefantastic, and he argues in relation to Dreyer's Vampyr, that the conditions necessary for the cinefantastic are provided for, in part, by a code of "pronoun functions." Nash applies Benveniste's concepts histoire/discours and suggests that the first-person histoire with its features of discours is manifested through the "classical point-of-view shot" or subjective shot, whereas the "descriptive shot," "characterized by the presence of the impersonal narrating instance," would mark the "third-person histoire."xxxvi Nash observes unexpected shifts from histoire to discours and he argues that they are analogous to the hesitations in enunciation inherent in fantastic literature.

Nash's analysis fails to convince. The reason is that he defines a discours on the basis of a shot/filmic image, instead of an interdependency of images/subject positions. By negating the very prerequisite of discours, as an interdependency of subject positions, he falls into the trap of dealing with subjectivity as a unified investment, and hence does not manage to account for the position of the second person.xxxvii For the purpose of this study, I have not maintained the sense of the term discours that implies in the first place a type of linguistic utterance. Instead, when necessary, I will be employing the term in the sense of Bal's semiotics of narrative. One aspect of narrative as mode of semiotic behavior is precisely the use of either "first," "second," or "third-person discourse" (Bal, 1993). In these terms, discourse comprehends the relation between the positions, implying that the focus is on the structure we can establish on the basis of the subject positions.

In response to Nash, Bordwell rightly argues against mimeticism although he seems frustrated by the filmic absence of a "presence" of the "second person," a presence that is supposedly manifest in Benveniste's conception of discours:
Nash can find no instances because we have no idea what could be pertinent marks. Is a close-up overtly addressed to the reader? Is a carefully framed long shot? In effect, every shot or cut bears some trace of the author’s address. The second person pronoun is a necessary component of Benveniste’s conception of discourse; it brings out the presence of the hearers. But if in analyzing a film we cannot distinguish first-person discourse (i.e., shots bearing personal marks of the author) from second person discourse (i.e., shots bearing personal marks of the viewer) then the category of person has no equivalent in cinema. (Bordwell 1985:21-26)

In his partly justified critique of Nash’s analysis, Bordwell implicitly imputes his rather Cartesian view to Benveniste. However, Benveniste never states that the 2nd person has to be explicit. Benveniste does not at all define a “you” on the basis of its presence but rather through its interdependency with an “I”:

Consciousness of self is only possible if it is experienced by contrast. I use “I” only when I am speaking to someone who will be a “you” in my address. It is this condition of dialogue that is constitutive of person, for it implies that reciprocally “I” becomes “you” in the address of the one who in his turn designates himself as “I.” Here we see a principle whose consequences are to spread in all directions. Language is possible only because each speaker sets himself up as a subject by referring to himself as “I” in his discourse. Because of this, “I” posits another person, the one who, being as he is, completely exterior to me, becomes my echo to whom I say “you” and who says “you” to me. (Benveniste 1986:106)

According to Benveniste, a discourse implies an interplay of positions which do not refer to either a presence or an absence, but to a relationship between positions. The “I” and “you” are mutually constituted. Hence, the essence of language does not reside in reference but in subjectivity. Bal explains that “this mutuality already holds, in fact, a radical break with the individual subject: losing its stability and continuity, the ‘I’ moves back and forth between the two positions of ‘I’ and ‘you’ ” (Bal 1994:105). Since the major thrust of my
project is to articulate the shaping of subjectivity in the new Hollywood cinema, the recourse to Benveniste's work on subjectivity in language is a logical point of departure. Three, theoretically inseparable terms recur in Benveniste's theory: language, discourse and subjectivity. Subjectivity is produced through language, and in the first instance it can be traced in a situation of discourse. Separating these terms the way Bordwell does, in order to prove that a filmic equivalent cannot be found, only confirms that Bordwell's theoretical position is incompatible with the concepts I am endorsing.

In *The Subject of Semiotics*, Kaja Silverman offers an inspiring analysis of Benveniste's concepts and convincingly theorizes the inter-dependency of subjectivity, language and discourse (Silverman 1983). Although Silverman retains the semiotic approach, however, she ultimately delegates the problem of subjectivity to psychoanalysis. Thus Silverman attempts to solve the problem of enunciation in cinema by means of the system of suture. The concept of suture can be useful in the sense that it helps us establish the patterns and structures of identification imposed on the viewer by the cinema as an apparatus of enunciation. On the other hand, when it comes to distinguishing the subtle differences, disjunctions and conjunctions between subject positions and focalizors functioning on the level of the discursive unit, the concept of suture as an account of filmic subjectivity is very limiting.

I contend that even though the problem of identification in cinema is dependent on enunciation in cinema, the former should not be collapsed with the latter. The "look" in the psychoanalytic sense cannot be equated with Bal's concept of the focalizor, but neither can the point-of-view of the camera. Nor can the look of the camera which induces spectatorial identification, immediately be understood as first-person narration. The problem of identification is principally an effect of enunciation and therefore, in order to recognize its configuration, we need to analyze the ways subjectivity is manifested at the level of the story and the fabula. This implies, for a start, that it is an analysis of the relations between subject positions at the level of a discursive unit that yields insight into the patterns of identification, and not the other way around.

Silverman offers a comprehensive account of the system of suture, commencing with its psychoanalytic formulation and gradu-
ally transporting the concept into cinema. Jacques-Alain Miller has defined suture in the following way:

Suture names the relation of the subject to the chain of its discourse [. . .] it figures there as the element which is lacking, in the form of a stand-in. For, while there is lacking, it is not purely and simply absent. Suture, by extension - the general relation of lack to the structure of which it is an element, inasmuch as it implies the position of a taking-the-place-of.
(Miller, 1977/78: 25-26)

Silverman mentions the importance of the shot/reverse shot formation as a means of “stitching” the viewer into the cinematic discourse. It is a way to suture his or her desire to fill in the lack, that is, a way to conjure up the “absent one.” The viewer is, thus, seemingly supplied with the answer to the question of who controls the gaze - but this is only due to the fact that s/he is positioned, via the system of suture, to identify with the character. The identification is made possible via the gaze of the camera, which conveniently obscures the fact that the discourse is controlled by an inapprehensible gaze.

The system of suture, in a broader sense, corresponds to the concept of focalization proposed by Bal. Narratives are dependent on a prefabricated perspective, and the structuring of the discourse is accordingly dependent on the perspective, world-view, ideology expressed in the narrative text. In that respect, psychoanalytic film theory is more pertinent to this study than cognitivist film theory, which does not deal with the forces/apparati which control the way we see. When it comes to the concrete analysis of a discursive unit, however, the concept of suture does not consider specific details. Because the concept is principally concerned with the identificatory position as a whole, as it is imposed on the spectator, the relations within a discursive unit are not treated with sufficient precision:

A simple display of a fictional character looking in shot 2 usually proves sufficient to maintain the illusion that shot 1 visually “belongs” to that character. The camera may even adopt an oblique position, slightly to one side of the actor, rather than directly facing him or her. Filmmakers are general-
ly no more literal with shot 1 of the shot/reverse shot formation. Often we are shown the shoulders or head of the character through whose eyes we are ostensibly looking. In fact, mathematical exactitude provides a much less successful approximation of “reality” than does the loose application of the shot/reverse shot convention. (Silverman 1983: 202)

In a new Hollywood film such as *ET-The Extraterrestrial*, as my analysis will demonstrate, the difference in the position of the camera directly affects the way character subjectivity is represented. As a result, it is not always possible to separate the image of a “he” from the image of an “I.” Furthermore, there are ostensible tensions and clashes between internal and external focalization. If we ignore these relations, we risk obliterating the essential characteristics of a mode of narration at work in a specific filmic text. Therefore, the psychoanalytic approach in itself does not suffice to account for the aspects of a filmic narrative. Conversely, a theory of narrative alone cannot account for identification and for the way the spectator, or rather his or her unconscious, is affected by the working of the cinematographic apparatus. The relationship between narrative, filmic images and identity is complex, particularly when we take into account not only the capacity of film to control the way we see but also its potential to restitute visions. Therefore, critical narratology takes issue with other disciplines, in this case with psychoanalysis. This theory of narrative helps us to understand the ways subjectivity is worked through in the text, while at the same time presupposing an alertness to the fact that a structure of subjectivity is a construct which depends on a vision expressed outside of the fabula.

**Thomes and Methods**

For reasons that become clear as I proceed, the discussions center on the theme of “fathering.” In chapter one I introduce the terms of analysis. When dealing with filmic narratives, the level of the text makes possible the tracing of subjectivity. The production and effacement of the subject of language cannot be limited to the representation of an “image of subjectivity.” But as Bal suggests, “subjective positions can be analyzed in their multiplicity and difference” (Bal 1994:106). When theorizing subjectivity, Bal proposes the map-
ping of subject positions according to their semiotic activities:

These positions, and those of the represented subjects/diegetic agents being plural by definition, the semantic network of such positions can be mapped for each discursive unit, thus providing the traces of subjectivity in the sense of projection. (Bal 1994:106)

This implies that subjectivity in the narrative text can be discussed on the basis of traces projected in the concrete discursive unit. Traces of subjectivity can be established on the basis of the relations between the subject positions. My primary aim in chapter one is to demonstrate that the specificity of a new Hollywood text such as ET-The Extraterrestrial lies in the interplay between narration and focalization, that is, in subtle conjunctions or disjunctions between the agent who narrates and the agent who sees. In such a case we can trace a clash between internal and external focalization. In ET-The Extraterrestrial, this instability of the focalizor is dependent on the conflicting positioning of the two main characters in the film: the text works to convince us that ET is a product of Elliot's imagination, while at the same time, ET is posited as a focalizing agent on whose point of vision the filmic narration relies. As a result, ET's return home will point both backward and forward - to Elliot's mind where he was conceived, but also to ET's home out there in the vast universe. In Walter Benjamin's line of thought, this type of structure can be understood as a "memory of the future." It will recur in other filmic texts, particularly in Schindler's List where the notion of home is bound up with a specific identity.

The interdependency between characters puts pressure on the notion of character-bound narration. The implied narrator relies on ET's vision, yet Elliot's vision is necessary to produce the vision of ET. This conflicting positioning of the two characters is produced by a technique that I will call the "decomposing of the character-image." The character-dependency manifested in the clash of focalization is traceable on the level of the story, but the resolution of the clash requires an intervention of the fabula. The arrival of the father figure, which conditions a resolution of the crisis of Elliot's subjectivity, is traceable on the level of the story, but the father's arrival into the fictional world itself is dependent on the narrational
authority who "fathers" the fabula.

While in *ET* the character is decomposed, in *Back to the Future*, the film 1 analyze in chapter two, the character is doubled and even tripled. In *ET*, the decomposition of Elliot's character-image which yields a crisis of his subjectivity is resolved through the arrival of a father-figure. In *Back to the Future*, the father is not absent but he is himself in a crisis. The doubling of the son's character-image works toward resolving the "crisis of the father." To "cure" the father, the son has to go back in time and intervene in the family history, or to put it in narratological terms, he has to intervene in the fabula. He has to undo the past, that is, he has to reverse the relationship between cause and effect. As a result, the story and the fabula become collapsed. Instead of presenting the preexisting fictional world of the fabula, in the course of the story the fabula is revised and, ultimately, a new fabula is produced. The process of re-vision implies a reframing of the past through the present, which requires a higher narratorial authority, an intervention of a vision from above which exceeds the fictional world.

To demonstrate the mobilizing of subjectivity on the level of the fabula, in the first two chapters I look closely at pertinent scenes, hence, at micro-units, in terms of their dependence on the fabula, or the macro-unit. For the analysis of separate scenes, I follow Bal's method of "mapping the subject positions according to their semiotic activities" (Bal, 1994: 106), whereas the analysis of the fabula requires an examination of the events and the diegetic agents. The examination of the relation between a micro-unit and a macro-unit in *Back to the Future* reveals a significant correspondence between the structure of meaning traceable in the scene and the structure of the entire narrative. The emerging structure of the narrative traceable across several levels points to a specific structure of subjectivity - the contiguous relation between the subject positions is continuous with the Peircian notion of the index, the Derridian notion of the trace, and the Freudian notion of the symptom. In terms of the aims of my study, then, the semiotic approach to narrative enables me explore the structuring of subjectivity within an interdisciplinary context. I demonstrate that in the type of narrative in question, the structure of subjectivity corresponds to that of Derridian *différence*. In this chapter, amongst other works, I draw on Thomas Elsaesser's discussion of the ways the new Hollywood cine-
ma employs time-travel to work through the traumas of history (Elsaesser, 1997).

In chapter three I focus on the ways narratives are "fathered" through invisible narratorial authorities, and I explore the connection the "fathering" forges between the paternal and the filial position. The structure of meaning which points to the tension between cause and effect, to an inverse generational ordering, or to a disjointed history can also be traced in the Indiana Jones trilogy. Here, I reverse the approach; instead of engaging in an analysis of subject positions manifested on the level of the text, I take the elements of the fabula as the point of departure. Hence, I examine the structuring of subjectivity on the basis of the relationship between the events, the actors, and time. I argue that the problem of accounting for subjective vision in Spielberg's trilogy is comparable to the problem of disclosing subjective vision in texts which claim scientific objectivity but employ the strategies of mythical discourse such as universality and eternity.

Bal's critical narratology makes us alert to the split concealed in mythical discourse between the subject of the text and the subject in the text, whereby the explanation is ultimately replaced with a story. Even though "telling is all there is to it," the telling is different each time (Bal, 1991a: 98). To explain how the subject of vision can be recovered in the films of the trilogy, I additionally draw on Michel de Certeau's contention that the writing of history is dependent on narrative structuring (de Certeau, 1988). Following his idea that a "science fiction" of history such as Freud's Moses and Monotheism can yield important insight into Freud's heritage, I demonstrate that the interweaving of history and myth in the Indiana Jones trilogy similarly structures our understanding of the issues concerning identity and race (de Certeau, 1986). The structuring of the films of the trilogy implies a refiguring of the Oedipal myth, and the refiguring can be observed as analogous to the racial bricolage traceable in Freud's work. Much like the narratorial authority of the films in question, Freud intervenes into the myth from the past in order to "correct" both the present and future.

With the example of the films of the Star Wars trilogy, I examine, in chapter four, the re-invention of the father through an interweaving of narratology, history and psychoanalysis. I argue that the double teleology implied in the name "Vader" summarizes and
interprets Vader’s function in the trilogy. The tension Vader/father conditions the spectral effect and produces what Derrida describes as the “haunted look” (Derrida, 1994). I take this concept as a point of departure in dealing with several themes. First, I am concerned with facing the father as the motor of the narrative. The operation of “facing the father” yields a discussion of the wall of Plato’s cave as the screen which discloses the conditions of its function. This will create the basis for re-reading Jean-Louis Baudry’s theory of the cinematographic apparatus in light of the haunted look. Connecting these two themes, I will then problematize the haunted look with respect to the de/composition of patriarchy.

What the Star Wars trilogy makes transparent is the “fathering” of the fictional world: when Vader, as the faceless authority removes his mask, the “apparatus” is unveiled. Taking the metaphorical production of meaning one step further, I suggest that this thematizing of the paternal authority can be brought to bear on Lacan’s notion of the Law of the Father which governs the symbolic order (Lacan, 1977). In that respect, fabulas can have a major function in the re-ordering of the symbolic universe; more precisely, the decomposition and restructuring of the Law of the Father which informs the world of the fabula points to the ways fabulas may be deployed to re-fashion the symbolic universe.

Even though the decomposition of character-images, the “facing” of history, or the reinvention of the father has a restorative function, in the case of new Hollywood cinema this is generally attained at the expense of the female characters. In chapter five, I pursue further the connection between narrative and cinematic representation, and I suggest that the overall preoccupation with the genealogy of the subject and its simultaneous reconstruction, is mapped out as a form of territorialism. While the male characters can easily exchange and transcend subject positions, temporal continuums and territories, there is a tendency to posit the female characters as in-between an intersubjective exchange, or in-between territories. In the case of female characters, ideological determinations in the first place affect the representation of the woman’s body — a tendency already canonized in Western art and aesthetics (Mitchell, 1986). As a result, women emerge as the negative emblem of différence.

For the purpose of the analysis I employ a double frame-
work - a semiotics of narrative and psycho-semiotics (Bal, 1994). With the example of films such as Innerspace, Junior, and Death Becomes Her, I demonstrate that the Freudian economy of the unconscious in these films is closely related with both the economy of desire and the narrative economy. Important again is the work of Kaja Silverman, who probes the connection between Lacan’s concepts, cultural critique, and cinematic representation (Silverman, 1983; 1996).

In chapter six, I focus on the trajectory a female character undergoes from her status as a constitutive outsider to a being that matters (Butler, 1993). I analyze the films of the Alien series, and I suggest that the features that confirm the woman’s state as the outsider in the symbolic universe of the father, if taken within a new normative injunction, can, in Judith Butler’s sense, become the features that matter. The features such as “alien,” “monster,” or “synthetic humanoid,” matter precisely because they mark a deviance and a difference from “woman” as a universal category. The work of Slavoj Zizek is pertinent to the central theme of this chapter, although I ultimately side with Butler, who, with the help of Derrida’s concepts elaborates the possibility of breaking out of embedded categories and labeling practices (Zizek, 1992). In terms of women in the new Hollywood blockbusters, I argue that the thematizing of alternative possibilities of existence is required, as well as rethinking the “outside.” Herein lies the true reconstructive power of fabulations. What is at stake is learning, as philosophe r Lorraine Code proposes, to see all over again (Code, 1991).

In chapter seven I shift the focus from gender to the problem of ethnicity and race, implying that the concern with discursive extraterritoriality is brought into connection with the loss of a homeland. The existence in-between territories, in the place where constitutive outsiders are “housed” is observed as “home” to a specific people. While chapter six theorizes the female subject as existing on an “impossible territory,” the specificity of the Jewish subject is taken as exemplary of an ethnic group existing without or on an impossible territory. Giving a face to this subject and to history involves the myth of exile and return, and the structure of this myth governs the process of fabulation. Tracing the elements of this structure is important, for it discloses the connection between territory and identity. For the discussion between the Jewish subject and
territorialism, amongst other works, I draw on Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of re/de-territorialization (Deleuze & Guattari, 1996).

With the example of the film Schindler’s List, I examine the new Hollywood’s ultimate reversal achieved via fabulation - the reversal that involves the displacement of the ungraspable horror of history onto a miracle of salvation. The analysis of the film demonstrates that the Moses-like features of Oscar Schindler are constructed precisely through decomposition and more precisely, through “departure and return.” This is traceable on the level of both the micro-unit, and the macro-unit. A “Moses-like Schindler” doubly underscores the promise that by giving a face to history we can begin to remember the future.

In the concluding chapter, the point of departure is the relation between narrative and the apparatuses traditionally involved in the structuring of subjectivity in films: the cinematographic apparatus (Baudry), the apparatus of the psyche (Freud), and the ideological apparatus (Althusser). The underlying premise here is that narrative is profoundly interconnected with the subject-effects produced via these apparatuses in a given historical period. I argue that in an age characterized by an ever-increasing virtuality of everyday reality, when the working of the apparatuses is becoming more transparent, narrative can play a crucial role. A culture of “real virtuality,” to use Manuel Castells’ term, brings about the mixing of tenses to create what he calls a forever universe, a “timeless time,” using technology to escape the contexts of its existence (Castells, 1996).

If we take into account the combination of media that blockbusters put into play, we can understand the role these films can play in the culture of “real virtuality.” Filmic images, electronic images, printing, writing, all this becomes a prosthesis to our mnemonic reserve, or hypomnestic technique as Derrida calls it (Derrida, 1996). The process of fabulation governed by the symbolic structures affects the mnemonic archive and the archivization process; it enhances the capacity of films to recircumscribe and recircumcise the mnemonic scars and extends the limits of what lends itself as a storage place, or “home.” In that respect, I would suggest that the critique of blockbusters could benefit from the approach Paul Ricoeur proposes for the critique of the symbol. He introduces a distinction between two extreme styles of hermeneutics: a reductive, and demystifying hermeneutics - a hermeneutics of suspicion - and
a nonreductive and restorative hermeneutics - a hermeneutics of belief (Ricoeur, 1970). The way the relationship between the former and the latter is established determines the way in which we locate ourselves in relation to our everyday reality. It marks that thin line which separates a dupe from a responsible social agent.

**Footnotes**

i Baudry's apparatus theory as it is related to Althusser's subject of ideology will be discussed in chapter four.

ii Thomas Schatz puts these assertions forward in his article “The New Hollywood.” In Jim Collins, Hillary Radner, and Ava Preacher Collins, eds. Film Theory Goes to the Movies.

iii Justin Wyatt’s book on contemporary Hollywood, High Concept: Movies and Marketing in Hollywood, takes the high concept imperative as the basis for his exploration. (24)

iv A very extensive exploration of the multiple implications of the “new world order” is offered by Manuel Castells in his three-volume study The Rise of the Network Society. I am in particular referring to the specifically philosophical concerns such as those put forward by Jacques Derrida in The Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, & the New International. Relevant here is additionally Slavoj Zizek's Tarrying With the Negative: Kant, Hegel and the Critique of Ideology.

v On the globalization of Hollywood films see for example Tino Balio “‘A Major Presence in All of the World’s Important Markets’: the Globalization of Hollywood in the 1990s.” In Steve Neale and Murray Smith Eds. Contemporary Hollywood Cinema. For a discussion on the ways contemporary Hollywood cinema reflects the commercial imperatives of contemporary culture, see Timothy Corrigan “Auteurs in the New Hollywood,” in John Lewis ed. The New American Cinema. See also World Cinema: Critical Approaches, eds. John Hill and Pamela Church Gibson, particularly chapter one, “Redefining Cinema: International and Avant-Garde Alternatives” by Stephen Crofts. It is important to add that “East” alludes here to Eastern and Central Europe and the Soviet Union where Communism collapsed. A cinema of the Far East, such as that of Hong Kong (also referred to as “Hollywood of the East”), for example, needs to be seen in terms of its own commercial successes with large domestic and reliable export markets. This cinema, (another case would be Indian cinema) could afford to ignore Hollywood, although Hollywood has pervaded even the Hong Kong market in the recent years. In Planet Hollywood: The Art of Popular Entertainment David Bordwell argues that the only Hollywood of the East is Hollywood.

vi Richard Schickel claims that “Hollywood seems to have lost or abandoned the art of narrative,” and furthermore that these films offer little more than a “succession of undifferentiated sensations, lucky or unlucky accidents, that have little or nothing to do with whatever went before or is about to come next.” Quoted in Schatz, “The New Hollywood,” 33.
Gaudreault’s discussion is based on his analysis of the films of the Lumière brothers from 1895: *La Sortie des usines Lumière, L’Arrivée d’un train en gare de la Ciotat, L’Arroseur arrosé and Déjeuner de bébé.*

In this context, the “frames” refer to a series of separate photographic images as they are registered on a strip of film. There are twenty-four frames registered per second, but due to an anomaly of the eye, called the persistence of vision, we perceive the series of separate/discontinuous frames as one continuous movement.

On the primitive and institutional modes of representation see Noël Burch, *Life to These Shadows.* Burch employs the term “primitive” for the films that do not display a directive scopic agency. This term is quite problematic, because even though he in fact criticizes the institutional mode, “primitive” at the same time alludes to an undeveloped mode of expression.

Every shot in any film can be understood as a spatio-temporal segment; it is that (only) uninterrupted time (and space) in the film during which the camera registers an event. The time that it takes for a certain action to evolve in reality will correspond to its duration in a specific shot. In narratological terms, this type of correspondence could be described as isochrony.

I am alluding especially to Tom Gunning’s discussion “The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avantgarde,” in Thomas Elsaesser ed. *Early Cinema, Space Frame Narrative.* “The cinema of attractions directly solicits spectator’s attention, inciting visual curiosity, and supplying pleasure through an exciting spectacle – a unique event, whether fictional or documentary, that is of interest in itself...Clearly in some sense recent spectacle cinema has reaffirmed its roots in stimulus and carnival rides, in what might be called the Spielberg-Lucas-Coppola cinema of effects” (56-63). On the convergence of early cinema and contemporary technologies, see for example Elsaesser’s “Louis Lumière - the Cinema’s First Virtualist,” in *Cinema Futures: Cain, Abel or Cable? The Screen Arts in the Digital Age.* See also Miriam Hansen’s “Early Cinema, Late Cinema: Permutation of the Public Sphere.”

Apart from the new Hollywood’s preoccupation with making new versions of the classical Hollywood films, there are a myriad of remakes of European films. Examples include: *A Bout de Souffle-Breathless, La Cage aux Folles-Birdcage, Return of Martin Guerre-Sommersby, Wings of Desire-The City of Angels, La Jetée-Twelve Monkeys, Nosferatu-Bram Stoker’s Dracula.* It is important to make a distinction here between new Hollywood’s tendency to recycle and reproduce the filmic pretexts, and the Europe-Hollywood exchange. The relationship between Hollywood and European cinemas is very complex and influences can be traced on both sides of the Atlantic. In many cases we can trace a circular trajectory. In *Wings of Desire,* for example, Wim Wenders is paying a tribute to Frank Capra’s film from 1946, *It’s a Wonderful Life.* Hollywood returns the tribute to Wenders with its 1998 remake of his film, titled *The City of Angels.* The new German filmmakers such as Wenders and Fassbinder were not turning for inspiration toward their German “fathers” but they rather turned toward their Hollywood “fathers” - Douglas Sirk, Nicholas Ray and Sam Fuller. But taking into consideration that Douglas Sirk is in fact a German émigré, we can begin to grasp the effects of the circular exchange. For an account of European art film in Hollywood, see
Pamela Falkenberg's "Hollywood and the 'Art Cinema' as a Bipolar Modeling System: A bout de souffle and Breathless." For resonances of Hollywood in the new German cinema, see Thomas Elsaesser's New German Cinema.

In many ways, the new Hollywood has adopted the postmodernist desire to rescue history from oblivion, as is confirmed by the new Hollywood's tendency to "set history in order." The decentering of subjectivity manifested in the suspension of "persons," diegetic agents, and temporal continuums, which confirms the new Hollywood's concern with postmodernist subjectivity, displays however, a very specific agenda. More precisely, while the rescuing of history from oblivion presupposes a rescuing of subjectivities that were silenced by the majority group/the system, Hollywood, as a powerful institution, deploys precisely these same strategies (of the minority groups) to propagate its own mythology. While the purpose of these new Hollywood strategies may seem altogether regressive, since the discursive space is dominated by the interaction between fathers and sons, I discuss the potentially productive effect of the new Hollywood's mythical discourse in chapters 3, 6 and 7.

In Fabulation and Metafiction, for example Robert Scholes looks at the "meaning of fictional acts" and argues that the archetype of all fiction is the sexual act" (27). I would like to emphasize that in my study the term "fabulation" in the first instance refers to the process of telling by means of which the fabula is refashioned, reconstructed or, remade.

I have modified Bal's definition, "[...] narrative agent or narrator - a linguistic subject, a function and not a person, which expresses itself in the language that constitutes the text" (1997: 16). For practical reasons, I have replaced the terms "linguistic subject" and "language." Rather than being the subject of language, "subject" is to be understood as the "medium of semiotic actions" (Bal 1991: 158). In her theory of narrative, Bal stresses the importance of the semiotic approach which offers considerable advantages when dealing with the concept of the subject. According to this view, a subject is not a person or an individual human being, but is also not to be understood solely as the subject of language. It is a "position, a place where different systems intersect" (155).

On the goal-oriented hero in the classical Hollywood cinema see Bordwell, Steiger and Thompson, The Classical Hollywood Cinema, Part One, (1-70). In "National Cinema and Subject Construction," and in Weimar Cinema and After: Germany's Historical Imaginary, Thomas Elsaesser argues that when deploying the term "classical Hollywood narrative," what needs to be taken into consideration is the fact that this is in itself a historically and nationally specific form of cinematic signification (81-92). See also Siegfried Kracauer's From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film.

The most extensive elaboration of the classical Hollywood style is undoubtedly The Classical Hollywood Cinema, Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960, by David Bordwell, Janet Staiger and Kristin Thompson. In their study, the formulation of the classical Hollywood style is related to Hollywood's production modes as well as to technological developments. Even though I will not endorse Bordwell's theory of narration, I nevertheless agree with the basic postulates of the book, notably, that when it comes to cinema, narration is to a large extent determined both by the production
practices and by the technology.

When discussing the relationship between narrative and epistemology, Bal argues that "first" and "third person" are the same person. I will discuss this idea in chapter 2.

Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. Henry James was actually the first to make a distinction between narrating and looking. Genette refers us to Percy Lubbock's *The Craft of Fiction*, and the assertion that "The art of fiction does not begin until the novelist thinks of his story as a matter to be shown, to be so exhibited that it will tell itself" (62).

Quoted from *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, (163).

Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan holds a position compatible to Bal's; she sees narration as an ongoing process constantly open to "visions and revisions" (T. S. Elliot). Behind all the acts of telling, according to Rimmon-Kenan is the author's act of narration. His or her role, however, is considered only when foregrounded by the text in question. In *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*. With respect to film narratology, I would mention François Jost, who draws on Genette's concepts but stresses the importance of the "illocutionary capacity of images." More importantly, he theorizes those instances when auctorial intention is not actually expressed anywhere, yet auctorial intention can be detected. In "The Authorized Narrative," in W. Buckland ed. *The Film Spectator: From Sign to Mind*.

For an in-depth analysis and critique of Genette's model see Bal's *On Story-Telling: Essays in Narratology*.

To return to the films of the Lumiére brothers, it may be useful to mention that the analysis could profit from additional information such as the choice of subjects who are filmed: the workers coming out of the factory in *La Sortie des usines Lumière*, are the workers of the Lumiére factory, owned by the Lumiére brothers themselves; in *L'Arrivée d'un train en gare de la Ciotat*, amongst the passengers waiting on the platform are the Lumière wives; in *Déjeuner de bébé*, it is a Lumière baby having breakfast. This extra-textual information reveals that there is a "home-movie" tendency already present in these pioneer works, a privilege which would be restricted to most people until much later. Early cinema poses many challenges when it comes to the problem of determining a critical perspective; the films of the primitive style most often consist of one principal shot/scene, and hence, time and causality cannot be conveyed in the same manner as in the films of the transitional or the institutional mode, that is, through an articulation of spatio-temporal segments (shots).

See also André Gaudreault, "Narration and Monstration in the Cinema"; François Jost "The Authorized Narrative," and "The Polyphonic Film and the Spectator," in *From Sign to Mind*; Seymour Chatman's *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*, and *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film*; David Alan Black "Genette and Film: Narrative Level in the Fiction Cinema," and Sarah Kozloff *Invisible Storytellers*.

In his first book, *Point of View in the Cinema*, Branigan states that, "there is subjectivity in every narration, including the so-called 'neutral' shots of the film. In its widest sense, subjectivity refers to the perceptual context of every utterance within the text whether explicit or implicit. However, when
used without further gloss in this book, subjectivity will mean character narration or perception." (2) For a cognitivist critique of Branigan’s position see Jan Simons “ ‘Enunciation’: From Code to Interpretation,” in From Sign to Mind.

For an insightful account of the ways cognitive schemata infer meaning, see Bordwell’s Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema.

With the above statement I am announcing my concern with the “political unconscious.” Yet this issue does not refer solely to Fredric Jameson’s views, although it does allude to the connections between narrative and psychoanalysis, which I will deal with in chapters 5 and 6.


See for example Thomas Elsaesser’s “Specularity and Engulfment: Francis Ford Coppola and Bram Stoker’s Dracula,” in Murray Smith ed.

Even though Bordwell does not work with the concept of focalization, he shares Branigan’s definition of subjectivity: “...I will use the term ‘point of view’ only to refer to the optical or auditory vantage point of a character; thus ‘point-of-view shot’ is synonymous with ‘optically subjective shot’.” (60)

See Murray Smith “Theses on the Philosophy of Hollywood History,” in Steave Neale and Murray Smith eds. (3-20)


The most influential theorists to have dealt with the work of Benveniste are Christian Metz, particularly in Psychoanalysis and Cinema: The Imaginary Signifier, and Kaja Silverman in The Subject of Semiotics. In the course of this study I will discuss the relation between the psychoanalytic approach to Benveniste and the narratological approach to Benveniste that I am advocating. It is important to emphasize that the problem of enunciation and subjectivity in cinema has fallen into the domain of psychoanalytic film theory. One of my main aims here is to introduce the possibility and the potential advantage of theorizing subjectivity in cinema by means of a semiotics of narrative.

Apart from Metz’s Film Language, see also, Stephen Heath’s “Film and System: Terms of Analysis," as well as Screen, a Reader 2: Cinema and Semiotics, particularly Stephen Heath’s “Metz’s Semiology: A Short Glossary.” For new perspectives in relation to Metz’s concepts see, From Sign to Mind ed. W. Buckland. Although I will be working from a different theoretical background, implying that the focus will not be placed on enunciation, I would draw attention to the work of Raymond Bellour, particularly his “Hitchcock the Enunciator,” as well as “Obvious and the Code.” See also Thierry Kuntzel’s “The Film Work,” and Alan Williams’ “Narrative Patterns in Only Angels Have Wings.” As I have previously mentioned, my concerns can be related to the work of Heath who explored the ways ideology shapes a
In his second semiology, Metz lays the foundation for psychoanalytic film theory; *Psychoanalysis and Cinema: The Imaginary Signifier*. The suppression, or effacement, of *discours* in films has been the concern of other theorists, such as Bellour and Marie-Claire Ropars-Wuilleumier, for example. On a more general level this tension between effacement and manifestation is comparable with and inspired by Jean-Louis Baudry's theory of the basic cinematographic apparatus. In “Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus,” Baudry contends that the condition for its functioning is the “denial of difference,” the apparatus conceals the discontinuity of frames and shots, inscribed by the camera, through the continuity editing and the mechanism of projection. Baudry's apparatus theory will be discussed more closely in chapter 4.

Mark Nash, “Vampyr and the Fantastic.” The general problem with Nash's analysis is that he tries to find filmic equivalents for Benveniste's concepts *histoire/discours* and subsequently, for Tzvetan Todorov's concept of hesitation in enunciation in the literary genre of the fantastic (Todorov, 1975). Instead of seeking equivalences he should have theorized the categories to encompass filmic images.

The project of finding filmic equivalents for Benveniste's concepts *histoire/discours* result in Nash's attempt to define a discourse on the basis of a shot-filmic image. In Benveniste's view, the messages that bear the explicit mark of the speaker are characterized as instances of *discours*. Messages that do not bear the personalized stamp are characterized as *histoire*. To account for *discours*, Nash offers a supposed filmic equivalent, supposed because, in Branigan's cognitivist view subjectivity is manifested in the “classical point of view shot.”

Nash, 1976: 40. Although he stresses the importance of the alternation of shots, in the production of *discours* in film, Nash does not recognize the process when the problem of the second person function is concerned. “second person function occurs in two titles [...] While most of the titles in the film function in a purely descriptive personal mode, these two directly address the reader, i.e. present questions to the implicit reader using written language.” As I have already mentioned, Nash is constrained by his own framework, that is, Branigan's distinction of two types of shots in “Formal Permutations of the Point-of-View Shot.”

For an in-depth cognitivist critique of Bordwell's concepts see Warren Buckland's *The Cognitive Semiotics of Film*. In contrast to Bordwell, Buckland argues that “linguistics does offer methods of inquiry that film theorists can adopt” (11).


The limitation of the concept needs to be considered particularly in relation to the historical context. The emergence of variegated texts puts pressure on the character-bound vision. The psychoanalytic enterprise of film studies of which the concept of suture is an essential aspect, was based on Baudry's apparatus theory followed by Metz's theorizing of film as the imaginary signer. While the insistence on the relay between the codes of narrative and the cinematic codes is characteristic of classical Hollywood films, the
strategies in question were challenged in other modes. Drawing attention to the cinematographic apparatus and the materiality of the medium, breaking the illusion by taking distance, also in the Brechtian sense, was for example, one of the major preoccupations of directors such as Jean-Luc Godard. Although the new Hollywood cinema is most often placed within the tradition of the classical Hollywood cinema (see Bordwell, Steiger, Thompson 1991) we have to be aware of the changes that took place not only on the level of the filmic texts but also on the level of the apparatus. This problem will be discussed further in chapters 2, 4 and 5.

* In her other works which I will discuss in the subsequent chapters, particularly The Threshold of the Visible World, Silverman does not deploy the system of suture. Nevertheless, because Silverman herself has not addressed the shortcomings of this system, I felt it was necessary to address this problem.

†† In my MA thesis Temporal Variations of the Character Image (1993), I discuss the problems related to the concept of suture on the basis of the three analyses of the film Mildred Pierce (Michael Curtiz): Joyce Nelson “Mildred Pierce Reconsidered,” in Movies and Methods, Pam Cook, “Duplicity in Mildred Pierce,” in Women in Film Noir, ed. Ann Kaplan (London BFI, 1978), Pamela Robertson, “Structural Irony in Mildred Pierce, or How Mildred Lost Her Tongue,” in Cinema Journal 30, no. 1, Fall 1990. In my discussion of the analyses I argue that each of the theorists has confused the “woman’s place in the discourse,” or rather the suturing of the woman’s place, with her place within the mise-en-scène. Furthermore, another confusion was created by mixing up the working of the narrative with the system of suturing. Hence the question “what is the suture shot to the shot of Mildred’s husband being killed in the beginning of the film?” was collapsed with the question “who fired the gun?” Each of the theorists asserts that the shot fired by Mildred’s daughter Veda, who fired the gun, succeeded Monty’s shot, and thus they took this shot to be the suture shot. This is plainly wrong, because Veda’s shot actually precedes Monty’s shot, and Mildred’s shot succeeds Monty’s. The guilt is suspended between what was before and what came after. Therefore, while the concept of suture is crucial when it comes to dealing with cinema as an apparatus of enunciation, it cannot account for the subtle clues emitted on the level of the cinematic text.

††† In “Progress Versus Utopia; or, Can We Imagine the Future?” Fredric Jameson argues that there is an atrophy of utopian imagination and as a result we are not capable of imagining the future. He examines the ways science fiction registers fantasies about the future and notes various cyclical regressions. “Science fiction thus enacts and enables a structurally unique ‘method’ for apprehending the present as history, and this is so irrespective of the ‘pessimism’ or optimism of the imaginary future world which is the pretext for that defamiliarization.” In her analysis of Blade Runner entitled “Back to the Future,” Kaja Silverman suggests that the farther we travel into the future the more profoundly we encounter the past. She asserts that the film does not encourage us to read replicant subjectivity as an uncanny repetition of its human counterpart, “On the contrary, it insists that we read the human characters through the paradigm provided by the androids. In this film it is the replicants rather than their creators who articulate the basic parameters of subjectivity” (1991:110). Both examples allude to the ways the
“political unconscious” (Jameson, 1981), shapes our visions not only of the present but, more importantly, of the future.

See also Lev Manovich’s discussion “Cinema by Numbers: ASCII Films by Vuk Cosic.” He examines the relation between analog and digital cinema and relates Cosic’s films to both Konrad Zuse’s “found footage movies” from the 1930s, and to the first all-digital commercial film made 60m years later, George Lucas’ *Star Wars: Episode I, The Phantom Menace*. In Lucas’ film, digital code lies under his images. “That is, given that most images in the film were put together on computer workstations, during the postproduction process they were pure digital data. The frames were made up from numbers rather than bodies, faces, and landscapes. The *Phantom Menace* is, therefore, the first feature-length commercial abstract film: two hours worth of frames made up numbers” (8).

In “Zooming Out: The End of Offscreen Space,” Scott Bukatman argues that through the global multimedia culture cinematic experience is both absorbed and extended. In Jon Lewis ed.