Cinema Studies

The Key Concepts

SIXTH EDITION

Susan Hayward

ROUTLEDGE KEY GUIDES

CINEMA STUDIES

Now in its sixth edition, this essential guide for students provides accessible definitions of a comprehensive range of genres, movements, world cinemas, theories and production terms.

This fully revised and updated book includes new topical entries that explore areas such as film and the environmental crisis; streaming and new audience consumption; diversity and intersectionality; questions related to race and representation; the Black Lives Matter movement; and New Wave Cinemas of Eastern European countries. Further new entries include accented/exilic cinema, border-cinema, the oppositional gaze, sonic sound and Black westerns. Existing entries have been updated, including discussion of #MeToo, and more contemporary film examples have been added throughout.

This is a must-have guide for any student starting out on this fascinating area of study and arguably the greatest art form of modern times.

Susan Hayward is Emerita Professor of Cinema Studies at the University of Exeter. Her publications include *Luc Besson* (1998), *French National Cinema* (second edition, 2005), *Simone Signoret: The Star as Cultural Sign* (2004), *Les Diaboliques* (2005), *Nikita* (2010), *French Costume Drama of the 1950s: Fashioning Politics* (2010), *Film Ecology: Defending the Biosphere – Doughnut Economics and Film Theory and Practice* (2020) and *Ecology Documentaries: Their Function and Value Seen Through the Lens of Doughnut Economics* (2021).

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For all students of cinema, past, present and future

CONTENTS

PREFACE, HOW TO USE THE BOOK AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cinema Studies: The Key Concepts is an in-depth glossary which, it is hoped, will provide students and teachers of film studies and other persons interested in cinema with a useful reference book on key theoretical terms and, where appropriate, the various debates surrounding them. This glossary also gives historical overviews of key genres, film theory and film movements. Naturally, not 'everything' is covered by these entries that are based on perceptions of students' needs when embarking on film studies. The intention is also to give teachers synopses for rapid reference purposes. Entries have been written as lucidly and as succinctly as possible, but doubtless there will be some 'dense' areas; I welcome feedback. My own students have been very helpful in this matter.

All cross-references are in bold. Sometimes the actual concept cross-referred may not be the precise form in the entry (for example, *ideological* in bold actually refers to an entry on ideology). Bibliographical citations at the end of certain entries refer to the bibliography at the end of the book. Wherever it is useful to explain the particular relevance or direction of a suggested text, this has been done.

Instead of a table of contents in traditional style, I have supplied a list of all concepts dealt with in this book. Where a particular concept is part of a larger one, the entry is cross-referenced to the main entry where it is discussed; thus, '*jouissance*' is entered under the J entries but as a cross-reference to 'psychoanalysis' where it is explained. At the beginning or end of most entries there are sign-postings suggesting that you consult other entries – I believe you will find this dipping across useful and that it will help widen the issue at hand.

For the sake of economy of words, film directors' names when cited in parenthesis will be by surname only, unless there are several with the same surname (e.g., Williams), in which case the full name is given. Directors' full names are listed in the Index. For the sake of clarity, certain directors' names (e.g., Chinese-Asian and Chinese) have been left in full and referenced accordingly in the Index.

This latest, sixth edition, has been completely revised. To economise space, cuts have been made where there was repetition and readers are pointed to the relevant passages extant in a particular entry (for example, under **spectator**, alongside that entry, you will also be invited to read both the **apparatus** entry and the relevant sections under **psychoanalysis**). Each edition of this book seeks to update on existing entries, include new ones and respond to suggestions from readers. But not everything can go in, of course. Thus, while for reasons of space there is not a separate entry on **Film and Philosophy**, nonetheless, this book makes clear that philosophy and film have always been co-present, at least since the 1950s (if not before). In the postwar period, Siegfried Kracauer of the Frankfurt School was one of the early thinkers to question film and representations of reality; questions of film and aesthetics were at the core of Rudolf Arnheim's writings; André Bazin of course is another pre-eminent thinker on 'What is cinema?' (with some phenomenological answers!). This book readily acknowledges the philosophical approaches that have been incorporated into film theory and instances where certain philosophers (e.g., Gilles Deleuze) have directly written about film. To this end, philosophical approaches are either touched upon, or referred to in a number of entries, or indeed given a full entry of their own (as in Deleuze's movement image/time image). And to help you navigate, here is a lexicon of the entries where philosophy is at work (either in a fulsome manner or as a gentle undercurrent):

- apparatus
- auteur theory
- deconstruction
- denotation/connotation
- feminist film theory
- film theory
- hegemony
- ideology
- modernism and postmodernism
- movement image/time image
- myth
- postcolonial theory
- psychoanalysis
- semiology/semiotics
- structuralism/post-structuralism
- subject/subjectivity
- voyeurism/fetishism

I wish to extend my thanks to Josh Gaunt whose depth of input on **digital/post-digital** cinema is acknowledged. Thanks also to Andy Patch for his contributions (on acting, digitisation and globalisation, distribution, experimental cinema and transnational cinema). Thanks to Gábor Gergely for his valuable suggestions and insights on several entries, I also acknowledge his addition to the **censorship** entry as it concerns autocratic regimes and his input on **sonic sound**. I am equally grateful to Will Higbee for his useful pointers on some entries. It is a pleasure to work in such a collaborative fashion with these scholars who, incidentally, are former PhD students of mine. Thanks, too, to Gayle Pemberton for our illuminating discussions and her most helpful insights into Black Cinema USA. Finally, on this point of pleasurable collaborations, my thanks to MaoHui Deng for his entry on East Asian Cinemas and his section on Chinese cinema post-2010.

LIST OF KEY CONCEPTS

Hammer Horror *see* horror
Hays code
hegemony
heritage cinema *see* costume drama
historical films/reconstructions *see* costume drama
Hollywood
Hollywood blacklist
Hollywood majors *see* classic Hollywood cinema, studio system
horror/Gothic horror/Hammer Horror/horror thriller/body horror/vampire movies
Hungarian New Wave *see* New Waves (Eastern European countries)

iconography
identification *see* distanciation, spectator-identification
identity *see* psychoanalysis, spectator-identification, subjectivity
ideology
Imaginary/Symbolic *see* psychoanalysis
independent American cinema
independent cinema
intersectionality *see* diversity and intersectionality
intertextuality
Italian neo-realism

jouissance see psychoanalysis
jump cut

lap-dissolve *see* dissolve
lighting
look *see* gaze/look/oppositional gaze, psychoanalysis, scopophilia, suture

mainstream cinema *see* dominant/mainstream cinema
match cutting *see* cut
melodrama and women's films
method acting
mirror stage *see* psychoanalysis
mise-en-abîme
mise-en-scène
misrecognition *see* psychoanalysis, suture
modernism
montage *see* editing Soviet cinema
movement-image/time-image
music
musical
myth

narrative/narration
naturalizing
neo-realism *see* Italian neo-realism
New German cinema *see* Germany/New German cinema
New Waves (Eastern European countries) *see* World Cinemas
New Wave/*Nouvelle Vague see* French New Wave
non-diegetic *see* diegesis

Oedipal trajectory *see* psychoanalysis
180-degree rule
opposition *see* narrative, sequencing
oppositional cinema *see* counter-cinema
oppositional gaze *see* gaze/look

parallel sequencing *see* editing
patriarchy *see* psychoanalysis

CINEMA STUDIES

The Key Concepts

ACCENTED/EXILIC CINEMA

Accented cinema is a concept coined by Hamid Naficy and developed in his book *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking* (2001) to refer to the cinema made as a response to a filmmaker's experience of displacement either as a result of exile, migration or diaspora. Naficy determines three categories of accented filmmakers: exilic (i.e., banished from their homeland), diasporic (forcibly dispersed persons) and **postcolonial** ethnic identity (non-White, non-Western immigrants or refugees, or children thereof) – categories which to an extent clearly overlap but which, equally, already suggest the multivocality of this accented cinema (11–15).

The choice of 'accented' is intended to point, in the first instance, to the difference between the aesthetics and narratives of this cinema and those of the dominant 'unaccented' cinema of the country in which these displaced filmmakers live. **Classical Hollywood cinema** is a perfect example of what Naficy means by the 'unaccented'. The hegemony of the Hollywood style, through **mise-en-scène**, filming, **editing** and three-act arc **narrative**, serves to reproduce 'life as it really is'. As Bordwell explains, it is an 'excessively obvious cinema' (1985: 1). Conversely in accented cinema, in narrative terms, themes of deterritorialisation, the unfamiliar, rupture and trauma thread through the films. As to the film aesthetics, namely, the mise-en-scène, filming and editing styles, and actor performance, they both reflect those narrative threads of the experience of displacement *and* emanate from a place of original filmmaking practice (that is, the exilic filmmakers' former homeland where they trained and worked). This mode of filmmaking is what Naficy terms an entire 'performance of identity' (6). That is to say, these films perform – stylistically, narratively and actorly – the filmmakers' ambivalent relationship to their previous and current counties. According to Naficy, this performance amounts to a mise-en-scène of the filmmaker's double-consciousness (22) whereby the actors reveal themselves through the performance of their identities, as 'split, double, crossed and hybridised' (32). As he further explains:

> In traumatic forms of expulsion and exile, especially when they are coupled with racism and hostility in the new country, the certainty and wholeness of the body (and the mind) are often put into doubt. The body's integrity, requiring a coincidence of inside and outside, is threatened, as a result of which it may be felt to be separated, collapsed, fractured, eviscerated, or pithed.
>
> (28)

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Accented films are 'liminal and interstitial' in that they are constructed *astride* and *in* the interstices (the in-between spaces) of dominant social formations and cinematic practices – never fully in, nor fully out, but across. Like their filmmakers, these films are *across* the inside and the outside, never quite whole, and so evidence 'multiple perspectives and conflicted or performed identities' (32). Visual style corresponds to this sense of anxiety; locations serve to evoke either a sense of claustrophobia or smallness; **sound** can be used **asynchronically** or fragmented to add to the feeling of unbelonging and deterritorialisation; dialogue is often multi-lingual and multi-accented pointing both to the effort to assimilate and the difficulty of outsideness, as well as to the fear of the potential loss of one's original language. Nostalgia and memory for the homeland double down with the impossibility of return, so 'sadness, loneliness and alienation' are frequent tropes embodied by the characters (27).

Naficy refers to the Armenian-Canadian filmmaker, Atom Egoyan's accented style by way of illustrating what is meant by accented cinema. I quote it in full since it is a masterful synthesis of Nacify's concept:

> His films embody many attributes of the accented style, including the inscription of closed and claustrophobic spaces both in the film's mise-en-scène and the filming; ethnically coded mise-en-scène, characters, music and iconography; multilinguality and accented speech by ethnic characters and actors; epistolarity by means of letters, video and the telephone; tactile uses of video and technological mediation of all reality; inscription of journeys of identity and of return journey to the homeland; the instability and persistence of memory that can be recorded over, remembered nostalgically, erased and played back repeatedly; and fragmented structures of feeling and narrative.
>
> (37)

Since the increase in the migratory flow in the twenty-first century, there have been many films that address in an accented style these feelings of deterritorialisation. I would point you to two films from the diasporic Kurdish cinema coming from Germany *A Little Bit of Freedom* (Yüksel Yavuz, 2003) and *En Garde* (Polat, 2004) which clearly exemplify this (see Ciçek, 2022: 190–200).

There are also interesting connections to be made between this accented cinema and **Third Cinema**. Indeed, Naficy makes this clear

when he states that 'accented cinema is one of the offshoots of Third Cinema' (30). He sees accented cinema as more 'situated' because it is a cinema of displacement. Less polemical than Third Cinema which, following Marx and socialist principles, advocates **class** struggle and guerrilla cinema, accented cinema is, he argues, nonetheless, a political cinema that 'stands opposed to authoritarianism and oppression' (30–31).

The debate around accented cinema has considerably widened since this seminal study. Arguments have been put forward by film historians and theorists to suggest that the periods which Naficy identifies as the emergence of this cinema (1950–70s) and its second wave (1980–90s) are too limiting, as indeed are the types of films that can be considered accented/exilic cinema. As Gábor Gergely points out in his intriguing study of exilic bodies, *Foreign Devils: Exile and Host Nation in Hollywood's Golden Age* (2012), the period pre-1950s saw many European exiles migrating to the USA who, while they may have entered the doors of mainstream cinema (Hollywood), certainly did not necessarily assimilate to the dominant visual style and narrative. Gergely demonstrates through his analysis of a number of Hollywood's exilic bodies that it is possible to 'identify narratives surrounding exile and the rupture and trauma of displacement in films produced at the centre' and, too, to trace 'the experiences of exile that inform the work of film directors'. Moreover, it is equally possible to 'engage with the ways in which the roles, performances and body of work of exilic actors are informed by or reflect on exile' (37).

While written some 20 years ago, I find it significant that Naficy's work continues to inspire such debates and move forward our understanding. Indeed, who could have foretold, when he wrote the following words below, that film and film theory would indeed have fully entered such interesting waters of investigation which we term, among other things, migration, **border-cinema**, **diversity and intersectionality**:

> Border consciousness emerges from being situated at the border, where multiple determinants of race, class, gender, and membership in divergent, even antagonistic, historical and national identities intersect. As a result, border consciousness, like exilic liminality, is theoretically against binarism and duality and for a third optique, which is multiperspectival and tolerant of ambiguity, ambivalence and chaos.
>
> (2001: 31)

ACTING AND PERFORMANCE (SEE ALSO ENTRY ON STARS WHERE MANY OF THE POINTS RAISED HERE ARE DISCUSSED IN MORE DETAIL)

Naremore notes that acting 'in its simplest form' is 'nothing more than the transposition of everyday behaviour into a theatrical realm' (1988: 21). But, crucially, the **spectator** is aware that this 'everyday' is simultaneously both present and absent through what Naremore defines as the 'performance frame' (1988: 9). The frame implies the physical limits of film reality, one that demarcates the boundary between the **audience** and the world represented on the screen. As an effect, therefore, cinematic acting (at least in **mainstream cinema**) favours representational over presentational because in real terms we, the audience, cannot interact directly with the characters on-screen (the characters are present to us on-screen, but absent to us in that they are not physically present; the image merely represents the body).

Traditionally, film studies has focused on those ancillary components that overlay acting: **stardom, costume, lighting, gender** and **genre**. Routinely, analysis of acting is reduced to notions of believability, realism and the merits of the performance within the reality on-screen. As McDonald asserts, 'judgments about "bad" acting are often formed on the basis that the performer was obviously acting and was therefore unbelievable' (1998: 33). The impact of an actor's performance is also affected by the extent to which the actor is foregrounded (King, 1985: 41). King further considers how an actor, when required to undergo significant transformation for a role, incorporates that of 'impersonation' acting. The actor embodies the character s/he is playing; noted actors who do this are Meryl Streep, Robert De Niro and Al Pacino (even though they never fully disappear within the character). However, those actors whose roles across a series of films are perceived as them performing to 'be themselves' are described by King as 'personification' (1987: 157). Actors in this category who jump to mind include John Wayne and Sylvester Stallone (we know what to expect). King ventures that with a star body the two categories often intersect, a combination that allows us to consider the reality on-screen. As Geraghty argues, the star body needs to discard 'the celebrity trappings' that surrounds it if the 'performance is to be understood' (2000: 192). The actorial embodiment is always poised between the real and the unreal, and we know that we are watching a performance because there is always already a gap, however small or large, between impersonation and star, or personification and star, between actor and character (for more details on all these points see **Star** entry).

It is important to note that this question of realism is primarily located around **narrative** cinema. Conversely, **counter-cinema** and non-mainstream films incorporate acting strategies within which the actor deliberately sets out to signify their distance from a character (Higson, 1986). For example, when Godard in *À bout de souffle* (1960) deliberately undermines the casts' 'reality' on-screen by combining actors, extras and 'non'-acting pedestrians on the Champs-Elysées, and by having characters speak out to the spectator.

A further aspect of narrative cinema is the reinforcement of the notion of performance as continuous. The reality of production is that a performance consists of fragments, a series of 'takes' (of a particular scene), but also, because of logistical necessity, it is mostly a shooting schedule that is out of **sequence** with the actual final narrative that we see on-screen. **Editing** therefore brings together these fragments, creating a sense of continuity, negating the reality of spatial and temporal constraints. As King notes, this fragmentation has led to film acting 'prioritizing a short arc of character representation with an emphasis on moments or epitomizing scenes' (1985: 250). From this production process, we can see how the on-screen actor is a product of various collaborative pressures: camera angles, movement, lighting, editing, **soundtrack**, which accentuate both the actor's body and voice, and draw the spectator to a **preferred reading** of that performance. Also belying this idea of performance as continuous and homogeneous is the fact that, as Maltby points out, the 'constructed nature of a movie emphasises the extent to which a movie performance is not only the work of the actor'. For example, 'several different bodies may be used to construct a single performance: voices are dubbed, stunt-artists are used for dangerous action sequences, and sometimes hand models and body doubles provide body parts to substitute for the actors' (2003: 371). Whose performance are we observing, therefore?

Acting is as much a product of process as embodiment (personification or impersonation). It incorporates not only the star body, and the surrounding **mythology**, and anticipated gesturality of that star (for example, Chaplin's walk or Nicholson's manic smile) but also the tensions and demands of the creative process for the film production (the numerous takes of a single scene being a prime example). This process is then in turn exhibited on-screen, but edited in such a manner as to hide the flaws and the inconsistencies.

Rozik argues that 'in enacting an action, actors produce a set of signs and sentences, mainly iconic, by imprinting them on their own bodies' (2002: 111). Various approaches have been undertaken to interpret such signs: for example, histrionic versus verisimiliar (Pearson, 1992);

integrated versus autonomous (Maltby, 2003); or presentational versus representational (Naremore, 1988). However, Rozik offers a differing model in terms of theatrical acting, arguing that

> instead of the usual dyadic model of actor and character, a triadic model is more appropriate: actor (who produces the signs), text (the set of images inscribed on his [*sic*] body) and character (who exists only in the imagination of the spectator).
>
> (2002: 113)

In this model, the actor becomes a bearer of signs, a system of signification on three levels. First, the actor produces **signs** (performing as another, using techniques such as voice, gesture and posture, alongside external influences such as lighting, costume and make-up) which displace or deflect our identification with their star persona. Second, the text is embodied by the actor's performance (so both text and actor, in symbiosis, construct a performance). Third, the spectator also constructs a reading of the composite body (actor, text, performance) to create a third level of meaning with regard to the performance, which in turn is influenced by the style of acting (**method**, for example) and our identification with the traits and expected behaviour of the star body on-screen (for further discussion of these concepts see **Star** entry).

ACTION MOVIES

Action movie is a rather broad and all-encompassing term for a type of film that, generally speaking, will cost a great deal of money to produce, and whose primary aim is to offer the spectator an endless rollercoaster of violent, action-packed images. It is not a specific genre but a type of film with a look that relies heavily on visual effects to thrill its audiences. Action movies have at their core fast action-packed fight scenes, chase and escape routines. Any top ten list of the 'best-ever' action movies will count among its favourites, **science-fiction**, spy thrillers, **fantasy** films, disaster and martial arts movies. As Marshall Julius (1996: 5) puts it so well, action films are 'vengeful cops and car chases, lunatic villains and martial arts masters, male-bonding, gun fights and super-secret agents, swords and sorcerers, wartime Nazi-bashing, boys' own adventures, casual destruction and general death-defiance'. In a word, the motivation behind action films is pure escapism. 'Forget the plot … focus on the mayhem' (1996: 13). Shoot-outs, car chases and crashes

galore pack fast-action thrillers; climaxes of fireball explosions and destroyed buildings (even worlds) are the very essence of science-fiction films, disaster and hijack movies; explosive conventions of all sorts, flying bodies, tanks and planes on fire, torpedo point-of-view shots are all the familiar grist of **war films**. What a feast for the eyes! We thrive on the vicarious fear – enjoy being physically stimulated. Why else would we enjoy a paranoid terrorist action movie such as *Rock* (Bay, 1996) with its threat of spreading the lethal Sarin nerve gas? As King argues (2000: 103), any sense of guilty pleasure we derive from the thrill of it all is compensated for by the fact that we go to these films to escape everyday ordinariness and, moreover, to experience plenitude as a way of making up for the scarcity in our own lives.

Although the action movie is primarily identified with **Hollywood**, it is worth making a couple of important points in this context. First, that the *nec plus ultra* of the action movie, the Bond movie, is first and foremost a British product (with 17 Bond movies carrying the GB label from the early 1960s until the early 1990s – albeit with considerable financing from the American producer Albert 'Cubby' Broccoli and, later, his wife Barbara). Bond movies – with their awesome sets by Ken Adam, breathtaking stunts, lavish visuals, extravagant fantasy, to say nothing of Bond's gadgets doing battle against the monster machines of the evil enemy – bespeak an almost overzealous love affair with technology and design. Indeed, we are invited to sit back and admire the spectacle 'based on lavish plenitude' (King, 2000: 96). Each Bond movie boasts bigger production values than the previous one. As such, the Bond movie has set the tone for many of the subsequent action series or action franchise movies as they are also known (for example, the *Rambos*, begun 1982; *Die Hards*, begun 1987; or the *Lethal Weapons*, begun 1988 – three of the biggest grossing of Hollywood's action spectacular series). However, whereas with Bond we are allowed to get the full picture show of the action in a big frame (almost in the Bazinian sense of **deep focus** editing), including the special futuristic design of the sets and exotic spaces visited by Bond, the newer action spectaculars offer us a curtailed sense of space in that they are full of rapid editing and discontinuity (a sort of **montage** style but without the montage effect). There is an 'unremitting battery of impact effects' (2000: 96). In the end, the speedy cross-cutting editing can destroy any sense of reality because, literally, we get lost. The frenetic editing in the shoot-out in the Korean nightclub in *Collateral* (Mann, 2004) is a good example of this, but so too are the battle scenes in *Troy* (Petersen, 2004) and *King Arthur* (Fuqua, 2004).

The second important point worth making is that the martial arts action films from Hong Kong, China, Japan, Taiwan and South Korea constitute a very important part of the action-movie heritage – dating back as it does to the early 1970s (if not before; Hong Kong produced quite a number in the 1960s), with the Hong Kong movies by Lo Wei (*The Big Boss*, 1971; *Fist of Fury*, 1972, starring Bruce Lee), followed by Jackie Chan's *Police Story* series (begun 1985) in which Chan also starred; and John Woo's films of the mid-1980s (*A Better Tomorrow*, 1980, starring the Chinese actor Chow Yun-Fat, and one of Hong Kong's top-grossing films ever). Interestingly, there has been a similar shift in film aesthetics to the one described above. According to King (2000: 97), whereas earlier films (of the 1970s and 1980s) favoured the single-shot perspective of a fight sequence allowing us to see the 'real capabilities of the star Bruce Lee' (see *The Big Boss*), now these martial arts/action films have come to rely increasingly on a 'panoply of montage effects'. The integrity of performance shooting (in the dual sense of the word: the wholeness and authenticity of the performance) has been replaced in some instances by the flashing tempo of hyper-violence (as in *Full Contact*, Lam, 1992, or *Bangkok Dangerous*, Pang brothers, 2001). Alternatively, the special effects of wire-fu action have moved martial arts films into a new realm of the fantastic (see *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, Ang Lee, 2000; *Hero*, Zhang Yimou, 2002). Not all films have succumbed to this speed or fantasy effect. Takeshi Kitano has taken this genre somewhere else in his almost poetic rendition of the action thriller (see *Sonatine*, 1993).

More recently, South Korea, since the end of dictatorship and the lifting of **censorship** in 1992, is making it big in the action-movie arena with filmmakers such as Lee Chang-Dong (*Peppermint Candy*, 2000) and Park Chan-Wook (*Old Boy*, 2004, a hyper-violent film about the metaphysics of revenge) – with room also for biting satire as exemplified in Bong Joon-ho's Oscar-winning comedy-thriller *Parasite* (2019, a reflection on late-state capitalism and the huge disparity in living conditions in South Korea between the wealthy and the poor). This is one of the few countries where indigenous action movies outsell Hollywood products – Hong Kong being another example. Small wonder that Hollywood has stepped in and succeeded in tempting a handful of filmmakers from the East to cross over to the USA by offering them conditions where the industry is more stable and better able to finance big action projects (see especially Hong Kong filmmaker John Woo, for *Face/Off*, 1997; *Mission Impossible II*, 2000). As an interesting side-note, three years after the transfer of Hong Kong's sovereignty to China, co-productions between these two countries began (averaging three films per year).

Clearly the culture clash of two entirely distinct governing and economic systems was able to find some resolution, at least within the film industry.

Action movies are not new to Hollywood and can be dated back to as early as the 1930s, at least, and the swashbuckler film, with Douglas Fairbanks Junior and Errol Flynn being some of the first action heroes as they fought their way out of numerous tight spots. But, even then, studio rivalries ran high, as Hollywood action movies fought to get the punters in. Two Warner Brothers productions starring Errol Flynn, *Captain Blood* (Curtiz, 1935) and *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (Curtiz, 1938), were made as a deliberate ploy to challenge *the* studio major with a reputation for hugely lavish products, MGM (e.g., *Mutiny on the Bounty*, Frank Lloyd, 1935, starring Clark Gable opposite Charles Laughton). Since then, this category of movie has moved on technologically and, moreover, come to embrace a broad set of genres – **thrillers**, science-fiction and war films being but the most common. By the 1970s, the levels of violence and destruction on-screen had escalated massively. Lightweight cameras and new special-effects systems were part of the equation. But so too, arguably, were the effects that war technology – as used in the Vietnam War – was having on the Americans in general and film audiences in particular. That war, as indeed subsequent wars (such as the Gulf/Iraq wars), demonstrated that there were seemingly no limits to which war technology could go to root out its enemy (napalm, smart bombs, drones and so on). So, too, it seemed as if there was literally no possible end to the types of explosions that could be created in the cinema world, especially with **digital** technology increasingly entering the frame of action fantasy (see also **CGI**).

Speaking of war and reality, post-11 September 2001 (9/11) one could have expected a crisis in representation where action movies were concerned. Indeed, the spate of epic movies in its aftermath (such as *Troy*) signified a displacement of the action thriller into safer long-ago times, where good and evil can fight it out more clearly. Thus, briefly, the terrorist and disaster movie did disappear from American cinema. But not for long. After all, they bring in millions of dollars. And just as a sign of the way in which discourses and technologies of war cross boundaries with ease, let us consider the Arnold Schwarzenegger vehicle *Collateral Damage* (Davis, 2001). This film was due to come out in October 2001 but was withheld post-9/11 because it was felt it ran too close to reality. It was finally released in 2002. In it, Schwarzenegger plays a firefighter. In the aftermath of 9/11, firefighters had reached an iconic status of courage and bravery, so Schwarzenegger's association with this function would, it was feared, be read as exploitative. This

was a first reason to hold back. A second reason was the narrative line: a terrorist bombing. In blowing up the local Colombian consulate, a Colombian terrorist also blows up Schwarzenegger's family and this drives him to attempt to exact revenge. Later, the terrorist tells Schwarzenegger these deaths were collateral damage. No wonder Schwarzenegger is outraged. However, we should pause here. Terrorist bombing and the fact that it causes collateral damage – which here is represented as a very evil thing – should not hide the fact that this term was first coined by the Americans when bombing Baghdad in the first Gulf War in 1991. At that time smart bombs (so-called because they could hit their target and send video proof of this from a camera positioned in the bomb's cone) caused thousands of civilian deaths. In the American case, collateral damage was an inevitability of war; in the case of Schwarzenegger's family, it is the outcome of the actions of an evil and unprincipled terrorist. Despite the similarities with 9/11 and despite a disturbing reappropriation of war discourses, nonetheless, the film was a success and brought Schwarzenegger back into favour once more as an action hero. In terms of US dominant ideology, this film struck the right note.

In this light of an appropriate post-9/11 tone, the *Bourne* trilogy (2002–07, starring Matt Damon) adds an interesting dimension. In these three films (*Bourne Identity*, *Bourne Supremacy*, *Bourne Ultimatum*), Bourne, a CIA paramilitary operative and assassin, fails in his mission, suffers a loss of memory, and fights his way out of various agencies' (CIA and Russian FSB) attempts to kill him (he is almost machinic in his abilities) as he tries to establish his true identity. The point, ultimately, is that he is the good guy, although he commits a number of murders and evil acts – much in line with a philosophy (so prevalent under Bush Jnr) that the end justifies the means (as in the fiction surrounding the Weapons of Mass Destruction which allowed Bush to go to war with Iraq).

It is not easy to talk of **codes and conventions** where action movies are concerned. What we can say is that narrative coherence is not an uppermost concern, but that excess is key and there is a great deal of 'male swagger' about (Jones, 2001: 28). Flag-waving can be part of this excess (in war and sci-fi movies especially). Explosions abound as the action hero more often than not stands poised between danger and the dark abyss of annihilation, except that, whatever the threat, death is defied by the hero – no matter how implausible that may be. Perhaps that *is* the only convention, with the cruel exception of Brandon Lee who was shot in the making of *The Crow* (Proyas, 1994) – although digital effects were used to 'bring him back to life' and complete the film. Spatial and temporal incoherence are also a big part of this action cinema. The audience is engulfed in a flurry of images and sounds, and yet – paradoxically – has

no sense of direction. The camera zooms around, fireballs come rushing out filling the screen, and deafening noises come from every which way. With recent developments in **3-D**, action movies bring even more terror and thrills for the spectator to experience (presently 3-D seems to be more oriented towards fantasy films and science-fiction – as with the famous example of James Cameron's epic sci-fi *Avatar*, 2009; or the less successful fantasy film *Clash of the Titans*, Leterrier, 2010).

With the action movie the spectators remain disoriented. They never feel time or space passing as they hurtle from one action to the next. So, ultimately, there is neither spatial nor temporal freedom for us to know where we are or where we might be going. As Kent Jones (2001: 27) states, in his very good study of Michael Bay's films (*Armageddon*, 1998, and *Pearl Harbor*, 2001), despite the fact that these $100 million-plus film extravaganzas are supposedly about speed, bizarrely they are the very opposite of fast and far more about 'hallucinatory confusion and stasis'. In order to feel the speed, he argues, 'you need to know where you are going'. And even if there is no real sense of spatial and temporal dislocation, nonetheless, often there still can be a feeling of stasis. Take, as another example, Michael Mann's *Collateral* where, although the director gives us a sense of a certain Los Angeles, it is a very selective and moody sense of this city, shot as it is by night and in a specific set of districts. We either know these areas or we don't. What we are mostly left with is, first, a dark impenetrable city which we scoot around at speed in a beaten-up taxi; second, a series of violent shoot-outs which are little more than a set of assemblages from Mann's earlier films (furthermore, the film is full of all the old clichés of a hit-man movie); and, finally, even more dispiriting, silly attempts at humour.

Let us pause on 'male swagger' for a moment. For, in this context, our action hero embodies the tradition of its earliest, courtly meaning whereby it referred to the swank of knights and nobles who would carry this swagger into battle (jousting, swordsmanship, etc.). For some of our modern action heroes the swagger begins in the verbal and ends in supremely cool action. Sean Connery as Bond is exemplary. Clint Eastwood, although he is nearly non-verbal, also comes into this category. We are not too perturbed by Connery's violence because the aesthetic value of Ken Adam's fantasy sets and the exotic settings, in which much of the action is located, function in their coolness as perfect foils to Bond's swagger – and the overall effect is hyper-real. Conversely, Eastwood's violence can be very disconcerting because it emanates from such a plausible space. Other heroes can only swank physically – and so are less cool. Charles Bronson of earlier action-movie years (the *Death Wish* series, begun 1974) comes to mind. In the 1980s–90s, Claude Van

Damme, Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger are at one extreme of the swaggering hulk, whereas Mel Gibson (*Lethal Weapon* series) and Bruce Willis (*Die Hard* series), with their lighter frames, are at the other end (and have a few more amusing one-liners to offer). Tom Cruise – who noteworthily does most of his own stunts – and Harrison Ford (*Indiana Jones* series) fall somewhere between the two sets of male swagger. They have the physical strength and display it, but there is that added element that theirs is also a cerebral swagger (as distinct from the wit of Connery and silence of Eastwood). African-American action heroes are also in the frame, especially since the **Blaxploitation** cinema of the 1970s. Wesley Snipes (though by no means confined to this type of film) is a major name (see *New Jack City*, Van Peebles, 1991; *Demolition Man*, Brambilla, 1993; *Drop Zone*, Badham, 1994); Mario Van Peebles has starred in several (*Posse*, Van Peebles, 1993); and Denzel Washington has also put in a performance or two (*Ricochet*, Mulcahy, 1991). Often, however, the African-American is less the action hero and more the side-kick to the front-running (White) action hero – see, for example, Danny Glover in the *Lethal Weapon* series where he is paired with Mel Gibson. Gibson is the all-risk-taking cop to Glover's more ponderous and careful type. In this role as side-kick, the African-American is contained as safe. By dint of being the voice of reason, he is unlikely to go on the rampage. Casting, then, is a code to watch for when studying these films.

Although action movies are clearly an intensely male category of film, nonetheless, they have spawned a few female action heroes – and they deserve a mention here. Perhaps the only female action hero to become a star is Sigourney Weaver with her *Alien* series (begun 1986). She is the one who daringly stripped off her femininity and allowed a wiry 'musculinity' to emerge in its place. She embodies a certain kind of machisma that few other female action heroes have dared to personify. Nor is this a simple representation, since she also comes to have a very complex relationship with motherhood and reproduction – as one capable of spawning 'monsters'. Other types, however, tend to be both strong and very eroticised (through having big breasts for example). The girlie-women in *Charlie's Angels* (McG, 2000 and 2003) are but one instance of this endeavour to contain the threat of a 'musculinised' female body. Or, the female action-hero's dress-coding can mark her out in a different way as an identifiably safe and fetishised body, such as the dominatrix clothing sported by Pamela Anderson in *Barb Wire* (David Hogan, 1996). One final type is the completely androgenised body – less common in American films, arguably – as found in Luc Besson's *Nikita* (1990) or the cross-over film *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* (West, 2001).

see also: **blockbusters, fantasy films, science-fiction**

For further reading see Julius (1996), King (2000), Lichtenfeld (2007), Stringer (2003); on martial arts films see Meyers (2001).

ADAPTATION

Literary adaptation to film is a long-established tradition in cinema starting, for example, with early cinema adaptations of the Bible (e.g., the Lumière brothers' 13-scene production of *La Vie et passion de Jésus Christ*, 1897, and Alice Guy's *La Vie de Christ*, 1899). By the 1910s, adaptations of the established literary canon had become a marketing ploy by which producers and exhibitors could legitimise cinema-going as a venue of 'taste' and thus attract the middle classes to their theatres. Literary adaptations gave cinema the respectable cachet of entertainment-as-art. In a related way, it is noteworthy that literary adaptations have consistently been seen to have pedagogical value, that is, teaching a nation (through cinema) about its classics, its literary heritage. Note how, in the UK, the BBC releases a film, made for screen and subsequently television viewing, and then issues a teaching package (DVD plus a teacher-student textbook). The choice of novels adapted has, to some extent, therefore, to be seen in the light of nationalistic 'value'.

A literary adaptation creates a new story; it is not the same as the original, but takes on a new life, as indeed do the characters. **Narrative** and characters become independent of the original even though both are based – in terms of genesis – on the original. The adaptation can create stars (in the UK context, Colin Firth, *Pride and Prejudice*, 1995; Ewan McGregor and Robert Carlyle, *Trainspotting*, 1995), or stars become associated with that 'type' of role (Emma Thompson, Helena Bonham-Carter, Nicole Kidman, Holly Hunter), whereas the novel creates above all characters we remember and associate with a particular type of behaviour (e.g., Mrs Bennet, Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice*). As André Bazin says (1967: 56), film characterisation creates a whole new mythology existing outside the original text.

Essentially there appear to be three types of literary adaptation: first, the more traditionally connoted notion of adaptation, the literary classic; second, adaptations of plays to screen; and, finally, the adaptation of contemporary texts, not yet determined as classics and possibly bound to remain within the canon of popular fiction. Of these three, arguably, it is the second that remains most faithful to the original, although contextually it may be updated into contemporary times, as with several

Shakespeare adaptations (e.g., Baz Luhrmann's *William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet*, 1996, which is recast into contemporary Los Angeles). The focus of this entry is primarily on the first type of adaptation, although mention will be made of the third type.

Literary adaptations are, within the Western context, perceived as mostly a European product – almost as if Europe has the established literary canon and northern America has not. It should be pointed out, however, that, while this European **heritage cinema** is the one that predominates and while it represents a deliberate marketing ploy for exports (Europe *sells* its culture to the rest of the world), the United States does have its own literary classics that get adapted – the novels and short stories of Henry James and those of Edith Wharton spring to mind (e.g., *Portrait of a Lady*, Campion, 1996; *The Age of Innocence*, Scorsese, 1993). Jack Clayton's 1974 version of Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* is arguably *the* benchmark movie of lavish literary adaptation Hollywood-style. Modern classics, written by African-American novelists, also rank quite highly (e.g., Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, Spielberg, 1985, and Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, Demme, 1998). Otherwise, Hollywood is more commonly associated with popular fiction adaptations (especially detective fiction).

In relation to other generic types, academic writing on literary adaptations is somewhat thin. There appears to have been a surge of interest during the 1970s (Bluestone, 1971; Horton and Magretta, 1981; Marcus, 1971; Wagner, 1975); then again in the mid-1980s to the 1990s (Friedman, 1993; Griffith, 1997; Marcus, 1993; McFarlane, 1996; Morrissette, 1985); finally, more recently in the new millennium (Geraghty, 2008; Hutcheon, 2006; Lupack, 2002; Stam, 2005). While literary adaptations have not attracted as much analytical attention in the field of film studies as other areas, one could speculate that the first manifestation of critical writing, in the 1970s, is linked to the introduction of film courses into English and foreign languages departments. The fact that the focus of these studies was on questions of fidelity to the original text would tend to support this argument. Furthermore, this interest in literary adaptations could be read as a reaction to the more difficult branch of film theory being practised at that time, namely **structuralism** and, a bit later, **post-structuralism**. The 1990s' re-ignition of interest appears to correspond to a time when literary adaptations were at their most popular on-screen (particularly in Britain and France). While the most recent spate is broader in its approach, ranging from adaptation theory (Hutcheon and Stam), to recent Hollywood and British successes (Geraghty), to African-American adaptations (Lupack).

Fidelity criticism, which makes up a great deal of literary adaptation criticism (particularly of the 1970s, but still ongoing), focuses on the notion of equivalence. This is a fairly limited approach, however, since it fails to take into account other levels of meaning. Conversely, some studies (Andrew, 1984; Marcus, 1993) have stressed the importance of examining the value of the alterations from text to text. For example, films are more marked by economic considerations than the novel and this constitutes a major reason why the adaptation is not like the novel. Furthermore, it is clear that the choice of **stars** will impact on the way the original text is interpreted; adaptations will cut sections of the novel that are deemed uncinematographic or of no interest to the viewers. In other words, there is always a motivation behind the choices made. Marcus (1993) and Monk (1996: 50–51) have pointed to the need for a third-level criticism; that is, to see the adaptation within an historical and **semiotic** context. Thus, it is not sufficient to show, through fidelity criticism, the difference between the texts, nor does it suffice to do a textual analysis based on a demonstration of how the film renders (or not) the language and style of the original through **mise-en-scène**, **editing** techniques, the symbolic use of images and, finally, the **soundtrack** and **music**. We need to understand the meaning of these differences within a socio-political, economic and historical context. We need to understand the **signs** of difference. Adaptations are a synergy between the desire for sameness and reproduction, on the one hand, and, on the other, the acknowledgement of difference. To a degree, they are based on elision and deliberate lack and, simultaneously, in the privileging – even to excess – of certain **narrative** elements or strategies over others.

Film adaptations are both more and less than the original. More, not just because they are in excess of the written word (through having both image and sound). But, more also, because they are a **mise-en-abîme** of authorial texts and therefore of productions of meaning. To explain: there is the original text (T^{1}), the adapted text (T^{2}), the film text (T^{3}), the director texts (T^{4n}), the star texts (T^{5n}), the production (con)texts (T^{6n}) and finally the various texts' own intertexts (T^{7n}). Such a chain of signifiers makes it clear that the notion of authorship becomes very dispersed. Thus, quite evidentially, the film is *less*, because the original author is only one among many (we hear complaints from the **audience**: 'it's not what the author wrote'). But, it is also *more* because of the density of new texts (and textual meanings, purposes and motivations) clustered around the original (again audiences complain: 'it's not at all like the book').

Audiences might complain. And, yet, they go in their droves to see the classics on-screen. Higson (1993: 120) is right to say that the

replaying or downplaying of the original material is at least matched, if not superseded, by the 'pleasures of pictorialism'. Our pleasure is deeper than our pained expressions at the end of the film. Strong (1999: 61) usefully invokes the term *neutering*. Although he uses it in a somewhat more specific context – namely, when the adaptive process alters the original's rendering of their own time – essentially this effect of neutering and appropriation of a text is a basic practice of adaptation. To a greater or lesser degree, the adaptation neuters the original interest (or a part of the novelist's intention), thereby appropriating it so that it makes sense within the present context (e.g., Emma Thompson's script for Ang Lee's *Sense and Sensibility*, 1995, provides a twentieth-century feminist re-inscription of the original Austen novel).

Classic adaptations are less than transparent. They materialise the novel into something else and the result is a hybrid affair, a mixture of **genres**. More crucially, a temporal sleight of hand occurs and, thus, intention. By way of illustration of this point, let's take the Austen, Forster and Pagnol novels and their subsequent adaptations. These novels were modern texts of their day and set in their time, yet they were also deeply nostalgic for a lost time in the past (be it for social, economic values or traditions). A major motivation of the narrative, then, is a nostalgia for what is no more. A sense of lack, of loss is redolent within the novel. Over time, however, these once modern texts become classic texts entering the literary canon. By the time they get to the stage of film adaptation, they are no longer of the present time and so become transformed into what we know as **costume** or **heritage** films. What was present is now of the past. A further shift occurs, however, in our reception of the film. It is nostalgic pleasure we are after, not understanding. Thus our focus shifts from a desire to *know* the times the novel is referring to (in socio-economic or political terms), to a desire to *see* the times (in terms of costume and décor). Thus the earlier intention of the narrative – a nostalgia for a past – is neutered. What drives us, the audience, is a nostalgia for the present times of the novel, the lived moment of Austen's heroines, or Pagnol's and Forster's characters – our imagined past, not that of the original text for which that present time represents unwanted change. Both the novel and the film are looking backwards nostalgically, but not at the same past.

Production values tend to match the perceived value of the original text. Thus, literary classics have high production values and the aim is for an authentic re-creation of the past through appropriate **setting**, quality mise-en-scène, minute attention to décor and costume, and for star vehicles to embody the main roles. Audience expectation is such that demand for authenticity and taste is carefully respected. Conversely,

popular-fiction adaptations make no such demands of taste. Sets can be flimsy, actors unknown; the whole purpose here is for cost-effectiveness. A small budget therefore means low production values. It does not necessarily mean, however, a loss of value. Indeed, many of the 1930s and 1940s Hollywood **B-movies** have gained such value that they have entered the Western cinematic canon. Nor have contemporary literary adaptations, while inexpensively produced, been without impact in the evolution of film history. The **British New Wave** of the 1960s, for example, relied heavily on contemporary texts for their source of inspiration and produced a grainy socio-realism (closely aligned with kitchen-sink drama) which mainly focused on the socio-economic crises of young working-class males. The so-called New Scottish cinema also draws on modern literary sources and provides low-budget movies with a raw realism of economic deprivation that mostly, but not exclusively, concerns the young male in crisis and the drug culture of Scottish urban youth (particularly male youth). The adaptation of Irvine Welsh's novel *Trainspotting* (Boyle, 1996) is the benchmark movie in this context (see Petrie, 2005).

Modern adaptations of contemporary novels have national value to the degree that they tell us something of the current political culture that surrounds us; the adaptation of classics has nationalistic value in that they mirror a desire to be identified with values of tradition, culture and taste to which certain elites, especially political elites, and generations aspire. They only refer indirectly to the current socio-political or cultural climate. But it is often possible to uncover traces of the present, nonetheless. As Strong (1999: 286–91) points out, the gay sub-text of Forster's *Room with a View* (Ivory, 1980) comes seeping through even if it does not threaten or challenge the particularly homophobic political culture and legislation of the Thatcher government in Britain at that time. Strong (1999: 63) makes a particularly interesting point about the distinction between contemporary and classical adaptations – one that comes down to gender. Classic literary adaptations with their almost obsessive focus on detail – an effect of miniaturising – lead to an increased feminisation of the original text. If we take this idea further, it is as if the film clothes its male protagonists in such a way as to make them safe, contain them as an ideal male who mirrors in the fanciness and detail of his own costume that of his female counterpart. We may forget the very real power wielded by men as we stand in awe of their prettiness. Viewed in this light, this feminisation comes to represent a containment and displacement of our contemporary myth of sexual equality and even unisexuality. The contemporary adaptations such as those of the British New Wave, argues Strong (1999: 62), and to which

we could add the Scottish New Wave, are ones that masculinise the original text in their over-investment in the individual youthful male protagonist. These films, which focus on the male, represent him as unruly, potentially threatening, powerful, wild. But given the process of masculinisation inscribed into the filmic text, the vicious twist at the end, that he is doomed to fail, die or remain the same, should give us pause for thought.

For background reading on early (1970s–80s) trends, read texts cited above. But for more recent writing, see Barefoot (2001), Cartmell and Whelehan (1999), Geraghty (2008), Hutcheon (2006), Lupack (2002), Marcus (1993), Monk (1996), Petrie (2005), Stam (2005), Strong (1999), Washburn (2001), Wilson (2002).

AGENCY

Refers essentially to issues of control and operates both within and outside the film. Within the film, agency is often applied to a character in relation to desire. If that character has agency over desire, it means that s/he (though predominantly in **classical narrative cinema** it is he) is able to act upon that desire and fulfil it (a classic example is: boy meets girl, boy wants girl, boy gets girl). Agency also functions at the level of the **narrative** inside and outside the film. Whose narration is it? A character in the film? A character outside the film? The director's? And finally, agency also applies to the **spectator**. In viewing the film, the spectator has agency over the text in that s/he produces a meaning and a reading of the filmic text.

See also: **subjectivity**.

ANAMORPHIC LENS

A French invention devised by Henri Chrétien for military use during the First World War, this is a wide-angle lens that permits 180-degree vision (see **180-degree rule**). It was not introduced into cinema until 1928 when it was used experimentally by the French filmmaker Claude Autant-Lara. Characteristically, the French film industry did not invest in this new technology, which could have done much to aid its ailing fortunes, and it was the United States which bought the rights to the system in 1952. The following year Fox **studios** was the first to release what was termed a **cinemascope** film, *The Robe* (Koster). The

widescreen effect of cinemascope is achieved by a twofold process using the anamorphic lens. First, the lens on the camera squeezes the width of the image down to half its size so that it will fit onto the existing width of the film (traditionally 35mm). Then the film is projected through a projector supplied with an anamorphic lens which produces a widescreen effect with an **aspect ratio** of 2.35:1. Without the anamorphic lens on the projector, the image would be virtually square and its contents hugely distorted – horizontally squashed and vertically stretched as if caught in a concave mirror. The wide-angle effect is now more usually accomplished without the anamorphic lens, through the use of the wide-gauge 70mm film or by printing 35mm onto 70mm film for special releases. And, of course, now that the digital camera is widely in operation, all that is required is a mere flick of the switch to shift from the standard 4:3 to 16:9 widescreen shooting format.

See also: **aspect ratio**, **cinemascope**, **widescreen**.

For further details see Belton (1992), Belton, Hall and Neale (2010).

ANIMATION

Animation is used in cartoons and now also in live-action films. *Cartoons* is the term generally used to describe short animated films, as distinct from the term *animated* or 'animation films' for full-length features. Traditionally, animation has been achieved by shooting inanimate objects, such as drawings, clay or plasticene models, frame by frame in stop-motion photography. In succeeding frames, the object has very slightly shifted positions so that when the stop-motion photos are run at standard speed (24 frames per second), the object seems to move. John Hart (1999: 3) gives a very useful thumbnail sketch of the essential ingredients needed for animation. In cartoons, he explains, artists must make dynamic use of space, compositional devices and colour. They must also use fore, middle and background effectively. Traditionally the main narrative action revolves around the principle of conflict which is mirrored by visual conflict on three levels within the image: size (large and small characters), strong verticals against horizontals, and colours (red against green).

Animation dates back to the early days of cinema. It first appeared in the form of a special-effects insert into a live-action film with Georges Méliès' animation of the moon – which he achieved through stop-motion and trick photography – in *Voyage à la lune* (1902). The Frenchman

Émile Cohl is credited with having brought the comic strip to film. Unlike printed comic strips, however, he used line drawings, creating stick figures among other objects. His first product *Fantasmagorie* (1908) was a huge success even though it was a spectacle-effects film (to use Richard Abel's term, 1994: 286) and not strictly a narrative text. The film was a series of illogical but seamless transformations of the line drawings (an elephant turning into a house, for example). Cohl's line drawing technique was imitated and adapted by the American Winsor McCay, who was himself originally a comic-strip artist. McCay introduced personality or character animation through his anthropomorphisation of animals. Thus, in 1914, he produced the first animated cartoon, *Gertie the Dinosaur.* In this vein of anthropomorphic stars, Otto Messmer's famous *Felix the Cat* – first conceived of in 1915 – eventually became a series (starting in 1920).

Walt Disney Productions (founded in 1923) continued with this popular tradition of anthropomorphisation, providing even greater **realism** to the animated creatures. In 1928, Disney produced the first synch-sound cartoon (*Steamboat Willie*, featuring Mickey Mouse). Disney is also credited with being the first to bring **colour** to **sound** cartoons (by 1932). Full feature-length colour and sound animated films came into their own with his *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) which won a special Oscar. In terms of animated dolls, arguably the most famous is the gorilla doll who is the eponymous hero of *King Kong* (Schoedask, 1933). This also demonstrated clearly that live and cartoon film could be hybridised in a feature-length movie. A slightly more recent and highly successful example of this hybridisation *in extenso* is *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (Zemeckis, 1988).

Disney Productions are not necessarily the pioneers of animation. Prior to the establishment of Disney studios, the Fleischer brothers (Dave and Max), in 1920, launched their *Out of the Inkwell* series. The success of their cartoon character, the clown Koko, allowed them to establish their own studio, Red Seal, in 1921. Although their business was to fail, the brothers went with their studio to work at Paramount and created, most famously, the Betty Boop character and the *Popeye the Sailor* series. Apart from the importance of their contribution to cartoon style – direct address to the audience, illogical plot developments (reminiscent of Cohl perhaps) – they were also technological pioneers. Dave Fleischer invented the rotoscope process (*circa* 1920) which, simply explained, is a process whereby individual frames of filmed action of live figures are projected onto the back of a glass then traced and rephotographed. Thus, the movements of the animated figures are based on those of live figures and cartoon characters move much like

human beings. The Fleischers also introduced, in 1934, the stereotypical process which gives the illusion of actual depth in the image. Disney Productions would incorporate both these processes into their own cartoon-making practices, either by intuition or by finding a similar process. Imitating human body movement continues as a practice today with some studios – although others spurn this type of hyper-realism, arguing that characters are strictly symbolic representations, not life-like creations. Studios following the imitation of life by transfer nowadays do it digitally with movements being based on motion-capture sensors attached, for example, to the face (see *The Polar Express*, DreamWorks, 2004, which uses Tom Hanks' face for the main character).

The Disney style and look have tended to dominate the Western animation tradition. However, the realistic movement for which Disney animated films are so renowned is not the only trend of animation. The United Productions of America (UPA, established in 1941 as a breakaway group from Disney) is perhaps best remembered for its *Mr Magoo* series. UPA was to have an important impact on the evolution of animation style. It used modern art styling which created, in particular, a counter-realistic effect of jerky movements; it also wrote non-violent scenarios – thus again breaking with tradition. Its impact in the late 1940s and early 1950s was felt both on home territory and abroad, particularly in Eastern Europe. Also in the USA, Warner Brothers spawned some of the greatest names in animation. Tex Avery worked for Warner Brothers' cartoon unit (1936–42) and helped them launch, along with Bob Clampett and Chuck Jones, the cartoon character Bugs Bunny, before going on to work for MGM (1942–55). His fast-paced, often violent, surrealist gag-style cartoons which were based on the principle of 'surprise the audience' had, and still have, a great influence (both on animation and on advertising). During this same period, Warners produced a cartoon series entitled *Merrie Melodies* which include two cartoons that warrant a mention given that they seem to contradict, due to their racist content, the reputation Warners enjoyed at the time for producing feature films with social content or criticism at their core. The two cartoons are *Clean Pastures* (Fritz Freleng, 1937) and *Coal Black and De Sebben Dwarves* (Bob Clampett, 1942). In the first cartoon, which features an all-Black cast, Saint Peter sends his angels down to Harlem to clean up the night-life. The cast is made up of caricatures of, among others, Cab Calloway (whose music figures in many cartoons of this period), Louis Armstrong, Fats Waller, Stepin Fetchit and Bill 'Bojangles' Robinson. The second is a racist spoof on Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* which, to Warners' credit, it eventually banned from projection (both these shorts are titles held by the British Film Institute's

archival collection). Chuck Jones worked for Warners' cartoon unit from the late 1930s until it closed in 1962. He made 300 animated shorts and was perhaps most famous for producing the *Road Runner* series. A central theme to his work was to show how we are driven to follow after things we do not necessarily want (quite an antidote to the American capitalist dream if we stop to think about it – the coyote never gets the road-runner, and may even have forgotten why he chases after him!). After Warners, Jones went to MGM for a while to work on their *Tom and Jerry* series. Finally, in terms of animator greats, mention must be made of Ray Harryhausen who created the stop-motion model animation known as Dynamation (see, for example, the iconic fight with the skeletons in *Jason and the Argonauts*, Chaffey, 1963).

Elsewhere, apart from the USA, there were famously several Eastern European Schools of Animation which, starting in the early 1960s, underwent artistic and quantitative growth (Bendazzi, 1994: 333). The Czech School established itself as a major player in the world of animated films. Its worldwide renown begins with its puppet and cartoon animations, many of which cast doubt over reality as a means of subversion. Jiri Trnka's *The Hand* (*Ruka*, 1965) and Jana Marglova's *Genesis* (1966) are exemplary of this allegorical use of animation. The Czech Republic (former Czechoslovakia) enjoyed and still enjoys a wide reputation as makers of children's puppet fables, and Surrealist mixed-medium animated cartoons (toys, puppets, clay figures, drawings, etc.). Its reputation as a significant school is matched in Eastern Europe primarily by Poland, which also has a strong tradition in animation. Walerian Borowczyk and Jan Lenica's use of cut-out graphics (*Dam*, 1957) and Witold Giersz's painting on glass (*Maly Western*, 1960) are just two animation styles introduced by this country into the cartoon milieu. While there is stylistic variety, the Polish School has a definite look which Bendazzi (1994: 341), in his very comprehensive book on world animation, sums up as follows: 'a preference for dark-toned images … and gloomy themes mostly marked by existential questioning … and heavy pessimism'. Finally (in the former Yugoslavia), the Zagreb School's legacy stems primarily from a group of Croatian animation artists, working in the 1950s and 1960s, whose style (inspired by the modern art styling of UPA) represents a reversal of the Disney realistic tradition.

Animation, although dominated by the American market, is a form of filmmaking that is widely practised in the Western world and the East. Japanese animation (known as *anime*) is becoming known to us through its presence on television. The industrial expansion of Japanese animation began in 1958 (Bendazzi, 1994: 411). Two major production companies were established around that time: Toei (1958) and Gakken (1959). Gakken, a puppet animation studio, was one of the few companies under

the leadership of a woman director, Matsue Jimbo (Bendazzi, 1994: 411). Toei's feature film production tended to focus on two subject areas: legends from the Far East and tales of **science-fiction**. These films, as with many others emanating from Japanese studios, are fast-action, fast-produced cartoons which are often violent in terms of both their subject matter and their fast editing style (Bendazzi, 1994).

One Japanese animation studio that stands out presently is Ghibli (established 1985), which has made 23 films to date – most famously *Princess Monoke* (1997), *Spirited Away* (2001) and *Ponyo* (2008). It specialises in feature-length animation films and the focus is on children and their perceptions of the world. There is greater moral and thematic complexity to their films, which in turn means that the pace is slower than the typical US or indeed Japanese product. Even more surprising, given the dominant trend of Manga comic-book-inspired animation films and their macho fighting culture, is the fact that most Ghibli animations feature a female character for the central role. The key animator is Hayao Miyazaki, with seven of the studio's films to his name, and he is partnered by Isao Takahata. Miyazaki's films are more **fantasy** based than Takahata's, which tend to be more experimental and based in the contemporary. Their work, whether popular or experimental, is marked by their use of realist detail in the backdrops and their skilled draughtmanship – a big attraction to older audiences. *Spirited Away* was an international success and a top-grossing film in Japan. Indeed, on their home territory, Ghibli products habitually outstrip Disney. This may explain why Disney has been a co-funder and, for a while, responsible for distributing Ghibli films in Japan and other countries.

Recent technological advances have seen the introduction of computer-aided graphics (see **CGI**). One might think that this new technology would have reduced production costs. One minute of traditional animation requires on average 1,500 drawings and the medium is therefore very costly and labour intensive. But CGI is no cheaper. It is sobering to recall that Spielberg's digitally animated dinosaurs in *Jurassic Park* (1993), made by George Lucas' independent company Industrial Light and Magic (ILM), cost $25 million alone (representing over one-third of the total costs of $66 million).

Digital animation is so sophisticated it can go beyond simply using movement and gestures to convey emotion (as animation has done in the past) and reach into the character's being to give a greater sense of depth. However, the millions of equations it takes to control each character and animate them down to individual frames of film means that it can take days to create a single frame. Often it takes up to two years to make a feature film.

Digital animation has produced greater realism in terms of movement, but can be used without necessarily endeavouring to make the characters more lifelike. Indeed there are two camps on this issue of realism within the US side of the industry: Pixar and DreamWorks. Pixar is considered a pioneer in the computer-animated format (computer-generated image: CGI). Pixar was co-founded in 1986 by Ed Catmull and Steve Jobs (of Apple fame) and, until 2004, was closely linked with Disney before becoming a subsidiary in 2006, when Disney acquired Pixar. They made *Toy Story* (1995) for Disney, the first wholly computer-generated animated film. Since that time, Pixar products have been a huge economic success and (as of 2021) have grossed 18 Oscars, the most recent of which is *Soul* (Docter, 2020). Unlike DreamWorks, where greater emphasis is laid on the computer-generated images (e.g., *Antz*, 1998, *Shrek*, 2001) at the expense of the story, Pixar works from the principle that realism is not what is being aimed at and the focus has to be on the story itself. Almost as if taking over Warner Brothers' mantle of making socially committed films, every Pixar film has a message which, as with Ghibli in Japan, is probably why it draws a large demographic audience. Pixar has also understood that, with the advent of computer technology, it is now possible to convey emotional complexity – for an outstanding example see the Oscar-winning *Inside Out* (Docter, 2015). Pixar uses high-colour reality – and in this context Ed Catmull's big contribution to the media was his invention of texture mapping, which is a system that allows a texture to be poured over the surface of a character in a realistic way without, however, attempting to make them seem real. Conversely, DreamWorks tries to reproduce, through transfer, the movement of live beings at the expense of depth of character. Gags abound in their *Shrek 2* (2003), for example, whereas the characters of Pixar's *The Incredibles* (2004) have a lot to contend with, not least the government's repression of their exceptionalness.

A final mention in this contemporary scenario must go to the British success story, the Aardman Animation group based in Bristol, headed by Nick Park (with David Sproxton and Peter Lord who originated the idea) and best known initially for their *Wallace and Gromit* TV series. A hallmark of their work is their deeply intertextual play with film **genre** and **classical narratives**. In a sense, this studio uses all the mediums of animation: drawing, modelling, digital animation. Beginning with tracing their animated characters on paper, including each movement, they then shoot a working script of each section of the film, in black and white, based on these tracings before going on to work out each of these rehearsed sections with their plasticene characters and backdrops. All these movements are then painstakingly filmed

and encoded into the computer for editing. *Chicken Run* (2000), their first feature film, was a great success; it took two years to make and, unsurprisingly given the huge expense of such an undertaking, was co-funded by DreamWorks.

Animation, because it is not based in the real, has always had inherent within it the potential to problematise representation. So, for example, it can address differently questions of **gender** and race. But, for the more complex takes on the subversive and more fully counter-ideological animated films, we have to look to the experimental work of, among others, Oskar Fischinger, Len Lye, Paul Driessen, the Quay brothers and Robert Beer from the West and, from Eastern Europe, the work of Jan Svankmajer and Birovoi Dovnikovi (see Faber and Walters, 2004, for more details).

There is a massive bibliography on animation; what follows is only a suggested list: Bendazzi (1994), Culham (1988), Faber and Walters (2004), Furniss (1998), Ghanian and Phillips (1996), Grant (1987, 2001), Hoffer (1981), Lassiter and Davy (1995), Lord and Sibley (1998), Napier (2005), Pillig (1992, 1997), Price (2008), Sandler (1998), Solomon (1987, 1994), Taylor (1996a), Weishar (2004), Wells (1998, 2002a, 2002b, 2008).

APPARATUS (CINEMATIC TECHNOLOGY AND THEORY – TO FULLY GRASP APPARATUS THEORY IT WOULD HELP THAT YOU ALSO READ THE ENTRY ON PSYCHOANALYSIS)

As a term, apparatus refers to the technology of the camera and film projector. As a theoretical concept, it refers to the effects of this technology upon the **spectator**. Baudry (1970) was among the first film theorists to suggest that the cinematic apparatus or technology has an **ideological** effect upon the spectator. In the simplest instance, the cinematic apparatus purports to set before the eye and ear realistic images and sounds. However, the technology disguises how that reality is put together frame by frame. It also provides the illusion of perspectival space. This double illusion conceals the work that goes into the production of meaning and, in so doing, presents as natural what in fact is an ideological construction, that is, an idealistic reality. In this respect, Baudry argues, the spectator is positioned as an all-knowing **subject** because he (*sic*) is all-seeing even though he is unaware of the processes whereby he becomes fixed as such. Thus, the omniscient spectator–subject is produced by, is the effect of, the filmic text. A contiguous, simultaneous

ideological effect occurs as a result of the way in which the spectator is positioned within a theatre: in a darkened room, the eyes projecting towards the screen with the projection of the film coming from behind the head. Because of this positioning, an identification occurs with the camera (that which has already looked, before the spectator, at what the spectator is now looking at). The spectator is engaged in an exchange *by* the filmic text (via the identification with the apparatus). The film, thereby, constructs the subject; the subject is an effect of the film text (see **ideology**). Thus, the spectator as subject is constructed by the meanings of the filmic text.

By 1975, in order to further clarify the dynamic between screen and spectator and explain how film works on the unconscious level, film theorists (Baudry, Bellour, Metz) began drawing on Freud's discussions of the libido drives and Lacan's of the **mirror stage** as a vital stage of the male-child's development of his (*sic*) identity (for a full explanation, see – under **psychoanalysis** – the sections on the construction of subjectivity in ***Freud's theory of the subject*** and ***Lacan's theory of the subject***). By analogy with Freud and Lacan's description of the mirror stage – in which the reflection of the child in the mirror is not real, it is not *him*, but an illusory image – so film makes *absence presence* (bringing into the spectator's field of vision images of people/**stars** who are not present in real life). The screen also functions to make *presence absence*: the spectator is absent from the screen upon which he gazes. However, the interplay between *presence and absence* does not end here. Although the spectator is absent from the screen, he is present as the hearing seeing feeling subject: without the presence the film would have no meaning. And it is in that respect that the screen is also seen as having analogies with the mirror stage. The screen becomes the mirror into which the spectator peers. Thus, the spectator has a momentary identification with that image (for example, of a star body) and sees himself as a unified being (an ideal image). But then he perceives his difference and becomes aware of the lack (he is not that ideal image). Finally, he recognises himself as perceiving **subject**. According to this line of analysis, at each film viewing there occurs this re-enactment of the unconscious processes involved in the mirror stage (from misrecognition [the ideal image] to autonomous selfhood or subjectivity).

It is not hard to see how **mainstream cinema**, in particular, benefits from this process of identification as a constant lure to return to the movies! It is through the interplay of *absence/presence* that cinema constructs the spectator as subject of the look with all that that connotes in terms of visual pleasure for the spectator (see **gaze**). But, this visual pleasure is also associated with its opposite: the shame of looking; for in

this seeing without being seen, cinema makes possible the re-enactment of the primal scene – that is, according to Freud, the moment in the child's psychological development when it, unseen, watches its mother and father copulating (see **scopophilia**, **voyeurism/fetishism**). When watching **pornography**, perhaps this shame of looking comes into play, but erotic scenes in films can induce more than visual pleasure, surely, without a sense of shame!

Film as a source for visual pleasure, but which at this stage only addressed the male spectator, is what led the feminist theorist Laura Mulvey to produce, also in 1975, her seminal essay 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' which helped, among various debates, to move the discussion of the apparatus on from this anti-humanist reading of the spectator as subject-effect, and the presupposition that the spectator is male (for fuller details on these debates see entry on the **gaze** and **spectator**). As a result, debates moved on from the apparatus to questions about the gaze and spectator theory. In this new context, the spectator now becomes an active producer of meaning who is still positioned as subject, but this time as agent of the filmic text. That is, s/he becomes the one viewing, the one deriving pleasure (or fear, which is another form of pleasure) from what s/he is looking at. S/he also interprets and judges the text. On the negative side of this positioning, it could be said that, in becoming the camera, the apparatus places the spectator voyeuristically as a colluder in the circulation of pleasure which is essential to the financial well-being of the film industry (see Metz, 1975). The economic viability of the latter depends on the desire of the former to be pleasured. Cinema in this respect becomes an exchange commodity based on pleasure and capital gain – pleasure in exchange for money. On the positive side, it could be said that, as agent, the spectator can resist being fixed as **voyeur**, or indeed as effect, and judge the film critically.

See also: **agency**, **spectator-identification, suture**.

For further discussion see De Lauretis and Heath (1980), Lapsley and Westlake (1988: 79–86), Mayne (1993: 13–76), Metz (1975), Mulvey (1975).

ART CINEMA

This term refers predominantly to a certain type of European cinema that is **experimental** in technique and **narrative**. This cinema, which typically produces low- to mid-budget films, attempts to address the aesthetics of cinema and cinematic practices and is primarily, but not

exclusively, produced outside **dominant cinema** systems. However, it must be pointed out that the **French New Wave** and the new **German cinema**, which come under this label, received substantial financing from the state. Other art cinemas such as the American **underground cinema** tend to be funded by the filmmakers themselves. Art cinema is also produced by individuals – often women filmmakers – who do not come under any particular movement (e.g., Agnès Varda, Liliani Cavani, Nelly Kaplan and Chantal Akerman).

Art cinema has been rightly associated with eroticism since the 1920s when sexual desire and nudity were explicitly put up on-screen. However, for American audiences during the **censorship** period under the **Hays code** (1934–68), art cinema came to mean sex films. With an eye to the export market, film producers were quick to exploit art cinema's sexual cachet. Perhaps one of the most famous instances of this is the case of Godard's *Le Mépris* (1963), starring Brigitte Bardot. Upon its completion, two of its producers (Levine and Ponti) insisted that Godard should insert some nude scenes of Bardot. He did this, but not with the anticipated results – far from titillating or sexual, these scenes are moving, tragic.

The term *cinéma d'art* was first coined by the French in 1908 to give cinema – which until then had been a popular medium – a legitimacy that would attract the middle classes to the cinema. This earliest form of art cinema was filmed theatre (mostly actors of the Comédie Française) accompanied by musical scores of renowned composers – making it a quite conservative artefact. During the 1920s, however, owing to the impact of **German expressionism** and the French avant-garde, art cinema became more closely associated with the **avant-garde**. From the 1930s onwards, partly owing to the French and Italian realist movements, its connotations widened to include social and psychological **realism**. And the final legitimation came in the 1950s when the *politique des auteurs* made the term *auteur* sacrosanct. This *politique* or polemic argued that certain filmmakers could be identified as auteurs – as generators or creators rather than producers of films. This further widening of its frame of reference has meant that, although art cinema is considered primarily a European cinema, certain Japanese, Indian, Australian, North-American and Latin American filmmakers are also included in the canon – as well as certain films made by representatives of some minority groups: women, Black people and self-called queers (see **Black cinema**, **queer cinema**; for women's cinema see Kuhn, 1990).

Historically, art cinema was not intentionally devised as a counter-**Hollywood** cinema, even though its production is clearly not associated with Hollywood. It is interesting to note, however, that the 1920s art

cinema was a period of great cross-fertilisation between Hollywood and European cinema. Generally speaking, in art cinema narrative **codes and conventions** are disturbed, the **narrative** line is fragmented so that there is no seamless cause-and-effect storyline. Similarly, characters' behaviour appears contingent, hesitant rather than assured and in the know or motivated towards certain ambitions, desires or goals. Although these films are character- rather than plot-led, there are no heroes – in fact this absence of heroes is an important feature of art cinema. Psychological realism takes the form of a character's subjective view of events; **social realism** is represented by the character in relation to those events. The point of view can take the form of an interior monologue, or even several interior monologues (Alain Resnais' and Ingmar Bergman's films are exemplars of this). **Subjectivity** is often made uncertain (whose story is it?) and so too the safe construction of time and space. This cinema, in its rupture with **classic narrative cinema**, intentionally distances **spectators** to create a reflective space for them to assume their own critical space or subjectivity in relation to the screen or film.

See also: **avant-garde**, **counter-cinema, experimental film, time-image (movement-image)**.

ART DIRECTION

This term covers the whole range of labour practices involved in the creation of the visual environment of the film – from the smallest to the largest. Thus, not only costume and set design come under this term of reference, but so too does obtaining the appropriate props. Overall responsibility for art direction lies either with the production designer or with the art director – the latter is often the designer of the sets or décors. Presently, in film studies' scholarship, costume and set design have become an important topic of research. Clearly, set design, in that it is the visual environment within which characters move about, impacts heavily on the meaning of a **narrative** and as such demands careful analysis when reading a film. Consider for a moment the analysis of **melodrama**'s **mise-en-scène** by Mulvey, Nowell-Smith and Elsaesser (all 1987) – which we now all understand plays an integral part in the meaning of the narrative, referring as it does to the couple's repression of emotion as they struggle to reach a compromise in their complex relationship. But it is also important to study the work of individual art directors since, like **auteur** filmmakers, it is obvious that they too leave authorial marks. For example, late 1930s **French poetic realism** might

well not have come about but for the legacy of the 1920s and 1930s art director Lazare Meerson, whose work heavily influenced the likes of Alexander Trauner and Georges Walkhévitch among others of his assistants or disciples. By the same extension, **costume** is an integral part of mise-en-scène and needs to be understood in a variety of ways, starting with an acknowledgement that it is governed by 'complex influences that relate to notions of realism, performance, gender, status and power' (Street, 2001: 2). Costumes tell us a great deal about the body beneath it, in terms of the body's desire either to hide itself, lose its own identity, or, conversely, to project a strong **sexuality**, a sense of status or **class**. Costume also has resonances for national cinemas – it displays the cultural pulse of a nation and, if it is France, the nation's undoubted superiority in matters of good taste(!), particularly if the designer is a couturier.

For more reading on costume design and fashion see Bruzzi (1997), Cook (1996), Hayward (2010), Street (2001).

ASPECT RATIO

This refers to the size of the image on the screen and to the ratio between the width and the height. It dates back to the days of silent cinema, when the ratio was fixed at 1.33:1 (width to height) thanks to a standardisation of technology brought about by hard-nosed business strategies on the part of the Edison company. Edison contracted its rivals into a cartel that had to use Edison equipment and pay royalties to the company. The cartel dominated the market from 1909 to 1917 when an anti-trust law broke it. Edison went out of business, but the aspect ratio for a standard screen remained the norm internationally until the early 1950s, when the threat posed to film **audiences** by television obliged the film industry to find visual ways to attract or retain audiences.

Although there had been experimentation with other screen sizes, it was not until economic necessity forced the film industry to invest heavily in technology that screens took on different dimensions. The first innovation in size was the 1950s **cinemascope** with a standard aspect ratio of 2.35:1. From the 1970s to the 1990s, widescreen films were more commonly projected either from the wide-gauge 70mm film frame with an aspect ratio of 2.2:1 or from 35mm film with its top and bottom pre-cropped with an aspect ratio of 1.85:1 in the United States and 1.66:1 in European cinemas. Today, however, a great majority of films are digitally mastered and, for cinema theatre projection purposes, the current widescreen cinema standard is 2.39:1.

ASYNCHRONISATION/ASYNCHRONOUS SOUND

Asynchronisation occurs when the sound is either intentionally or unintentionally out of sync with the image. In the latter case, this is the result of faulty editing (e.g., a spoken voice out of sync with the moving lips). In the former, it has an aesthetic and/or **narrative** function. First, asynchronisation calls attention to itself; thus, the **spectator** is made aware that s/he is watching a film (so the illusion of identification is temporarily removed or deconstructed). Second, it serves to disrupt time and space and thereby narrative continuity, and as such points to the illusion of reality created by **classical narrative cinema** through its seamless **continuity editing**. Finally, it can be used for humorous effect, as occasionally in the earliest talkies when the advent of sound was met by filmmakers with mixed reactions.

See also: **sound**, **seamlessness (editing)**, **space and time**.

AUDIENCE

Always recognised as important by film distributors and exhibitors, the audience has now become an important area of research for film theorists and sociologists (for discussion and references see **spectator**). Considerable work has been done on reception theory (how the audience receives and/or is positioned by the film). More recently, the debate has focused on how the spectator both identifies with the film and becomes an active producer of meaning as subject of the film (see **agency**). The film industry has since its beginnings targeted films to attract large audiences; this has meant that the product is predominantly audience-led. As the audience changes (e.g., in terms of Western-world audiences, from working-class men and women, before the Second World War, to women of many classes after the war, to youth from the late 1950s, to the increase in child audiences, to home consumption), so too does the type of product. Studies conducted by Statista and the BFI (on US and UK audiences), from 2000 to the present, show that the main cinema attendee audience is the 15 to 34 age group at 45–52%. However, young audiences, the seven to 14 age group, account for 14–17%. Indeed, child audiences are important sources of revenue for local cinemas, often attracting sell-out figures for matinées, weekends and school holidays. (Clearly the COVID pandemic has affected numbers, but the percentages still hold.)

The emergence of the internet as a viable distribution platform means that the relationship between audience and product has altered. Multiple points of access, unencumbered by time, have led to a new wave of on-demand services. These services also allow the audience to engage with films they want to see, rather than being dictated to by exhibition practices. One aspect is that the hegemony of cinema exhibition is no longer the dominant site of audience consumption. From mobile phones to Netflix (and other **streaming** services), tablets to illegal file sharing, the means of audience consumption has been irrevocably transformed. Once again, the impact of COVID means that, since 2020, streaming movies at home has hugely increased, outstripping cinema audience figures. It remains to be seen what the picture will be when the pandemic finally recedes.

The internet has also redefined the type of relationship between audience and film. Individuals, with a shared passion for a film, are no longer isolated, or reduced to association purely defined by geographical proximity. Fandom has, through the internet, become a viable global, or cyber, community. The global network, which serves these fan groups, is used to re-engage with the text in a variety of ways. Creating new meaning within the text, applying subversive readings, inflecting alternative meanings or creating new cultural product with the original text as a foundation.

AUTEUR/AUTEUR THEORY/*POLITIQUE DES AUTEURS/CAHIERS DU CINÉMA*

Although *auteur* is a term that dates back to the 1920s in the theoretical writings of French film critics and directors of the silent era, it is worth pointing out that in Germany, as early as 1913, the term *Autorenfilm* (author's film) had already been coined. The *Autorenfilm* emerged partly as a response to the French *Film d'Art* (with its cachet of art cinema) which began in 1908. The German term *Autorenfilm* is associated with the polemical issue regarding questions of authorship. Writers for the screen campaigned for their rights to these so-called *Autorenfilm* and staked their claim not just to the script but also to the film itself. In other words, the film was to be judged as the work of the author rather than the person responsible for directing it (Eisner, 1969: 39). In France the concept of auteur (in the 1920s) came from the other direction, namely, that the filmmaker is the auteur – irrespective of the origin of the script. During the 1920s, the debate in France centred on the auteur (often making **art cinema**) versus the scenario-led film (that

is, films whose scenarios were commissioned by studios which subsequently appointed the director). This distinction fed into the high-art/low-art debate already set in motion, as early as 1908, in relation to film (the so-called *Film d'Art* versus popular cinema controversy). Thus, by the 1920s, within the domain of film theory, auteur films had as much value, if not more, than canonical literary **adaptations** which in turn had more value than adaptations of popular fiction.

After 1950, and in the wake of Alexandre Astruc's seminal essay 'Naissance d'une nouvelle avant-garde: la Caméra-stylo/Birth of a New Avant-Garde: the camera-stylo' (*L'Écran français*, 1948), this debate was picked up again and popularised – with the eventual effect, as we shall see, of going some way towards dissolving the high-art/low-art issue. The leader in this renewed auteur debate was the film review *Cahiers du cinéma* (launched in 1951) and the essay most famously identified with this debate is François Truffaut's 1954 essay 'Une certaine tendance du cinéma/A Certain Tendency of Cinema'. Although it should not be seen as the sole text arguing for auteur cinema, nonetheless, it is considered *the* manifesto for the **French New Wave**.

In the 1950s, the *Cahiers du cinéma* (still in existence today) was headed by André Bazin, a film critic, and was written by a regular group of film critics, known as the *Cahiers* group. This group did not pursue the 1920s theorists' thinking (see **avant-garde**); in fact, they either ignored or totally dismissed it. And it is the later, 1950s debate, that has been carried forward into film theory. Through the *Cahiers* discussions on the *politique des auteurs* (i.e., the polemical debate surrounding the concept of auteurism), the group developed the notion of the auteur by binding it closely with the concept of **mise-en-scène**. This shift in the meaning of the auteur was largely due to the avid attention the *Cahiers* group paid to American/**Hollywood** cinema for the following reasons. During the German occupation of France in the Second World War, American films had been proscribed. Suddenly after the war, hundreds of such films, heretofore unseen, flooded the French cinema screens. This cinema, directed by the likes of Alfred Hitchcock, Howard Hawks, John Ford and Samuel Fuller, seemed refreshingly new and led the *Cahiers* group to a reconsideration of Hollywood's production. They argued that just because American directors had little or no say over any of the production process, bar the staging of the **shots**, this did not mean that they could not attain auteur status. Style, as in mise-en-scène, could also demarcate an auteur. Thanks to the *Cahiers* group, the term *auteur* could now refer either to a director's discernible style through mise-en-scène or to filmmaking practices where the director's signature was as much in evidence on the script/scenario as it was on

the film product itself. Exemplars of auteurism in this second form (i.e., total author) are Jean Vigo, Jean Renoir, Jean-Luc Godard, Agnès Varda in France; Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Werner Herzog, Wim Wenders, Margarethe von Trotta, Michael Haneke in Germany; Orson Welles, Sydney Lumet, David Lynch, Martin Scorsese, Quentin Tarantino in the United States; Ousmane Sembène and Diop Mambéty in Senegal. Certain filmmakers (mostly of the mise-en-scène form of auteur) have had this label ascribed to them by the *Cahiers* group even though their work may pre-date this use of the term (e.g., Hawks, Ford, Fuller and Hitchcock on the American scene).

The *politique des auteurs* was a polemic initiated by the *Cahiers* group not just to bring favourite American filmmakers into the canon but also to attack the French cinema of the time which they considered sclerotic, ossified. Dubbing it *le cinéma de papa*/daddy's cinema, they accused it of being script-led, redolent with safe psychology, lacking in social realism and of being produced by the same old scriptwriters and filmmakers whose time was up (François Truffaut was by far the most virulent in his attacks). The effect of this polemic, however, was to establish the primacy of the author-filmmaker/auteur – a rather romantic and, therefore, conservative aesthetic (i.e., the auteur as genius, as sole producer of meaning). A further problem with this polemic as it stood at the time was that, by privileging the auteur, it eluded context (i.e., history) and therefore side-stepped **ideology**. Equally, because film was being looked at for its formalistic, stylistic and thematic structures, unconscious structures (such as the unspoken dynamics between filmmaker and actor, the economic pressures connected with the industry) were precluded. Ironically, of two former writers in the *Cahiers* group who went on to make films, Godard and Truffaut, it is Truffaut's work that is locked in the conservative romantic ideology of the *politique des auteurs* and Godard's that has constantly questioned auteurism (among other things).

This *politique* generated a debate that lasted well into the 1980s, and auteur is a term that still prevails today. Given its innate conservatism one might well ask, why? The first answer is that, initially, it helped to shift film theory from what, until the 1950s, had primarily been sociological analysis. The second answer is that the auteur debate, which was always ongoing, made clear that attempts to provide a single film theory just would not work and that, in fact, film is about multiple theories.

What follows is a brief outline of the development of auteur theory through three phases (for more details see Caughie, 1981; Andrew, 1984; Cook, 1985; Lapsley and Westlake, 1988). Figure 1 (overleaf) outlines the three phases of auteur theory and gives a graphic representation of auteurism.

Phase 1

The term *auteur theory* came about, in the 1960s, as a mistranslation by the American film critic Andrew Sarris. What had been a polemic now became a full-blown theory. Sarris used auteurism to nationalistic and chauvinistic ends to elevate American/Hollywood cinema to the status of the only good cinema, with but one or two European art films worthy of mention. As a result of this misuse of the term, cinema became divided into a canon of the good or great directors and the rest. The initial impact of this on film courses and film studies in general was considerable, the tendency being to study only the good or great canon (see Figure 1, phase 1). Thankfully, the impact of cultural studies on film studies, in the late 1970s, and developments in film theory since have served to redress this imbalance.

Phase 2

The auteur debate did not end there. It was picked up in the late 1960s in the light of the impact of **structuralism** (see Figure 1, phase 2). In France, the *Cahiers du cinéma* was obliged to rethink and readjust its thinking around auteurism, and in Britain the film journal *Movie* significantly developed the debate. As a concept, structuralism dates back to the beginning of the twentieth century, primarily in the form of Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic theories. However, it remained little known until the theories were brought into the limelight by the French philosopher-**semiotician** Roland Barthes in the 1950s – especially in his popularising essays *Mythologies* (1957). Saussure, in his *Cours de linguistique générale*, sets out the base paradigm by which all language can be ordered and understood. The base paradigm *langue/parole* was intended as a function that could simultaneously address and speak, on the one hand, for the profound universal structures of language or language system (*langue*) and, on the other, for their manifestations in different cultures (*parole*). Claude Lévi-Strauss' anthropological structuralism of the 1960s (which looked at American Indian myths) continued in a similar vein, although this time it was applied to **narrative** structures. Lévi-Strauss' thesis was that since all cultures are the products of the human brain there must be, somewhere, beneath the surface, features that are common to all.

It is worth labouring this point that this rethinking of film theory, in the 1960s, did not come via film criticism (as it did in the 1950s) but through other disciplines, namely, structural linguistics and semiotics. This pattern would repeat itself, in the 1970s, with **psychoanalysis** and philosophy pushing the debate along, and then history, in the 1970s-1980s

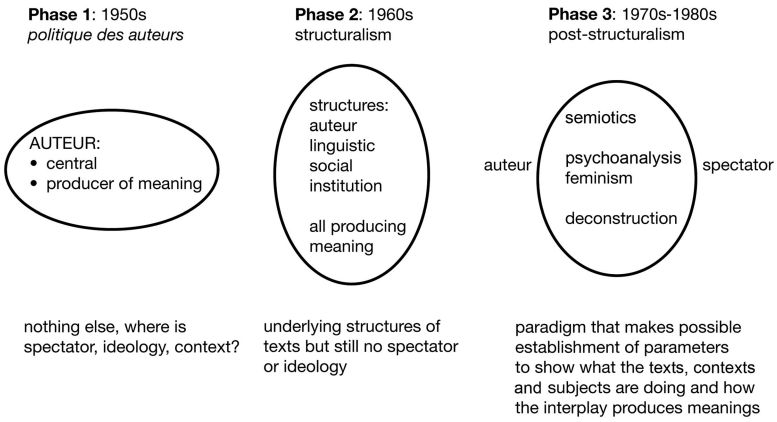

Figure 1 The three phases of auteur theory.

(see Figure 1, phase 3). The significance of this new trend of essayists and philosophers turning to cinema to apply their theories cannot be underestimated. Not to put too simplistic a reading on their importance, it is unquestionably their work which has legitimated film studies as a discipline and brought cinema firmly into the academic arena.

Structuralism was eagerly seized upon by proponents of auteurism because it was believed that, with its scientific approach, it would facilitate the establishing of an objective basis for the concept and counter the romantic subjectivity of auteur theory. Furthermore, apart from its potential to give a scientific legitimacy to auteurism, the attraction of structuralism for film theory in general lay in the theory's underlying strategy to establish a total structure.

Symptomatic of this desire for order in film theory were Christian Metz's endeavours (in the mid-1960s) to situate cinema within a Saussurian semiology. Metz, a semiotician, was the first to set out, in his *Essais sur la signification au cinéma* (1971, 1972), a total theory approach in the form of his *grande syntagmatique*. He believed that cinema possessed a total structure. To adopt Saussurian terms, he perceived cinema as *langue* and each film as being *parole*. His endeavour – to uncover the rules that governed film language and to establish a framework for a semiotics of the cinema – pointed to a fundamental limitation with such an all-embracing, total approach. The problem became one where theory tended to overtake the text, thus occluding other aspects of the text. What got omitted was the notion of pleasure and **audience** reception, and what occurred instead was a crushing of the aesthetic experience through the weight of the theoretical framework.

This is not to say that structuralism did not advance the debate on film theory and auteurism. It did. Auteur-structuralism brought about a major positive change to auteur theory (*à la Sarris*). The British film journal *Movie* pointed out the problems of a resolutely romantic aesthetic in relation to cinema, but saw ways to deal with them. By situating the auteur as one structure among others (such as **genre** and the film industry) producing meaning, the theory would yield to a greater flexibility. *Cahiers du cinéma* was also critical of the romantic notion of auteurship because the auteur is not a unified and free creative spirit and film, as a text, is a 'play of tensions, silences and regressions' (Caughie, 1981: 128). Thus the auteur was displaced from the centre of the work and was now one structure among several others making up the film text (see Figure 1, phase 2). This displacement allowed other structures to emerge, namely, the linguistic, social and institutional structures and the auteur's relationship to them. And even though, in the late 1960s, the tendency was still to perceive the auteur structure as the major one, it was also recognised that the **studio** and **stars** – among others – were equally important contributors to the production of meaning in film. Still absent from the debate, however, were the contextual structures and **discourses** such as the **ideological** effects of film as practice (how it functions ideologically) and spectator–text relations – these would be part of phase 3 of auteur theory (see Figure 1, phase 3).

After 1968, *Cahiers* made a first attempt to introduce ideology into the debate in its exploration of Hollywood films that either resisted or reflected dominant ideology. For example, in what is referred to as 'the *Young Mr Lincoln* debate', the *Cahiers* group claimed that this film mediated Republican values to counter Roosevelt's Democratic New Deal measures of 1933–1941 and to promote a Republican victory in the 1940 Presidential elections. Althusser's discussions on ideology, particularly his concept of *interpellation*/interpolation, made it possible for both *Cahiers* and the British journal *Screen* to start to address the screen–spectator relationship. At this juncture, both journals accepted what, with hindsight, turned out to be a profoundly anti-humanist analysis of spectator positioning. According to Althusser, ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) interpolate individuals as **subjects**. That is, as pre-existing structures, ISAs function to constitute the individual as a subject to the ideology. ISAs manifest themselves as institutions of the state: the police, government, monarchies are ISAs. Just to illustrate: the British are subjects to the monarchy. The individual is, therefore, an effect of ISAs and not an agent. As subject–effects, individuals give meaning to ideology by colluding with and acting according to it. A mirroring process occurs which provides the subject with a reassuring sense of national

identity (of belonging). Applied to film this means that cinema, in terms of meaning production, positions the spectator as a subject–effect who takes as real the images emanating from the screen. Thus, meaning is received, but not constructed, by the subject.

Phase 3

Undoubtedly, two seminal essays of the late 1960s, Barthes' 'Death of the Author' (1967) and Michel Foucault's 'What Is an Author?' (1969), helped move forward the debates around auteurism and spectator positioning. Barthes argued that a text is a tissue of quotations (suggesting there is no true or single authorial voice), and each text is geological, constructed as it is of multiple layers and meanings. As Foucault explains, the author is a function, among others. Texts are products of many other texts and contexts – in our instance of film this means all levels of production ranging from the pro-filmic moment (everything that occurs before filming even begins: for example, the novel, the novelist, the script and scriptwriter), all levels of the industrial practice (producers, technicians, stars/actors and so on), to the film itself and, subsequently, distribution, exhibition, audience reception.

This move beyond the concept of a single author, grand theory or structure heralded the advent of **post-structuralism**, a theoretical approach which embraced a pluralism of theories. In relation to auteur theory, it took the impact, in the 1970s, of post-structuralism (see **structuralism/post-structuralism**), psychoanalysis, feminism and **deconstruction** to make clear, finally, that a single theory was inadequate and that what was required was a pluralism of theories that cross-fertilised each other (see Figure 1, phase 3). Post-structuralism, which does not find an easy definition, could be said to regroup and, to some extent, cross-fertilise the three other theoretical approaches (psychoanalysis, feminism and deconstruction). As its name implies, it was born out of a profound mistrust for total theory, and started from the position that all texts are a double articulation of discourses and non-discourses (i.e., what is spoken and what is unspoken). In terms of auteur theory, the effect was multiple: 'the intervention of semiotics and psychoanalysis shattering once and for all the unity of the auteur' (Caughie, 1981: 200). Because post-structuralism looks at all relevant discourses (spoken or unspoken) revolving around and within the text, many more areas of meaning production can be identified. Thus, semiotics introduced the theory of the textual subject, that is, subject positions within the textual process, including that of the spectator and the

auteur, all producing meanings. Furthermore, semiotics also made clear that the text is a series of **signs** producing meanings.

Having defined the auteur's place within the textual process, auteur theory could now be placed within a theory of textuality. Since there is no such thing as a pure text, the **intertextuality** (effects of different texts upon another text) of any film text must be a major consideration, including auteurial intertextuality. That is, the auteur is a figure constructed out of her or his film: because of specific hallmarks, the film is ostensibly a certain filmmaker's and also influenced by that of others, etc. Psychoanalysis introduced the theory of the sexual, specular, divided subject (divided by the fact of difference, loss of and separation from the mother (see **psychoanalysis**)). Questions of the subject come into play: who is the subject (the text, auteur, spectator)? What are the effects of the enunciating text (i.e., the film as performance) on the spectator and those on the filmic text of the spectator? What are the two-way ideological effects (film on spectator and vice versa) and the pleasures derived by the spectator as s/he moves in and out of the text (see **spectator-identification**)? To speak of text means too that the context must also come into play in terms of meaning production: modes of production, the social, political and historical context. Finally, and simultaneously, one cannot speak of a text as transparent, natural or innocent; therefore it is to be unpicked, deconstructed so that its modes of representation are fully understood.

See Caughie (1981) for a comprehensive review of debates.

AVANT-GARDE

The term *avant-garde* was first used in the modern sense to typify various aesthetic groupings that appeared immediately before and after the First World War: cubism and futurism (both 1909), Dadaism (1916), constructivism (1920) and **surrealism** (1924). The avant-garde seeks to break with tradition and is intentionally politicised in its attempts to do so. In cinema the avant-garde cachet was first used, in the 1920s, when a group of French film theorists (most famously Louis Delluc, Germaine Dulac and Jean Epstein) turned their hand to filmmaking and sought to create a cinema of the avant-garde. The first point to be made about this loosely banded collective is the pluralism of its members' theoretical approaches to cinema, which clearly inflected their filmmaking practices. Between them, they addressed issues of high and popular art, realist versus naturalist film, the **spectator**–screen relationship, **editing** styles

(particularly that of the **Soviet school** and **montage**), simultaneity, **subjectivity**, the unconscious, and the **psychoanalytical** potential of film, **auteur** cinema, cinema as rhythm and as a sign (see **semiology**). Once they turned their hands to making film, experimentation was central to their practice. This experimentation functioned on three overlapping levels: reworking genres, exploring the possibilities of film language and redefining the representation of subjectivity. **Genres** were mixed, intercalated and juxtaposed. Similarly, the popular was fused with the experimental (mainstream cinema with **counter-cinema**), socio-realism with the subjective (**documentary** with **melodrama**). Working within these popular genres allowed these filmmakers to extend, distort, subvert dominant **discourses**. In so doing, these avant-garde filmmakers attacked the precept of filmic **narrative** and spectator omniscience. Their films raised questions about subjectivity and its representation by disrupting **diegetic** time and space. This was achieved in a number of ways: shifts from diegetic continuity to discontinuity, fast editing, disruption of conventional transitional **shots**, disorientating shots through **unmatched shots** or a simultaneous representation of a multiplicity of perspectives. Thus, the fetishising **gaze** of the male was also examined, showing an awareness of the underprivileging of female subjectivity. Subjectivity not only became a question of point of view but also included the implicit notion of **voyeurism** and speculation (of the female other – see **gaze**) as well as the issue of desire, and the functioning of the conscious and the unconscious mind (see Abel, 1984: 241–95; Flitterman-Lewis, 1990; Hayward, 2005).

Soviet cinema and **German expressionism** with, respectively, their characteristic editing and **lighting** practices greatly influenced this first avant-garde, as did the surrealist movement and **psychoanalysis**. This avant-garde went through three different stages: subjective cinema (showing the interior life of a character, as in *La Souriante Mme Beudet*, Dulac, 1923), pure cinema (film signifying in and of itself through its plasticity and rhythms, as in *Entr'acte*, Clair, 1924) and surrealist cinema (a collision of the first two stages with the intention of giving filmic representation to both the rationality and the irrationality of the unconscious and dream state, as in *La Coquille et le clergyman*, Dulac, 1927 and *Un chien andalou*, Buñuel, 1929).

Since that period, other influences have also come into play. And, interestingly, once again there are three dominant types: first, what Wollen (1982: 92) calls the *self-reflexive avant-garde* (predominantly American), or what Andrew (1984: 124) terms the *American romantic*; second, the avowedly *political avant-garde* (Wollen, 1982: 92) or the *European structural materialist* film (Andrew, 1984: 125); finally, the *narrative avant-garde* of the cinema of *écriture* (Andrew, 1984: 126).

Where the American type is concerned, the major influences are the works of what are now called modernist painters but which are in fact those of the avant-garde movements of the early part of the twentieth century (see above). These films have an abstract formalism displaying a self-reflexivity that brings them close in their concerns to the pure cinema of the 1920s avant-garde (as in Maya Deren's *Meshes of the Afternoon*, 1943). As for the second type of avant-garde film, the major influences were Bertolt Brecht and his theory of **distanciation** and Sergei Eisenstein's montage theory. The film practice invoked here is one whereby the film displays its very structures and materiality – that is, it makes an exhibition of its signifying practices, draws attention to the artifice of cinema. Point of view and narrative structure do not exist. So the spectator is under no illusion that what s/he is watching is a two-dimensional projection of the process of filmmaking. This is what Godard termed making political films politically. This cinema reflects the revolutionary role of the avant-garde: assailing **ideology** by revealing the structures that put it up and keep it in place (as in Godard's *Weekend* and *La Chinoise*, both 1967). The third type more readily recalls the first and last stages of the 1920s avant-garde but also has some parentage with materialist film. Here the narrative avant-garde works with, or on cinematic **codes**, bringing the theory of counter-cinema into practice. This cinema denaturalises cinema to show that dominant cinematic language is not the only cinematic language and that new modes of subjectivity are possible, including that of the spectator as a producer of the text (see **agency**). Again, this is a predominantly European cinema and, unsurprisingly perhaps, because it addresses issues such as identification, representation, screen–spectator relations and subjectivity as well as production practices (film as work or labour) it is also a cinema associated with feminist filmmakers (e.g., Chantal Akerman, *Jeanne Dielman*, 23 *Quai du Commerce*, 1080 *Bruxelles*, 1975; Marguerite Duras, *India Song*, 1975; Agnès Varda, *Sans toit ni loi*, 1985).

See also **art cinema, counter-cinema, experimental film**.

For further reading see Andrew (1984: 119–27), Arthur (2005), Brakage (1992), Flitterman-Lewis (1990), Gidal (1989), Lapsley and Westlake (1988: 181–213), MacDonald (1993), Sitney (1974, 1978).

BLACK CINEMA – UK

Black cinema is a term used to refer to films made by British Black filmmakers and which extends to British Indian-Asian **directors**. Perhaps

because British cinema itself does not have a supremely first-world track record in film production, we should not be too surprised to hear that within UK cinema, Black cinema is, in relation to its counterpart in the USA, quite a small affair. It is, however, a significant cinema although its roots go back only as far as the 1950s and 1960s. If we consider that the major waves of immigration to the UK from either the British colonies or former colonies occurred after the Second World War, then it becomes clearer still that since diasporic communities only came into existence in a significant way at that time, it is hardly surprising that a diasporic cinema should not begin to emerge until that period. What has to surprise, undoubtedly, is that presently British Black cinema, in terms of feature films, has not grown significantly in numbers since that time, even though there are a number of international successes (see below).

Karen Ross (1996: 53) provides us with some revealing statistics as to the status and availability of Black cinema products. Between 1988 and 1992, the total number of Black films available for hire or archival viewing only grew from 130 to 204 (two-thirds of which are in **documentary** format and therefore are not counted as feature films). Seventy-four films in four years – especially those four years during which Black issues were very much to the fore in British consciousness – is a small output particularly if we consider that only a handful are full feature films. Black cinema certainly became a presence during the 1980s and was born out of a governmental response to the civil disobedience of the late 1970s and early 1980s. The many so-called riots of the early 1980s led to numerous inquiries, the results of which made it abundantly clear that Black communities felt seriously disenfranchised and without a voice. Public sector financing at a local and governmental level, including grants from the British Film Institute (BFI), was invested into five workshops around the country in major cities where inner-city strife had been at its most vocal. At the same time as the public sector was assisting in financing the workshops, the birth of Channel Four in 1982, with its remit to represent the voices of minorities, meant that there were outlets for the workshops in the form of commissioned work for the channel. Sankofa and the Black Audio Film Collective (established 1983, but now defunct) remain the best known of these workshops. The workshops were concerned as much with film practice as with debates on representation, including historical representation and issues of identity and hybridity. It is perhaps for this reason that much of their production cuts across or is a fusion of documentary and fiction. Given the workshops' ethos, it is not difficult to see how certain film theorists and practitioners have identified this cinematic practice

with that of Third Cinema (for a fuller debate of that point see **Third Cinema** entry).

In 1982, Channel Four launched its production company, Channel Film Four Films, later to be renamed Film4 (1998). Film4, the former UK Film Council (UKFC) now absorbed into the British Film Institute (BFI) and the BBC are some of the significant backers of British Black cinema. Their impact is discussed later below.

Before this public sector's fairly modest provision of financing for projects came into being, however, the output of British Black cinema was very tiny indeed. Among the few filmmakers around, we can list Lloyd Reckord, Horace Ové and Lionel Ngakane (a Black South African in exile who has been claimed by the British as one of their first Black filmmakers). These filmmakers directed a handful of feature and non-feature films, during the period 1960–80, and largely financed their projects themselves. Most of these films are available through the BFI National Film Archive. All, without exception, deal with the question of marginalisation and race relations – thereby establishing a tradition that would, to a degree, be perpetuated in the later cinema of the 1980s and 1990s. Reckord's *Ten Bob in Winter* (1963) tells the story of African-Caribbean immigrants newly arrived in the UK. Ngakane's *Jemima and Johnny* (1966) is about an inter-racial friendship between a Black girl and a White boy that survives the racist hostility of the street upon which they live by being kept secret in the basement of a ruined house. Ové's documentary ***cinéma-vérité*** style informs his early shorts *Baldwin's Nigger* (1969) and *Reggae* (1970), as well as his first feature film *Pressure* (1975), which is heralded as the first Black British feature film. This film tells the story of an English-born son of Trinidadian parents. Alienated from his White friends and the White values that surround him, this unemployed youth is drawn into the world of thieving and smoking dope. Like other Black youths in his community he becomes the target of police harassment. As a result of all this cumulative pressure, it is not long before he joins his older brother and gets involved with Black Power.

The 1980s to the present day and a new era of Black cinema

As a BFI production, Menelik Shabazz's *Burning an Illusion* (1981) was the first feature film to come out of the new climate in British Black filmmaking. It is, therefore, a landmark film even though, as we shall see, in some ways it continues the earlier **realist** tradition that was very

much based in the present and not in considerations of history. It is a landmark film in that it sets an agenda – both by what it includes and what it omits – of issues that will concern the politicised Black cinema of the 1980s and 1990s. The film tells the story of a young Black woman, a secretary who, as a result of her Black boyfriend's brutal arrest and subsequent unjust imprisonment, changes from being apolitical into an active participant in Black politics. Her political coming-out is both one of style and politics. As a marker of her new political consciousness, she rejects her White-based dress-codes and straightened hair and adopts an Afrocentric dress and hairstyle. She gives up reading Barbara Cartland and takes on board (at the suggestion of her boyfriend) the writings of Malcolm X. What distinguishes this film from its precedents is the fact that it is a woman-based point of view. What makes it similar is its basis in the contemporary. What makes it ground-breaking is its broader address of race, **class** and **gender** and its attempts to show, as Lola Young puts it (1996: 155), 'that relationships are constructed within a racialized social context'. Conflicts of gender are present for a first time in this film even though, as Young (1996: 159) points out, the centrality of this issue disappears towards the end of the film and is subsumed under the question of racial politics.

The debates on and practices of issues of representation were closely interlinked and were a founding ethos of the workshop production of the 1980s and 1990s. It could be argued, therefore, that the nature of the film work that followed *Burning an Illusion* took up and explored many of the issues raised (either by their presence or absence) in this landmark film. But it also has to be said that even though outside funding was now available and the Black filmmakers workshops were producing challenging as well as successful films, the amounts were not sufficient to allow for a boom in feature film production and so Black filmmakers still found that if they were to make films, then for the most part these films would have to be shorts, more precisely documentaries. As a result, there was not a widespread or mass audience knowledge about this new Black cinema (as opposed to what was happening in the United States). Work remained pretty much perceived as independent **art cinema**. John Akomfrah's film career to date best exemplifies this problematic. A member of the Black Audio Collective (BAC) and subsequent independent filmmaker who set up Smoking Dogs Films with co-BAC members Lina Gopaul and David Lawson, his films have been both too few and far between and for the most part short docu-art films (19 to date). His *Handsworth Songs* (1980, BAC produced) is a 60-minute essay on race and disorder in Britain. The film examines the historical, social and political contexts of racial unrest and

seeks, through that broad and historicised optic, to explain why the current anger and disillusionment felt within the Black communities are running so high. Akomfrah's *Seven Songs for Malcolm X* (1993, BAC produced) is a 52-minute multi-layered poetic-documentary on the Black leader who was assassinated in 1965 (see also in this context his made-for-TV **documentary** on Martin Luther King, *The March*, 2013). Of his films to date, Akomfrah has directed just two narrative full feature films: *Speak Like a Child* (1998), an intense story about three friends in a children's home in Northumbria; and *The Nine Muses* (2012), a multi-layered film that reflects on diasporic history by weaving documentary footage of Black people and Asians coming to work in the UK with shots of a solitary Black figure in the Alaskan wilderness. Akomfrah's experimental work, whether documentary or fiction, pushes the boundaries of filmmaking and consistently questions the way in which we narrate stories. Migration and memory are two key themes that run throughout his films and the way in which they function (for good and ill) to construct Black identity (see his recent documentary on the cultural theorist Stuart Hall, *The Stuart Hall Project*, 2013).

In a different way, Isaac Julien (who was part of the Sankofa Collective for three years) has limited his production mostly to docu-shorts and film installations. But he has made some features. Perhaps best known for his highly successful feature film *Young Soul Rebels* (1991), for which he won the International Critics' Prize at Cannes, he has also made what might be considered art-style experimental documentaries on important personas in Black history. *Looking for Langston* (1989) is a 45-minute essay on the private world of Langston Hughes, a founding member of the Harlem Renaissance and a homosexual who had to hide his **sexuality** in a climate of disapproval, within both White society and Black – where Black manhood could not be **queer**. In 1997, Isaac Julien made *Frantz Fanon: Black Skin White Mask* (*sic*), a remarkable composite film made up from documentary footage and re-enacted scenes from the life of this major Black intellectual of the 1950s and 1960s. Julien has continued in this vein of docu-art short films and screen installations, of which his most recent, *Playtime* (2014), is dedicated to the memory of Stuart Hall. He was nominated for the Turner Prize (2001, for *Long Road to Mazatlan* and *Vagabondia*). His films (virtually all independently funded or commissioned) are meditations on the culture of diaspora as well as masculinity, queerness and desire (see his documentary on Derek Jarman, *Derek*, 2008). And his film practice can best be described as that of a **transnational** subject committed to a diasporic cinematic language (as with his docu-fiction art film *Paradiso Omeros*, 2004; or again his installation piece *Ten Thousand Waves*, 2010).

Black women filmmakers are also present in equal numbers, although, because of an even greater lack of **finance** where their projects are concerned, few have broken through to making a full feature film as yet. Maureen Blackwood's *The Passion of Remembrance* (1986) was made with Isaac Julien and was the first full feature-length film to come out of a Black workshop, in this instance Sankofa. Elsewhere, Blackwood has mostly made shorts including *Perfect Image?* (1988) and *Home Away from Home* (1993). Other Black women filmmakers to have made shorts include Martina Attile (*Dreaming Rivers*, 1988), Ngozi Onwurah (*The Body Beautiful*, 1990) and Amanda Holiday (*Miss Queencake*, 1991).

Onwurah was the first British Black woman filmmaker to release a feature-length film, *Welcome II the Terrordome* (1995), a hard-hitting political action **thriller**, set in a futuristic city, about the tensions between Blacks and Whites in the wake of a child's death. More recently, five other women filmmakers – Clare Anyiam-Osigwe, Amma Asante, Destiny Ekaragha, Rungano Nyoni and debbie tucker green – have directed award-winning feature-length films. In this context, see Anyiam-Osigwe's *No Shade*, 2018, about colourism; Asante's **social-realist** *Way of Life*, 2004, **costume drama** *Belle*, 2013, and a period romantic drama, *A United Kingdom*, 2016, set in the late-1940s, about an inter-racial marriage between a British White woman and the Black African king of Bechuanaland – all three are fact-based narratives; Ekaragha's **comedy** *Gone Too Far!*, 2013; tucker green's all-Black cast *Second Coming*, 2014, about marital difficulties; Nyoni's *I Am Not a Witch*, 2018, about witch accusations against children in Zambia. However, Black women filmmakers account for only 2% of Britain's filmmakers and are kept even more on the margins of British film industry than their male counterparts. Difficulty in securing public finance to kick-start production fund-raising for a feature-length film is a primary obstacle. For example, Anyiam-Osigwe had to set up her own production company; Nyoni went down the co-production route with four countries; Ekaragha's film was produced by the boutique company Poisson Rouge Pics; tucker green's by the independent production company Hillbilly Films; Asante's features, however, in respective order, were assisted by public funding in the form of the UK Film Council, the BFI and the BBC. And in 2021, tucker green's *ear for eye*, about the Black British experience and its links to both American history and the larger issue of imperialism and exploitation, received funding from the BFI and the BBC (it was simultaneously released on screen and on BBC2).

In recent years there has been a growing space for Black authors to have their scripts adapted to film (either for screen or for television release). One such, written by screenwriter/playwright Theresa Ikoko, is *Rocks* (Gavron, 2019) – a coming-of-age ensemble drama with at its

core the story of a teenager's desperate efforts, with the loving support of her friends, to cope for herself and her younger brother after their mother abandons them. Another route to the screen is exemplified by scriptwriter/director Joseph Adesunloye, who set up his own film company to make *White Colour Black* (2016) which was eventually streamed on Curzon Home Cinema (2021). The film's focus is on belonging, of disaffection and displacement in two separate cultures (British and Senegalese). A successful London photographer Leke leads a frenzied and rather shallow existence. He is called 'home' to Senegal to bury his father; he returns to a culture that is now alien to him, but in which, eventually, he will find acceptance and fulfilment.

What unites all the productions in this new wave of Black British cinema is a desire to speak not *for* the diasporas but from *within* them and to reveal the heterogeneity of Black communities – to undo the **myth** of sameness and at the same time give images that do not show Black people as unmitigated and powerless victims of racism, but as citizens with all the complexities of life before them, including choices of political awareness (in this light, see the hard-hitting urban violence, realist film *Bullet Boy*, Dibb, 2004). The issues addressed involve representation and truth in representation, belonging and not belonging. Thus, the power of these productions is in the frankness of the representation, not in the disguising of bad qualities to enhance only the good; and in the exploration of the struggles attached to senses of belonging. This consciousness about diasporas and identities has led some film critics and filmmakers (e.g., John Akomfrah) to align this film production with **Third Cinema**. Furthermore, history is often a core element to these Black films. Gurinder Chadha's feature film *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993) is exemplary of this tendency. It tells the story of a small community of Asians living in Birmingham. A day trip is organised to Blackpool by a worker at the Saheli's women's centre. These women of all different generations head off to Blackpool. As the day progresses their various tales unfold. One woman is the victim of a wife-beating husband; another is pregnant by her Black boyfriend who only agrees to share the responsibility for the baby right at the end of the film; older women express their weariness at always doing for their family and dream of more fanciful ways of spending their days. Chadha reveals her men and women characters in all their complexities and multiplicities at the same time as she addresses questions of identity and belonging. Chadha remains committed to the above issues (history, identity and belonging), consistently blending them with comedy, a combination which has led her to a number of international successes (*Bend it Like Beckham*, 2002, and *Bride and Prejudice*, 2004). On the whole, however, Black British cinema

is still sadly small in terms of production (however, Black acting talent is increasingly coming to the fore and gaining international recognition and fame – even if actors must often travel to Hollywood to find work). To date, therefore, Black British cinema has remained very much an **independent cinema** that has not managed to merge into **mainstream**. Chadha is one exception, as is the writer-director Asif Kapadia with his first feature film, the award-winning *Warrior* (2001) and his widely acclaimed (and top-grossing) documentaries *Senna* (2010) and *Amy* (2015). Another exception, this time marking a cross-over from art cinema to mainstream, is Steve McQueen (a Turner prize winner in 1999). His feature films include *Hunger* (2008), *Shame* (2011) and *Widows* (2018). He was the first Black director ever to win the Best Picture Oscar, for his film *12 Years a Slave* (2013). All four films, incidentally, were in part financed by Channel Four or Film4 which speaks to the continued importance of British television's contribution to Black cinema.

In this context, lately, there has been move by Black filmmakers to exhibit their films on television often with a strong political voice and an **intersectional** approach to Black people's history in Britain. One such is Steve McQueen's *Small Axe* anthology of five films (2020 on BBC1). It provides a clear exposition of the conditions West Indian communities in London had to face in the 1960s through to the 1980s. Three of these films had theatre release (*Lovers Rock*, *Mangrove* and *Red White and Blue*); *Lovers Rock* and *Mangrove* were official selections for Cannes 2020. What emerges from the five films is the extent to which racism is a White problem (whose starting place is the negative archetypes ingrained in the White consciousness and which date back to the slavery trade, colonialism and imperialist **ideology**). The subject-topics of *Small Axe* cover historical events of the 1960s–80s and range from police harassment of ordinary Black citizens endeavouring to make a living, to police brutality and random arrests followed by imprisonment, to a determination by some London Councils to deprive Black youth of their education rights by transferring a disproportionate number into schools for the 'educationally subnormal'. These grim events are balanced out by representations that celebrate British-Caribbean culture and the Black communities' ways of living. McQueen's documentary series *Uprising* (2021, BBC1) deals with three intertwined events from 1981: the New Cross fire which killed 13 Black teenagers and which was poorly investigated by the police, the subsequent Black People's Day of Action in response to this lack of commitment from the police to discover the truth and, coming on the back of these tensions, the Brixton riots which flared up in response to the police's increased use of 'stop and search' (the infamous Sus Law).