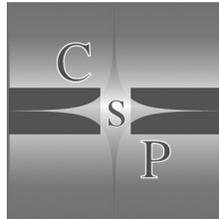


Realities and Remediations

Realities and Remediations:
The Limits of Representation

Edited by

Elizabeth Wells and Tamar Jeffers McDonald



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Realities and Remediations: The Limits of Representation, edited by Elizabeth Wells
and Tamar Jeffers McDonald

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INTRODUCTION

REALITIES AND REMEDIATIONS: FILM AT THE LIMITS OF REPRESENTATION

This collection of essays emerges out of a realisation that the question of representation in cinema as a phenomenon in its own right has rarely been addressed in film criticism. This seems a curious oversight since film criticism from its inception has always sought to put representation - of particular groups in society, of themes, ideologies and generic conventions - at the heart of its enterprise. In this anthology many of those thematic aspects are addressed, but beyond that, there is a concern with structures and apparatus: with technical questions of how representations are put into place, through mise-en-scene and editing so the ways that what we know and see are transformed and manipulated through technology, literally *re-mediated*.

This concern with representation as a whole appears even more urgent when one considers our hyper-visual environment, in which no image seems to exist which cannot be exported, disseminated or commodified in a matter of seconds. The very idea that we can be speaking off “limits”, as if there is anything that lies outside of our ability to represent it seems redundant, even fatuous. After all, this is the era of MySpace and YouTube, in which home videos showing casual violence filmed on mobile phones (a phenomenon the media have dubbed “happy slapping”) rubs shoulders with bootlegged footage of Saddam Hussein’s execution, and much that is considered unacceptable outstrips the mediators’ ability to regulate it. Television delights us with series showing celebrities brought low through humiliating antics, offering a level of schadenfreude many viewers find addictive. Our secular culture reveals an enduring capacity to be scandalised, most notably when *Jerry Springer, the Opera* (2001) caused uproar by representing Christ wearing a nappy; on screen too, Mel Gibson’s *The Passion of the Christ* (2004) shocked cinema audiences with its visceral depiction of the crucifixion.

Elsewhere film continues to challenge, both in the arena of documentary realism (recent examples include Jonathan Caouette’s *Tarnation* (2004), about mental illness; Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky’s *Paradise Lost* (1996) which

deals with child murders in Arkansas, or *Capturing the Friedmans* (Andrew Jarecki, 2003), which documents a family whose father is accused of sexual abuse) and fiction. Sexual explicitness and the detailing of sexual violence have been taken to new levels in recent films such as Michael Winterbottom's *Nine Songs* (2004), which stirred controversy for its liberal display of unsimulated sex; Michael Haneke's *The Piano Teacher* (2001), which documents a repressed middle-aged woman's savage masochistic desires and Gaspar Noe's *Irreversible* (2002), which features a ten-minute rape scene. Extremes of violence and horror continued to be explored in an ever more adventurous global cinema: Takashi Miike's *Ichii the Killer* (2001), recent Australian outback horror *Wolf Creek* (2005) and low-budget British offering, Shane Meadows' *Dead Man's Shoes* (2004) all probe this question of how far our jaded seen-it-all appetites can be revived.

Yet as far as these visual narratives can take us, the moral and ethical discourses that follow seem to suggest that the question of limits has by no means been answered. Despite the apparent sophistication with which we negotiate our visual literacy, questions of ethics, access and taboo still delimit what may be said, revealed and represented. In this anthology we examine "limits" in all its possible permutations: in the sense of texts that push boundaries but also in the sense of what audiences may be permitted to see and interpret. Some of the films discussed here may be considered to be "limit" texts in the sense that they are a kind of barometer of public consciousness, representing that which refuses to be contained and challenging formal constraints by which we determine inside from outside, private from public, sacred from profane.

In acknowledging that the act of re-presentation is always political and a mediation of power, these essays illustrate the complex ways in which images of the world and definitions of reality are "ideologically mobilized" to define, legitimise or contest the "existing order of relations of domination, subordination between classes, races and sexes" (SUNY Oneonta). Pertinent examples may be found in Hannah Hamad's study of the "deracination" of Eddie Murphy's screen persona (and the subsequent "ethnicisation" of CGI-generated sidekicks in films such as *Dr Doolittle* and *Shrek*) or Helene Charlery's exploration of the ways in which the Hays Code restricted and delimited racial representation in Classical Hollywood cinema.

Perhaps one of the questions we should be asking is how far is it film's role to challenge our notions of what can be represented? Certainly the post-war challenge to realism is one of the key ways that film has rejected what Jean-Francois Lyotard has called the "solace of good forms" (Lyotard 1984, 81). For many critics, both of film theory and theory generally, art must establish a move

away from consensus - the rules of what has *been done*, or in other words convention - in order not to fall merely into a world view that seeks refuge in ideology.

Critic Thomas Docherty traces this permutation of consensus back to the Heideggerian sense of an ancient gathering or community: for the modernists, Docherty argues, the external world is vivified through a mediating “presiding consciousness or subject which defined itself against its ulterior world”. For example in Joyce’s “epiphanies”, Proustian “souvenirs involontaires” and Woolf’s insistence on *looking within* to find reality, what is to be “seen and felt is something constitutive not of the objective world of things but rather something constitutive of the inner subjective life of consciousness faced with its contemporary reality.” (Docherty 1996, 20) In other words, with respect to the “thing” being represented, modernism paradoxically called on the artist to “descend within himself” (1996, 20). It follows then that such an emphasis on interiority in the bourgeois humanist tradition of representation has a direct implication on the way that all external reality and material history is mediated; in collapsing or reducing objective experience into the aestheticizing structures of the linguistic self, the very “thingness” of things is lost. In this collection there is an emphasis on restoring this lost specificity to our experience of things. To paraphrase Brian McHale, in the shift of dominant in our cultural episteme from the epistemological (broadly the consciousness of modernism) to the ontological (the consciousness of what, for want of a better term, we may class as postmodernism), we must sacrifice our hunger for the abstract and conceptual and look beyond it for “the sensuous”. In order to respect the historicity and uniqueness of the object, criticism should try and resist what Docherty calls “the tendency to translate things into signs, ontology into epistemology, prematurely” (1996, 27). In mediating the materiality of history through an individualised consciousness, modernism and its critical developments (structuralism for example) substitute “form” for force and representation becomes merely an “aesthetic” expression of that legitimizing consensus, “unable to assume the status of the historical ‘event’, much less that of the political event” (27).

Thus, while a collection of essays on representation in film acknowledges this bind of complicity - i.e. that every act of criticism co-opts a work of art and re-presents it in order to be decoded and “liberated” into understanding, possibly smoothing out its inconsistencies and eliding differences - a conscious effort has been made to return to the “sensuousness” of film as a phenomenological and material artform. Many of these papers are interested in the use of editing, both in directing how the audience sees and how this constructs or interferes with our notions of (perceptual and cultural) realism and the ways in which it engages our senses as bodies in participation, not merely as

passive onlookers. Such approaches problematise the traditional status of criticism's epistemological function, and return us to our bodies as perceiving, material beings. There is also an emphasis on sound and its relationship to visual narrative, or what Docherty calls the relationship of "discourse to figure" (1996, 151). In both modern arthouse and mainstream cinema the acknowledgment of the audience as the watching, perceiving "I/eye" is integral to the meaning-making process leads to this dynamic being put "on trial". For example, Greg Singh's study of *Snake of June* explores the problematic juxtaposition of sound and image, in which the manipulation of muzak and artificial sound serves to emphasise the film's rejection of realism and to reveal our involvement (as audience) in the technocratic nature of society and its alienating nightmares. Here film criticism concerns itself with those interfaces between what can be represented and what can be experienced and communicated liminally, through senses other than the visual. This is also explored in Ian Hunter's essay on *A Clockwork Orgy*, in which he posits a notion of "flow" in which the viewer's experience becomes synchronous with the action on-screen, and in Greg Tuck's exploration of our bodily response to film, which, he suggests, cannot be "explained away" by a traditional film criticism based on semiotics.

In such papers we are confronted with what may be described as a post-structuralist approach to art which struggles with the prioritization in semiotics of the "'readerly' over the merely 'visible' in a way which denies the visibility of the visible, always translating it into a material whose essence is that it can be processed as 'text'" (Docherty 1996, 155). Where film itself engages with and pushes the limits of what can be represented, criticism should follow, even as its role may be to trace what is already vanishing from our line of sight rather than to fix it in perpetuity.

In this regard then, this study humbly approaches representation by way of its limits and impossibilities so as, paradoxically, to "see better". As Lyotard writes "Lire est entendre et non pas voir" (1971, 217). This paradox may be seen from both a Kantian and postmodern perspective, as a recognition of the artistic striving for the "sublime", that which is unrepresentable, limited and beyond immediate cognition. In the *Critique of Judgement*, Kant states that the feeling of the sublime "may appear... to contravene the ends of our power of judgment... and to be, as it were, an outrage on the imagination" (Kant, 1, ii, sec. 23). For Lyotard, the beauty of the imagination lies precisely in its inadequacy to match the concept: we may have an idea of the world and understand its "totality" in the abstract, "but we do not have the capacity to show an example of it... We can conceive the infinitely great, the infinitely powerful, but every presentation of an object destined to 'make visible' this

absolute greatness or power appears to us painfully inadequate". Yet the very fact that we continue to strive after this impossibility gives us the "little technical expertise"... to present the fact that the unrepresentable exists" (1984, 78). We are back to the notion of "force" again in the sense of desire which defers the gratification of "good forms". For Lyotard, art will abandon its nostalgia for presence in order to *see* better: "it will enable us to see only by making it impossible to see; it will please only by causing pain" (78). This pursuit of the avant-garde in art is a pursuit of reflective judgment, a search for rules which do not already exist (David, *Paideia*). As part of this project then, film criticism as a form of hermeneutics must not aim to anticipate or foreclose this process of figuration and avoid imposing a consensus which (ironically for this study) only serves to limit film's signifying possibilities.

The book is organised to reflect both thematic and critical continuities: the only remit given to contributors involved thinking about the nature of "limits"; other than that, contributors were free to interpret it as they wished. The majority of the films under discussion are Hollywood in origin - perhaps an acknowledgement not merely of the pervasive nature of this cinema but the ideological tensions inherent in its representations - although Greg Singh's study of *Snake of June* is a notable exception. In terms of approaches these essays taken together represent a broad view of critical analysis in film studies; thus thematic concerns about race sit alongside those focusing on technique, mise-en-scene and editing, this last being a notable absence from the traditional remit of film studies. The book's title thus acknowledges the interdependence of form and content in any attempt to address representation in art. The study of remediation recognises, in the words of Graeme Burton, that "inseparability between processes of mediation and constructions of reality" (Burton 2005, 202). In addressing how our access to images is mediated and remediated through cinematic technologies, these essays problematise questions about transparency and our relationship to reality as a potential "chimera" (202).

The book addresses this above concern in the opening section on "Editing/Remediations". With "The pleasure of invisible sex: Cinematic Meaning, sexual 'metaphors' and the phenomenology of editing in Classical Hollywood Cinema", Greg Tuck proceeds from a discussion about censorship in Hays Code-era film to a wider reflection on how meaning is communicated to an audience when representations are circumscribed by normative limits. Tuck adopts a position - echoed elsewhere in Singh and Hunter - which eschews traditional hermeneutical models based in semiotics, for an exploration and privileging of the material and sensuous response that a spectator engages in whilst watching a film. Tuck's contention - that limiting what we can access visually and literally only serves to free our imagination - sheds light on the ways in which edits can communicate precisely through what they leave out or

excise from our visual field. Returning to Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological notion of communication as ways of "singing the world", Tuck explores the way that Classical Hollywood-era films such as *From Here to Eternity* can be understood as forms of signification that through their demonstration of voice and feeling, go *beyond* language to mobilise our embodied understanding of what is being portrayed on screen.

This examination of the phenomenological effects of film production is complemented in Singh's study "Remote Control: Exposure and the limits of sound design in Tsukamoto Shinya's *A Snake of June*" in which his discussion of the film's soundtrack focuses on the relevance of sensual and kinaesthetic signifying practices. As a film that looks at technologies of representation, the essay addresses how audience perceptions are challenged by the film's use of blue filter and sound to emphasise the alienating effects of modern urban living. The depiction of "industrial" spaces, endless rain and the use of muzak all serve to highlight an anonymous existence which requires transgressive physical acts to revivify it. In addition, Singh contends, *Snake's* representations of urban alienation call attention to the way that technologies that "nominally exist to aid human communication and expression" ironically remediate our knowledge of each other's bodies into a process defined by looking (scopophilia) and surveillance. According to Singh, the film raises some interesting questions about image production, particularly in relation to the gaze and its traditional associations with patriarchal objectification. In disrupting clear boundaries between the spectator and the observed subject, Shinya explores the notion of complicity and foregrounds the importance of the apparatus in mediating human relationships.

The next two chapters explore the limits of race in mainstream film, both finding that there is a well-established history of the erasure and elision of blackness. Hannah Hamad looks at the evolution of Eddie Murphy's star persona, while Helene Charlery examines several films from Code-era Hollywood for their institutionalised ways of keeping the screen white.

In "The position of annoying talking animal has already been taken", Hamad charts the peaks and troughs in Murphy's career and the concomitant impact of these on his star persona – that amalgam of onscreen and offscreen images which remains relatively constant across texts. She argues that while his earlier film characters, such as those in *48 Hours* and *Trading Places*, are overtly positioned as the object of white racist treatment within the films, later films which seem to reject such racism are actually only being more covert in the prejudice they reveal. The professional family men Murphy plays in such recent films as *Daddy Day Care* and *The Haunted Mansion* do not have their race commented upon; Hamad suggests that far from indicating an acceptance of the

black character, this textual silence indicates a wish on behalf of the film, speaking for its mainstream audiences, to avoid the topic. Finally, Hamad compares the voice performances Murphy has produced in the animated films *Mulan* and *Shrek*; here, it seems, his racial markers are allowed to return, with the re-emergence of typical “jive” talk, which had been a facet of his earlier characters, reappearing - safely, as Hamad argues - in cartoon dragon and donkey.

Maintaining the focus on Hollywood cinema, but turning her attentions to an earlier period of film history, Helene Charlery, in her chapter “Racial Cut: Miscegenation, Black Women and Characters on American screens during the Hays Code” subjects the Production (“Hays”) Code to scrutiny, examining its mandates against “miscegenation” (inter-racial relationships) and how these were policed within films produced in key films of the 1930s and 40s. Charlery elects to study films which focused on the topic of race by having lead or main black characters, and finds that the ban on promoting or showing inter-racial romance was so rigid that, at times in these studied texts, the black woman is edited out of scenes she is present for, simply to avoid being on screen with a white man. In her close reading of her chosen films Charlery notes a difference in the strategies for (not) permitting interracial contact between those films which feature black actresses as black characters, and those which feature white women in these roles. The black actress Louise Beavers in the 1934 version of *Imitation of Life*, for example, is kept away from white male characters by elements of mise-en-scene and framing, while the white actress Jeanne Crain, star of *Pinky*, is permitted a kiss which is narratively inter-racial but actually permissible because it is white-white. Charlery concludes that the racial prejudice rife on the screens of Hollywood was maintained by both technological and industrial mechanisms.

Taking up the idea that the mise-en-scene (literally, the objects “placed in the scene”) present in films has the potential to push the limits of representation by subtle underscoring or undermining of more overt narrative interests (to which Charlery’s paper alluded), and chiming with the interests of Tuck and Singh in editing, the next section of the book explores how aesthetic strategies can explore or push the boundaries of what can be represented. Iris Luppa looks at the naval blockbuster, *Master and Commander: The Far Side Of The World*, finding that its mise-en-scene creates a portrayal of various and varying masculinities which undermine the overt allegiances of the dominant narrative, while Kathrina Glitre turns her attention to another popular generic category, the romantic comedy. In her chapter Glitre examines how mise-en-scene created by CGI can serve to unsettle the normative trajectories of the romantic comedy form.

Luppa's chapter, "Music With The Captain: limits and scope of visual representation in *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World*", examines Peter Weir's 2003 film set aboard the *HMS Surprise*, a navy ship during the Napoleonic Wars. It offers a close reading of various visual elements chosen by the film-makers, elements which are, Luppa argues, elected not merely to convey information about the actions occurring, but also to comment on the characters engaged in those actions. The film's mise-en-scene is deployed to contrast the characters of the ship's captain, Jack Aubrey, and doctor, Stephen Maturin. Each, for example, is introduced by a series of close-ups focusing tightly on the tools of his particular trade. The details of mise-en-scene are employed in the film to establish and compare Aubrey and Maturin, and covertly to undermine the traditional masculinity of the captain through suggesting his authority is unjustly founded and maintained, even if charismatic. Maturin's ideas are founded more on liberal values. That the two men can, despite their differences, remain friends, symbolically shown in their ability to play music together, suggests that the possibility of a proliferation of masculine types is possible, undermining the traditional notion of masculinity as a monolith with a restricted range of acceptable attributes. Examining the film's aesthetic choices thus indicates how the limits of representing and imagining masculinity can be extended through adroit mise-en-scene.

Exploring this arena further, Kathrina Glitre notes that it is generally only in action and fantasy that contemporary mainstream Hollywood cinema deploys CGI effects in order to represent events and images outside of the bounds of perceptual realism. Yet in her study "Untrue Love: Simulating authenticity in contemporary Hollywood romantic comedy", Glitre explores the way that CGI technology is currently being co-opted into the genre's preoccupation with authenticity and the revelation of "true" identity. Such films, she argues, push the limits of perceptual realism in order paradoxically to satisfy the expectations of what is "real" (in the sense of a metaphysical truth) in cultural and generic terms. Yet a recent example such as *Forces of Nature* offers a curiously *unsatisfactory* romantic denouement precisely because its happy ending is perceived to be the "wrong" one: it may conform to cultural convention (i.e. unfaithful man returning to long-suffering spouse) yet in the world of rom-com it contravenes the rules of generic verisimilitude. Such tensions reveal the complex ways in which romantic comedies negotiate notions of authentic true love and how normative generic expectations frequently come into conflict with the formal restraints of realist representation, in order to convey the sense of a world subordinated to the magic of romance. Glitre's study points to an increasing tendency in postmodern culture towards celebrating the "'aesthetic fabrication' of romantic illusion" by remobilising old romantic narratives in

which deception is paradoxically the mechanism by which “true” identity is revealed.

Earlier in the introduction we suggested that one of the key aspects in this study of “limits” in film is the challenge to realism: an acknowledgment that, in Lyotard’s terms, “good forms” have been recycled so often that to get any new mileage out of them they must be refigured, re-mediated. Pastiche and parody are twinned approaches to this modern aesthetic dilemma and are articulated respectively in responses by Elizabeth Wells and I.Q. Hunter. Famously, Fredric Jameson, another notable voice in this debate, lamented the death of the individual style, seeing in pastiche (which he called a statue with blank eyeballs) an emblem of the auto-referentiality of postmodern culture, the snake devouring its own tail (Jameson 1991, 18). Yet if every presentation is already a re-presentation, then, these essays suggest, strategies of parody and pastiche only make that admission explicit and do it with a consciousness that makes them powerful tools to see the world anew.

In “*The Man Who Wasn't There: The drama of existence in Camus and the Coen brothers*”, Elizabeth Wells finds another illustration of the manner in which modern cinema has harnessed strategies of pastiche to re-present ideological assumptions in the Hollywood tradition and to problematise their transparency. Contra Jameson, Wells’s study suggests that the Coen brothers’ film sheds light on the film noir style as a mode which can explore the very limits of existence, in the form of the absurd: something that has traditionally been regarded as the preserve of philosophical writers such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. Wells contends that it is in its very echo of a dominant popular style that the Coens’ neo-noir can self-consciously draw attention to the absurd world of 1950s America with its provincial suspicions of difference and futile attempts at self-expression. Drawing parallels with Camus’ *The Outsider*, Wells looks at the way that the noir style has been re-articulated through absurdist tropes to critique notions of bourgeois social morality and civic structures which constrain the individual’s struggle for personal meaning.

Finally, ending this section on intertextuality and the book as a whole, IQ Hunter’s study of parodic porn, “*A Clockwork Orgy: A user’s guide*”, examines the ways that parody can operate as a “corrective” to the absences in the signifying practices of mainstream Hollywood cinema. As a genre pornography operates on the fringes of filmic representation - as Hunter states, “of all films they are the most despised, troubling, quarantined and unassimilable”- and in their parodic guise as subversions of dominant narratives of popular cinema, they are even more so. Hunter argues that *A Clockwork Orgy* deviates from most hardcore pornographic adaptations in appropriating to a greater extent the narrative arc of the original film and in doing so underscoring the subversive content of Kubrick’s vision.

Yet, refreshingly, Hunter goes beyond mere hermeneutics, eschewing the usual Cartesian attitude to pornography in the academic environment (which, he claims, tends to be based on a view of porn's "aesthetic poverty... on its being boring") in order to offer an analysis of how it is consumed. Thus he introduces the concept of "flow", a phenomenological approach which prioritises the material body and lived experience of the spectator in watching and interpreting what they see on screen.

Thus the study comes full circle back to the idea that film criticism must return to the concept of viewing "pleasure" in its fullest sense: that to jettison the body from critical analyses of film perhaps says more about the limits of discourse than it does about the medium itself. We would do well to remind ourselves of the salutary message at the beginning of this Introduction in that in our haste to pin down the meanings of films' representational practices, we risk foreclosing not only other ways of looking and interpreting, but essentially a greater understanding of ourselves as sentient and *sensuous* spectators.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PLEASURE OF INVISIBLE SEX: CINEMATIC MEANING, SEXUAL “METAPHORS” AND THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF EDITING IN CLASSICAL HOLLYWOOD CINEMA

GREG TUCK

The movies are peculiarly suited to make manifest the union of mind and body, mind and world, and the expression of one in the other.
(Merleau-Ponty 1964, 58)

In the made-for-television clip compilation, *Kisses* (Neil Steinburg & Bruce Cohn, USA, 1991), Lauren Bacall presents a selection of scenes of kissing from both the late silent and classical period of Hollywood. From the outset she draws attention to the distinction between these more implicit embraces and the explicit sex scenes of contemporary films. Essentially the programme repeats the cliché that when it comes to representations of sex, the less that is shown, the more can be imagined. However, Bacall is equally at pains to stress that while no explicit sex acts are seen, these kisses are not entirely “innocent” either. One moment she describes these scenes as “pure romance”, the next as “passionate” and it is the capacity of such moments to both allow and encourage a complex double reading unlimited to what is seen, that Bacall specifically celebrates. As she says, these moments help us to “enter a fantasy world” or to “build a dream” and the kiss is seen as an act which is suggestive of passions and relationships that go far beyond just kissing. Yet at the same time what is shown is merely a kiss and hence able to comply with the Production Code Administration (PCA) restrictions: the historical regime of censorship in place at the time, known as the Hays Code. The Code was first adopted in 1930 and only fully replaced by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) rating system in 1967. However, it was not until 1934 that it was enforced with

much rigour and by the late 1950s and early 1960s its authority was being questioned with more and more films being released without gaining a certificate of approval. Nevertheless, for around twenty-five years the Code became synonymous with the permissible limits of sexual representation in what we would now call classical Hollywood cinema.

When it came to scenes of passion, the Code demanded three basic principles. Firstly “they should not be introduced when not essential to the plot”, secondly, “excessive and lustful kissing, lustful embraces, suggestive postures and gestures, are not to be shown” and finally, in general “passion should so be treated that these scenes do not stimulate the lower and baser element” (Motion Picture Production Code 1930 – see Arts Reformation). However, the Code was not simply imposed on Hollywood from the outside, but adopted as a piece of self-censorship to ward off such a development. Certainly this did not mean the PCA was toothless, but it did mean that it had a sophisticated understanding of filmmaking. As Lea Jacobs has described it, “censorship as an institutional process did not simply reflect social pressures; it articulated a strategic response to them” (Jacobs 2000, 94). Yet at the same time, the industry was well aware of the popularity of sex and romance at the box office. So, almost from its inception filmmakers began testing these boundaries, not least through the development of modes of representation that complied more in the letter than the spirit of the Code. In this regard kissing attracted particular attention from both censors and filmmakers alike, since a kiss could both show and suggest, be both literal and figurative, and could be presented as an act which sparked and fuelled the erotic imagination while delimiting and disavowing it at one and the same time. A kiss was and was not just a kiss, simultaneously.

What such moments make clear is that the Production Code, the most obvious mechanism through which limits were imposed on classical Hollywood, did not in itself limit film’s ability to make meaning. To some extent this was simply the result of the imprecision with which terms such as “excessive” or “lustful” are understood and interpreted. However, I would go further than merely claiming a degree of interpretive freedom at the margins of the Code. As filmmakers from as diverse movements as the Nouvelle Vague, Third Cinema and Dogme 95 have demonstrated, having sets of codified rules to kick against often encourages rather than limits representational creativity. Limits do not merely proscribe, they can equally channel and inspire. Furthermore, as an appeal could always be made to the more literal and innocent reading of a representation, the Code protected as much as restricted filmmakers. In this regard, the way classical Hollywood cinema negotiated these boundaries was equally a source of as much as a limit on the erotic potential of these films. Indeed, the interpretive richness of many of classical

Hollywood’s scenes of passion remind us that film should never be understood simply as an empirical object of vision invariably comprehended by a passive viewer, but a creative engagement whereby “film is given the wild liberty of a mental process – of thought, imagination and dream” (Perkins 1991, 98). Hence this cliché regarding the role of imagination in the representation of sex in classical Hollywood cinema actually points to a more general and profound truth regarding the ability of films to signify, in that it is paradoxically based as much on what we do not see (and how we do not see it), as on what we do see. Such scenes do not merely leave things to the imagination but engage it in a specific way. The question is, how? It is here, in the fertile gap between the permissible limits of visible representation and the limits of interpretative reading, that the pleasures of “invisible” sex are to be found.

Of course, censors are well aware of the dangers of implicit rather than explicit meaning and throughout the period of the Code, particularly during its early development, context was everything. As Joseph Breen, the head of the PCA recognised, such things as set design, performance, camera movements and editing (particularly the calculated use of ellipsis when a scene would suddenly end, fade or cut) could dramatically change the “tone” and hence the meaning of a scene (Jacobs 1997, 97). While showing “nothing”, filmmakers could draw attention to these gaps in their narratives in such a way as to imply a number of far more provocative or risqué readings. For example, the elided rape scene in *The Story of Temple Drake* (Stephen Roberts, USA, 1933) simply shows the lights going out followed by the sound of a woman’s scream. However, it was more usually the case that such gaps and ellipses worked to endorse and promote more normative sexualities not least of which was the relationship between visible romance and marriage and invisible sex and procreation. At the end of the musical number “By a Waterfall” in *Footlight Parade* (Lloyd Bacon, USA 1933) Scotty (Dick Powell) holds Bea (Ruby Keeler) in an embrace and sings the last line “there’s a magic melody, mother nature sings to me...” before leaning in for a kiss. As the lovers embrace the music swells and the camera tilts up and away into the branches of a tree, stopping on a bird’s nest from which three little chicks emerge. Metaphors of home-making and reproduction abound here, but nothing beyond an embrace is shown. More explicitly in *The Harvey Girls* (George Sidney, USA, 1946) one moment we see Susan (Judy Garland) kissing Ned (John Hodiak) in the countryside when suddenly, through a fade, the same kiss becomes that of their wedding day. On other occasions the order of events is more chaotic and potential readings less unproblematically normative. At the end of the remake of *My Man Godfrey* (Henry Koster, USA, 1957), Godfrey (David Niven) and Irene (June Allyson) have two hours to kill until the boat they are on has sailed

outside American jurisdiction and the Captain gains the right to marry them. After Irene asks Godfrey if he can wait that long, the film ends with an exchange of looks and an embrace and as they kiss, the camera pans away to the porthole, through which the Statue of Liberty is framed, underlining as Kathrina Glitre has argued, both their geographic and marital position (Glitre 2000, 2). The implication is that sex comes *before* marriage here, even if only by a matter of hours. Indeed, as Glitre has also suggested, sometimes the implication is that kissing leads directly to sex rather than wedlock and the subsequent marriage, whether represented or merely inferred, actually signifies an unplanned pregnancy. As her analysis of the consummation of the relationship between Brad (Rock Hudson) and Jan (Doris Day) in *Pillow Talk* (Michael Gordon, USA, 1959) makes clear, we go directly from premarital embrace to a scene several months later where Brad is making misunderstood statements about him (but we can safely assume Jan), “having a baby”.

[A]s Brad and Jan embrace, the shot starts to dissolve and the title “3 months later” begins to appear on screen, before Jan and Brad have even kissed. Thus, the consummation is rapidly elided with the consequence: pregnancy. Moreover, given that the fertility goddess was visible on a pedestal right next to the bed, the implication is that marriage came after the fact (Glitre 2000, 176).

Scenes such as these seem to combine reproductive metaphors with a variety of ellipses that depend not on fantasy but the illusion of spatial and temporal realism for their effect. That is, while we do not see what the couples are up to as the camera pans or tilts, or the scene is cut or fades, we do not think they have ceased to act in this way. They continue to have an existential resonance and it is this sense of the continuation of the diegesis beyond the limits of the cinematic border which produces the effect. As André Bazin famously suggested, “the basic principle of [cinema] is a denial of any frontiers of action” (Bazin 1967, 105), and it is the spatial and temporal “realism” of live action cinema that lets us know that just off screen, just out of sight, the action continues. His contemporary, Jean Mitry, took this idea a stage further and made two key observations. First, the film image “never appears by itself” but always in a sequence. Consequently, he argues, like Bazin, that “the screen appears like a window opening onto a view”, but the outlook on offer “in fact, stretches beyond the view seen through the window at any given time” (Mitry 1998, 73). It is not simply what is seen, but also, what *could* be seen that matters and all this other potential seeing, while in once sense invisible, adds to the meaning and experience of the visible image. This total landscape or place is made particularly evident by the movements of tracking and panning shots. In terms of sexual representations, pans and tilts away from a kissing couple therefore create a space for sex without showing it. Or, as in the case of *On the*

Waterfront (Elia Kazan USA, 1954) when Terry (Marlon Brando) kisses Edie (Eva Marie Saint) and they then slide down the wall and out of shot, a similar space is created by their moving out of frame. However there is, of course, another sense in which this cinematic aperture is particularly un-window like. For what is not possible is for us to go up to the screen or change our angle of vision. We cannot walk up to the screen, peer over the bottom edge and see precisely what Terry and Edie are up to. The window moves but our gaze in relation to the limits of the frame does not. So, while on the one hand, we have the sense of the film world extending beyond the frame, on the other, we have the actual representation - the image of that world - entirely contained by the frame. For Mitry the main point of this limitation was to demand, *contra* Bazin, that the constructed nature of the image must be taken into account despite the realism or naturalism of film’s iconic signification.

However, it is not simple the sense of an “outside” world beyond the frame that conveys the realism of cinematic space. It is also film’s ability to “jump” from one point of view to an entirely new one within that space that creates this sensation. This is what makes the process of editing such a powerful and expressive tool. It was this ability to combine iconic realism with sudden edits that feel more like metaphoric substitutions, which generated some of classical Hollywood cinema’s most provocative representations of sex. Unlike reproductive metaphors such as birds’ nests and fertility goddesses which relate to sexual function, it is through the suggestion of actual physical activity and sexual pleasure that these scenes produce their erotic intensity. The waves crashing over the kissing lovers in the infamous beach scene in *From Here to Eternity* (Fred Zimmermann, USA, 1953) undoubtedly point to the intensity of their passion. That Milton (Burt Lancaster) and Karen (Deborah Kerr) are both prone and wet, adds to the effect. The scene begins with a short, stand-alone shot of crashing surf. We cut to a wave rolling up the beach and we follow it, panning right to left, as it crashes up the beach and over the bodies of the lovers. Then, as the wave quells, Karen gets up, runs up the beach and collapses onto a towel before stating that she has never been “kissed” like that before, giving us the impression that we have come in at the end of things. After a row, followed by a confession and reconciliation, the scene ends with another passionate embrace and again we cut away to a stand-alone shot of crashing surf. On both occasions, although these surf shots are potentially a real part of the beach location, the way they are edited and shot make them hard to locate in spatial reality. They do not seem to come from either left or right of the couple and seem bigger than the waves we see roll over them. The obvious, and perfectly justifiable reading of the crashing surf is as a metaphor for orgasm, yet one in which the metonymic status of the waves allows such a reading to be plausibly

denied. The waves can be read as “sex” or as “beach” so the limits imposed by the PCA are both adhered to in the letter and breached in the spirit. However, what such a reading fails to take account of is our phenomenal experience of the edit and the substitution. Beyond the interpretation of these wave shots as either metaphoric or metonymic signs, it is equally the way the substitution is perceived and experienced, which is suggestive of orgasm. The sense of being taken to another place, the suddenness of the visual and aural ellipsis, the change it demands in our focal distance, all of these experiences equally add to the effect. There is something about the structural organisation of the visual and aural fields beyond or in excess of the objects within them that is at work here and which is a source of a more direct physical engagement with the film. So, these waves are not simply metaphoric of orgasm and metonymic of a beach, they are also in some other way suggestive of our experience of sexual embodiment itself. Consider two more examples from the classical period where a sexual metaphor is both read and experienced.

In *Casablanca* (Michael Curtiz, USA, 1942), the most dramatic scene between Rick (Humphrey Bogart) and Ilsa (Ingrid Bergman) occurs when Ilsa shows up at Rick’s apartment to plead for the letters of transit she knows are in Rick’s possession. Rick belligerently withholds them in order to hurt Ilsa, the way she hurt him when she “abandoned” him in Paris, but Ilsa is not prepared to take no for an answer. She pulls a gun and threatens to shoot him unless he gives up the letters. Rick walks up to her and presses himself into the muzzle of the gun and says “Go ahead shoot – you’ll be doing me a favour,” but Ilsa cannot. She tells Rick that she never wanted to leave him and cries out how much she loves him, how she has always loved him. The music rises to a crescendo and in close up, Rick and Ilsa kiss, passionately. Then, the film suddenly dissolves to a long shot of the Casablanca lighthouse and we see a rotation of the beam from left to right. This “orgasmic” flash lasts less than three seconds. We then return to a medium-long shot of a calm-looking Rick, standing alone, shot from the outside of his apartment. We zoom in and see him leaning against the window frame, looking out of the window as the light from the lighthouse crosses the shot. Rick is now smoking a suspiciously post-coital-looking cigarette. He asks Ilsa to “go on”, confirming that the lighthouse shot covers a far greater time frame than it actually takes up on screen. She speaks calmly, confirming that the previous passion has either mysteriously abated, or, more possibly, been sated.

In the denouement of *North by Northwest* (Alfred Hitchcock, USA, 1959), Roger O Thornhill (Cary Grant) finds himself in a fight against murderous foreign agents on top of the Mount Rushmore monument. During the struggles his assistant and love interest Eve Kendall (Eva Marie Saint) has been pushed from the monument and finds herself clinging by one hand to a thin ledge.

Roger reaches down to pull up her outstretched hand, and tenaciously clings to her. Suddenly, his expression changes from one of intense concentration to a relaxed smile and in a clever transition that employs a sound bridge between the shots, we cut to the interior of their Pullman car train carriage. Roger continues to pull Eve up, but this time she is pulled into his arms in the upper bunk of their private carriage, rather than simply to safety. Obviously, their perilous situation has been resolved and by addressing her as “Mrs. Thornhill” the film suggests that they are about to consummate their marriage. Then, as they kiss, we cut to the exterior of the train which we now see thundering into a tunnel with its whistle blaring and with this seemingly obvious metaphor of penetration, the film ends.

It is hard to imagine any adult audience in its entirety, then or now, being so naïve as to miss the visual innuendo. Indeed, the sheer number of such substitutions rather than simple fades or cuts must suggest that the majority of the audience was sophisticated enough to interpret them, otherwise their presence becomes somewhat inexplicable. However, this emphasis on the sexual interpretation of such metaphors has tended to obscure the importance of the mode rather than the object of substitution. In all three cases, beyond the content, the form in which they are presented, the perceptual experience of the scene prior to or outside the process of signification also needs to be considered. In all of these scenes the suddenness of the edit, the increase in volume as well as the change in size and direction of the elements in the frame have a physical effect on the viewer. Indeed, this appeal to our physical and sensory experience of cinema brings into question whether the concepts of metaphor and metonym - concepts imported into film studies from literary and linguistic disciplines - are adequate to describe such a process. Instead I would suggest that films engage our erotic imaginations not simply through the explicit content of the image, nor through the metaphoric interpretation of other objects as human bodies, but through the phenomenal experience of the formal properties of the film itself. To explain how this process works let us first consider the usefulness and the limits of a more strictly linguistic/semiotic understanding of how films produce meaning.

The linguistic concepts of metonym, synecdoche and metaphor, concepts which describe three common modes of language substitution, have also been applied to cinematic substitution. While it may be something of a simplification, these modes of substitution can be thought of as the basis for a number of cinematic conventions since they allow films to “represent” what they cannot “show”. Hence, at first glance, the transposition of concepts from linguistics and literary theory to film studies seems to have much to offer. For example, metonymy (the substitution of an object or concept with a property of that

object or concept) allows the close up on a driving train wheel to stand for the journey as a whole rather than simply as a mode of transport. We *see* a wheel but *read* a journey. Similarly, changing the lighting from daylight to darkness as we watch the motion suggests the temporal dimension of such journeys. We *see* light but *read* time. The synecdoche (substitution of a part for a whole) is the fundamental logic behind establishing shots so that a shot of Big Ben can stand in for London and the Eiffel Tower for Paris. We *see* the landmark and *read* the city. For some theorists such as Roman Jakobson, however, the distinction between metonymy and synecdoche is not that clear-cut and they suggest that the single term metonymy will suffice for both concepts (Jakobson & Halle 1956, 95). For example, while the White House can stand for Washington DC (synecdoche) it can also stand for the power of the USA as a state (metonymy). Metonymy and synecdoche both bear some direct connection to the thing they are representing; they are contiguous and foreground what it is they are meant to signify. This has led them to be associated with prose and essentially realist modes of representation. Metaphor, on the other hand, is quite a different process which emphasises the substitution *itself*, marking a more imaginative relationship of symbolic similarity between the object and the signifier. This is a mode more common to poetry, fantasy and surrealism, but it is also a way of evading more literal as well as psychological censorship. Like metonymy, metaphor is double-coded so that a literal reading of the image remains possible, but because the relationship is imaginary and non-contiguous, the conceptual distance between the images may be immense. Thus in the context of censorship, the sexual metaphors and phallic symbolism of such things as erect flashing towers, waves crashing on a beach and trains going through tunnels can be disavowed and defended simply as representations of the objects they are. The comparison is all in the mind of the (decadent) reader rather than the (innocent) text.

However, what tends to be lost in such explanations of the *function* of language is that in its use, it is as much about feeling as it is about meaning. To speak is not merely to employ a code, to use a simple store of predetermined meaning, but to express oneself. That is, while signs might bear an arbitrary relationship to the things they signify, their expression through the medium of voice, the medium that brings signs to life, does not. Voice does not just *know*, it *feels*, not simply in the emotional sense but in the more literal embodied sense which animates words such as “love”, or “hate”, into the embodied understanding of such states. This more phenomenological description of embodied communication, as opposed to signification, is described by Maurice Merleau-Ponty as the way “words, vowels and phonemes are so many ways of “singing” the world” (1962, 187). While agreeing with the semiological claim “that their function is to represent things not, as the naïve onomatopoeic theory

had it, by reason of an objective resemblance” (1962, 187). Merleau-Ponty insists that this did not mean that the relationship between the signifier and the signified in live speech is entirely arbitrary. Instead, Merleau-Ponty argues that speech works to “extract, and literally express, [the] emotional essence” (1962, 187) of that which is spoken about. The objective capacity of signs is supplemented, if not exceeded, by the affective subjective property of voice.

Once this embodied and affective element is introduced to our understanding of communication in general, the fact that films materialise and express signs in speech, sound, music and images, goes some way to account for the imaginative depth and richness of its “voice”. Furthermore, the fact that we experience film with our entire bodies (our flesh creeps, our stomach churns, we hold our breath), suggests that film voice delivers tactile as well as aural and visual stimulation in addition to conveying narrative meaning. So, while a shot of a simple embrace can in one sense be *read* as saying that these two people are in a relationship, the quality of that relationship is always invoked and imagined at a level beyond this simple statement. How closely do they stand, how passionately do they kiss, does the camera swirl around them, does the music fade or build? The dominance of interpretive modes of analysis which concentrate on asking what the visual means has obscured this understanding of cinema as a synaesthesia of visual, tactile and aural senses as well as ideas and signs. As Tom Gunning’s notion of a “Cinema of Attractions” reminds us, the physicality of the film experience, our embodied experience of film, means it is as close to a fairground ride as it is to a peep show (Gunning, 2004). The supposed dominance of narrative in classical Hollywood never entirely negated the underlying phenomenal experience of cinema, but instead incorporated and combined these modes. Indeed, when a shot is presented in a way that seems most clearly semiotic or linguistic, such as in metonymic establishing shots (Eiffel Tower equals Paris, Big Ben equals London), the objects are acting as little more than a visual intertitle. They can be explained as code because, in effect, they have been reduced to code and utilised as code. More usually however, it is the interplay and relationships between, rather than within, signs that need to be accounted for and it is less than clear whether the identification of *any* single sign, whether defined as a metonym or metaphor, is either possible or useful in the context of cinema. The waves on the beach in *From Here to Eternity* are a case in point, as they seem to be metonymic and metaphoric at the same time, signifying beach, power, passion and orgasm. To claim the waves are more or less one of these modes of communication is to reduce, not explain, the power of cinematic display.

The notion of display is crucial here and we must obviously be careful not to lose sight of the fundamental difference between cinematic and written (and to a

lesser extent spoken) language: the moving image. Even if only at the level of the signifier, language, whether spoken or written, is arbitrary and symbolic, but the visual signifiers of motion pictures are always delimited and iconic. The wave is not simply “there” as a conceptual symbol to be read as is a word on a page, but is also there as a direct perceptual experience. They are always *particular things*: things that may only subsequently be read as both symbolic and indexical of other things. So, they are both concrete and particular material things (waves) and abstract and universal signifiers of concepts (passion) at the same time. That is, in addition to if not prior to their ability to signify, iconic images of the world connect with and arouse memories of our sensory and sensual relations to such things. As such they do not merely partake of the conscious (or even unconscious) play between the signifier and signified, but also reconnect us to our immersion in a visible and audible world of referents. Our knowledge of the concrete particular is in this sense “wild”: a perceptual and embodied pre-linguistic knowledge, rather than a social, conceptual and conscious form of knowing. Unlike the process of signification, in which the price of sophisticated thought is the potential for uncertainty, ambiguity and flux, such body knowledge delivers absolute sense certainty. Consequently I would argue that we both read and experience films with an intense immediacy, richness and potency that is of a different order from language. As with our sensory experience of music, films do not have to produce meaning before they can produce laughter, tears or anger, and just as reducing a song to its musical score drains the experience of that which gives it significance (as opposed to signification), so is it the same with motion pictures. The experience of film should therefore not be reduced to “meaning”, either as a conscious (metonymic) semiological system, or even an (metaphoric) unconscious dream-work. While these theoretical procedures seem to address the fact that film *can* be decoded and understood as both a recording machine and a dream, I would suggest that both of these urges to extract meaning from film risk ignoring or distorting what is a far more synthesizing and embodied experience. Indeed, because the reduction of film to a linguistic trope ignores the materiality of the experience, the active role of human embodiment in the experience of both the transmission and reception of film has generally been either underplayed or ignored (with the notable exception of the work of Vivian Sobchack 1992). This has enormous consequences for the communication/display of human sexuality, since from a phenomenological perspective, we very much “sing” rather than “state” our sexual being: in other words, we show it and feel it as much as tell it.

So, if we regard sexuality as primarily visceral rather than psychological we can both “know” and “understand” our sexuality at a non-linguistic level. For example, reading the words “Ilsa looked longingly at Rick”, is not as affective as hearing them and neither of these linguistic experiences carries the same

intensity as *seeing* Ilsa look longingly at Rick. We do not need to translate the emotion conveyed into words in order to comprehend it, but experience Ilsa’s embodiment of longing directly. We read bodies *as* bodies, not as disembodied consciousnesses (or, indeed, as an unconsciousness) and as Merleau-Ponty has suggested, it is in fact “only within the perceived world that we can understand that all corporeality is already symbolism” (1968, 156). We think, communicate and represent as and through the body. Bodies are not merely *in* communication, they *are* communication and therefore representations of the body, especially the sexual body, speak and sing in their material form as much as in their conceptual content. While bodies may and do signify they are also always “stuff”: always in excess of any of these meanings; thus filmic representations of the body cannot but carry and convey this primeval relationship to our materiality. This is particularly the case with regard to representations that invoke the most intimate of physical sensations: touch. For example, returning briefly to the waves that actually engulf and touch Milton and Karen (as opposed to their stand-alone counterparts that bookend the scene), while they signify passion, they do not do so simply as metaphor. The fact that these lovers are so engrossed with touching and kissing each other that they effectively either do not notice the water, or add the massive sensory overload of the sudden rush of cool seawater to their existing tactile experience of each other, is as much a material *revelation* of this passionate touching as a metaphor of it. There is a display of sexual embodiment here that needs to be understood far more experientially as part of our wider sensory existence. The visual does not simply undergo translation into the verbal but equally opens us up to other forms of sensory understanding so in effect we do not just see the wave, we feel it. As Merleau-Ponty argues, “the senses translate each other without any need of an interpreter, and are mutually comprehensible without the intervention of any idea” (1962, 235). The reason they are both distinct yet mutually comprehensible is that the senses engage directly with the same, common, material world, regardless of any subsequent conscious interpretation that is placed on the sensation. So, while claiming that touching is not seeing and that “the sense of touch is not spatial *as is* sight” (1962, 222), Merleau-Ponty still insists that we can recognise the distinction between the senses “without any threat to the unity of the senses” (1962, 225). The space created and explored by the sense of touch and the space created and explored by the sense of sight cannot be simply transposed one onto the other. Yet, the “two spaces are distinguishable only against the background of a common world, and can compete with each other only because they both lay claim to total being” (Merleau-Ponty 1962, 225). To comprehend the specific power of the motion picture to signify requires a comprehension of this intertwining or chiasm of the

multiple elements (perception, language, conception and body) involved in the formation of cinematic meaning. Cinema is a synthesising mode of expression and it is in the synthesis between the objective and the subjective and between sensory/embodied and metaphoric/linguistic meanings that enables film to engage, encourage and lead our erotic imagination in such an intense way.

So, returning to these now well-worn cinematic metaphors of sex, we can now analyze in what precise sense we do not simply read, but conceive and experience these clips as “sexual”. To begin with, at the obvious visual level it is of course because of what we see. In both instances, we are offered a direct representation of an embrace and a kiss. The scenes are clearly passionate. However when the film cuts during the kiss to offer such visions as waves, towers and tunnels, a bifurcation of intentionality is created by the edit itself. The syntax is such that the intention of the second representation is suspect and so draws the spectator’s attention to the edit as a moment of substitution. While no sex act is visible, the narrative intention of a representation of sex is visible in the substitution. However, the substitution is not simply syntagmatic and metonymic *or* paradigmatic and metaphoric in the linguistic sense, as it partakes of both combination and substitution. Beyond their static visual similarity to sexual embodiment (crashing orgasmic waves, tall phallic structures and penetrable tunnels) which simply create metaphors, in their *movement* these substitutions seem equally to offer an sense of contiguity with the *experience* of sexual embodiment and are therefore equally metonymic. For example, while the lighthouse is a rather obvious metaphoric phallic object as a structure, in its accompanying climatic flash, it also suggests the sudden intensity of orgasm. Likewise, while the train entering the tunnel is metaphoric of penetration, the screaming of the whistle suggests an attribute or adjunct of the sex act itself.

Furthermore, these metonymic aspects of sexual embodiment do not rely solely on our vision of things for their affect, but equally on an invisible more sensory understanding of closeness, proximity and touch. Indeed, the edit allows the film to bring disparate forms into contact, to conjoin its revelations of the world. That is, at a phenomenological level the edit does not just string things together as concepts, but literally reorders the world at a sensory and perceptual level. The iconic images of lovers touching each other are themselves touched by iconic images of waves, of a lighthouse and of a tunnel. There is something intentional about the cut that alerts us to a new meaning at both a perceptual and conceptual level beyond the embrace that we have been witnessing. If the kiss was all there was to see, we could see it end, or we might even fade to black. Yet the suddenness of these edits renders the previous meaning of the embrace incomplete. We do not feel the embrace is over; it has been taken away from us too quickly so that it remains as the dominant notion, not merely despite, but because of its disappearance. So, while the embrace is

no longer visible it is not so much over or absent but remains an *invisible* presence within or beneath the new shot. Yet, the film equally demands that we attend to the sound and imagery before us as a meaningful phenomenological encounter beyond the desired narrative. As the waves, the train and the lighthouse are *still* waves, a train or a lighthouse, they resist being so easily commandeered. We do not merely move our conscious intentionality from kiss to metaphor across the boundary as instructed by the filmmaker, neither are we simply confused by the otherwise impossible juxtaposition, but enjoy both the conceptual ambiguity and sensory affect of the edit itself. It is this ambiguity and affect, this opacity that confers not simply an objective signifying potential on film, but a subjective intentional communication, one which expresses what *matters* as much as it states meaning. In effect, it confers on film a homology with an embodied subjective conception, rather than simply a mechanical objective perception, of the world. So, in addition to what they show as well as the engagement of our erotic imaginations, all three of these scenes equally address our embodied memory of our own sexual being. In moments such as these, films are not merely showing or implying sex, they are also evoking it at a sensory level, so we are made not merely to see that which we cannot see, nor simply to “imagine” it, but to be “touched” by it. This is the pleasure of invisible sex.

CHAPTER TWO

REMOTE CONTROL: EXPOSURE AND THE LIMITS OF SOUND DESIGN IN TSUKAMOTO SHINYA'S *A SNAKE OF JUNE*

GREG SINGH

“A small camera won't do. Has to be a big one with a flash...”

From these opening lines of dialogue in *A Snake of June*, the audience is presented with a double *entendre* in which the camera's gaze is analogous with male genitalia; the analogy is further embellished with the connotation of penetrative intercourse through the narrator's allusions to orgasmic pleasure and beholding another. This analogy has been evoked time and again in film theory. For example, the discussions on the apparatus in terms of Lacanian/linguistic models (Metz 1975), through Marxist/materialist evaluations of the means of film production (Adorno 1991; Baudry 1974-75; Heath 1980), to the psychoanalytic theories of the gaze (Mulvey 1975; Copjec 1995; Cowie 1997). Sean Homer, in his essay “Cinema and Fetishism” gives an excellent account of the abstractionism in film criticism that appeared in the film journal *Screen* throughout the mid-1970s (see Homer 2005). Here, he details examples of the materialist consideration of the institutional apparatus and its role in both production and ideological reproduction. Crucially, he also identifies the need in that approach to theorise the subject hence, the incorporation and eventual hegemony of psychoanalytic theory in *Screen* film criticism for many years after. However, one might argue that one of the main flaws of early applications of psychoanalysis in film theory results from its very usefulness. Namely, the negotiation of identification mechanisms and the constitution of the cine-subject are ultimately based on clinical and analytical accounts of sexual difference. Whilst this was seen by many to be an important intervention in film criticism, it nevertheless produced a biased rendering of sexual difference in the subjectivity of the spectator. That is, sexual difference in the Freudian model of