

Abstracts and brief curricula

Philip ROSEN

“Time, History and Medium Specificity in Kracauer”

Kracauer's posthumous *History: Last Things before the Last* finds that the temporality and objects of history are analogous to those of photography. Furthermore, as in his *Theory of Film*, properties attributed to photography are extended in various ways to cinema. Thus, the history book includes not only analogies between historical objects and photographic objects, but historiographic structure and filmic structure. It has been suggested that his conception of historical temporality anticipates contemporary theories of time as a disjunctive and multiple.

This paper explores how Kracauer's theory of history intersects with his distinctive film-theoretical concept of medium specificity, with attention to the type of temporality he attributes both to these media and to historiography. I will suggest he employs a logic of the exceptional as a component of his critique of linear temporality. The extraordinary has long been of concern in aesthetics, which has often explored the status of the extraordinary work, artist, period, etc. But in Kracauer, I will suggest, a logic of the exception underlies his conception of the uniqueness of historiography and its temporality, and therefore has implications for the theory of cinema as he sees it.

Philip Rosen is Professor of Modern Culture and Media at Brown University, where he is also affiliated faculty in the Departments of American Studies and English. He is author of *Change Mummified: Cinema, Historicity, Theory*, and editor of the standard compilation of structuralist and poststructuralist film theory, *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology*. He has written on a wide range of subjects related to film and media theory and history.

Josep María CATALÀ DOMENECH

“The Shape of the Event: Memory and the Documentary Gaze”

Starting from the Hayden White ideas about the complexity of the events that can be called postmodern, I want to analyse how the documentary gaze, that exceeds the documentary film itself, shapes the "historical" events and how through this form we can identify fundamental questions about the representation of reality and the conversion of this reality into visual memory that can be retrieved. This visual way of recalling, essential to the documentary gaze, works in postmodernity through multiple types of archive which allegorize the various forms taken by memory in a technologically saturated world.

Josep M. Català Domenech is current Dean and Professor of Film and TV in the School of Communication of Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. He is the author of books such as *La puesta en imágenes: conceptos de dirección cinematográfica* (2001), *La imagen compleja* (2006), *La forma de lo real* (2007), *Pasión y conocimiento* (2008)

and *Estética del ensayo. De Montaigne a Godard* (2014). He also coordinates the Master on Creative Documentary in the same university.

Malin WAHLBERG

“Scarred Voices, Speaking Bodies: Memory Work in Documentary Re-Enactment”

Roland Barthes refers to speech as the theatrical and unpredictable other of the written word, which is freed of the former’s “tactical” feature. The semiotic conclusion is that the written word introduces “a new image-repertoire, that of ‘thought’” (Barthes transl. Coverdale: 3-7). In documentary film and media, the experience of first person testimony, processes of recollection and forged memory work present us with an “aesthetics of ambiguity” (Vaughan, 1999), which upsets, if not rules out, the logic of Barthes’ binary. The documentary attraction of framed speech, or of an unfolding confession, tends to be invoked by the very process of framing, camera inscription, and editing where the spontaneous gesture transforms into a controlled motif and a screen event open to the viewers’ desires and anxieties. What is often at stake in moving images is precisely what Jean Epstein described as “a certain degree of contradiction between image and speech, of falsehood between the eye and the ear”, and, we may add, between what the person says and how she performs, between the spoken words and the character of the voice (Epstein, 1955).

The aim of my paper will be to exemplify documentary approaches to memory work, and, in particular, strategies of re-enactment that provide the means to escape the conventions of “the talking head” or of observational cinema. Instead, closer attention is paid to the unfolding of speech, the drama of body language, or the telling moments of silence and hesitation that invoke memory work as a particular mode of involuntary storytelling, marked by the vulnerability of the subject and her ghosts of the past. References to scholarly work on the aesthetics and ethics of documentary film and media (Renov, Marks, Lebow, Piotrowska, Wahlberg) will meet with Epstein’s rarely acknowledged notion of phonogénie which I will put in dialog with the gallery films of the Swedish artist Tova Mozard, in particular *Stora Scenen/The Great Scene* (2011) and *Repertoar/Repertoire* (2013).

Malin Wahlberg is an Associate Professor in Cinema Studies at the Department for Media Studies, IMS, at Stockholm University. She is the author of *Documentary Time. Film and Phenomenology* (2008) in the Visible Evidence Series, and of essays and book chapters on subjects including aesthetic theory, science cinema, video art, and documentary in the context of public TV and broadcasting culture. In 2013, she organized the conference Visible Evidence XX in Stockholm.

Efrén CUEVAS ÁLVAREZ

“The Archive Effect in the Appropriation of Home Movies”

This paper intends to explore the way the archive is used as mnemonic tool in contemporary documentaries, with a special focus on a specific type of archive: home movies. Following the proposals of the recent book of Jaimie Baron, *The Archive*

Effect: Found Footage and the Audiovisual Experience of History (2014), I would analyze how the double disparity –temporal and intentional– proposed by Baron affects our understanding of home movies in recent documentaries. In the final part, I will examine briefly Sarah Polley’s film, *Stories We Tell* (2012), where we are faced with a blending of real and fake home movies as the main visual strategy to “remember” the past.

Efrén Cuevas Álvarez is Associate Professor at Universidad de Navarra. One of his main areas of research deals with home movies, autobiographical documentaries and family memoir. Related to this area, he has co-edited books about filmmakers Alan Berliner (2002) and Ross McElwee (2008); edited the book *La casa abierta. El cine doméstico y sus reciclajes contemporáneos* (2010); and published articles in journals such as *Biography*, *Studies in Documentary Film*, or *Archivos de la Filmoteca*.

Stefano ODORICO

“Contemporary Non-fiction Forms: The Interactive Documentary between Memories and Transmedia Storytelling”

Institutional, technological and cultural developments have greatly transformed the practice of ‘watching and producing films’ over the last decade. Internet convergence and multi-platform storytelling have become important requirements for the documentary film form. In this age of convergence, new media position moving images on various platforms and screens, modifying the way how cinematic stories are usually told. This presentation will discuss how transmedia documentary can offer new spaces of participation to private and collective memories.

Stefano Odorico is Associate Senior Lecturer in Media at Leeds Trinity University (UK), where his work focuses primarily on interactive trans-media platforms. Before moving to Leeds Trinity University, he also lectured at University of Bremen (Germany), Leipzig University (Germany), University College Cork (Ireland) and Queen’s University Belfast (UK). He is also co-founder and member of editorial team of *Alphaville: Journal of Film and Screen Media*.

Sonia GARCÍA LÓPEZ

“Creative memory, creative documentaries: The power of imagination in the figuration of the real”

This contribution seeks to explore the creative, imaginative strategies that contemporary documentary brings into play when addressing a subjective, non-visible, non-quantifiable process such as personal memory. Most specifically, it aims at discussing the implications of the crisis of the analogical trace, derived from the consolidation of the digital image, on contemporary documentary, a media form traditionally conceiving archive as an ideal means for the articulation of the politics of the past.

Bringing into play an interdisciplinary approach to media representations which includes cognitive sciences, philosophy, and film analysis, and taking *The missing image* (Rithy Panh, 2013) as a case study, I will stress that the imaginative and creative

dimension of memory requires means of representation transcending the recording of the real, and introducing creative, poetic strategies able to give account of the subjective dimension of reality.

To conclude, I will propose a discussion about the potential and the limits of creativity and imagination to articulate alternatives to the official, hegemonic discourses controlling the means of image production, and frequently imposing a monological, unidirectional meaning of images, and thus reducing their ambivalent nature to a one single interpretative dimension.

Sonia García López is Assistant Professor at Universidad Carlos III (Madrid). She is the author of *Spain is US. La guerra civil española en el cine del Popular Front (1936-1939)*, and *Ernst Lubitsch. Ser o no ser*. She co-edited with Laura Gómez Vaquero *Piedra, papel y tijera. El collage en el cine documental*. Her main interests as a researcher include the relationships between film and history, avant-garde, and documentary film.

Lourdes ESQUEDA VERANO

“Representing Time: The concept of *durée* in André Bazin’s Film Realism”

It is a common place in film theory to think of André Bazin when reflecting about the temporal dimension of cinema. The specific emphasis that Bazin placed on time –from its ontological understanding of cinema to his interpretation of many film styles– helps us understand the role that cinematic time plays in his realist theory of cinema. In this paper I aim to explore this link between realism and time in cinema in the writings of André Bazin, focusing on his concept of *durée*, which he understood as a restitution of real time in cinema. I will conclude with a brief reflection on the relationship between duration and observational documentaries to point out how this type of films may exemplify Bazin’s understanding of time and *durée*.

Lourdes Esqueda Verano is Teaching Assistant and Ph.D. candidate at Universidad de Navarra. Her dissertation deals with André Bazin’s film realism and its contemporary reception. She is a member of the TiMeDoc Research Group. Her main research interests are Film Realism, French Philosophy and Social Cinema.