SKINNER, Quentin. 1976. «Motives, Intentions and the Interpretation of Texts.» *New Literary History* 3.2 (1972): 393-408. Rpt. in Newton-De Molina 1976: 210-221.
SONTAG, Susan. 1966. *Against Interpretation.* New York: Noonday.
SPARSHOTT, F. E. 1976. «Criticism and Performance.» In Sparshott, *The Concept of Criticism.* Oxford: Oxford UP, 1967. 162-177. Rpt. in Newton-De Molina 1976:104-115.
SPIVAK, Gayatri Chakravorty. 1988 *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics.* New York: Routledge.
TOMPKINS, Jane P., ed. 1980. *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP. Introduction, ix-xxvi.
WATSON, George. 1976. «The Literary Past.» In Watson, *The Study of Literature.* London: Allen Lane, 1969. 66-83. Rpt. in Newton-De Molina 1976, 158-173.
WELLEK, René. «A Rejoinder to Gerald Graff.» *Critical Inquiry* 5 (1979).
WIMSATT, W.K. 1976. «Genesis: A Fallacy Revisited.» In *The Disciplines of Criticism: Essays in Literary Theory, Interpretation and History.* Eds. Peter Demetz, Thomas Greene and Lowry Nelson, Jr. New Haven: Yale UP,1968. 193-225. Rpt. in Newton-De Molina 1976: 116-138.
---, and Monroe C. Beardsley. 1967. «The Intentional Fallacy.» *Sewanee Review* 54 (1946). Rpt. in Wimsatt, *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry.* 1954. Lexington: U of Kentucky P. 2-18.

KUBRICK'S *DOCTOR STRANGELOVE:* THE LOGIC OF SPECTACLE

Luis Miguel GARCIA MAINAR
Universidad de Zaragoza

For Barthes the language of narratives is the product of two processes: one called «articulation» or segmentation that produces semantic units and another called «integration» which gathers those units into clusters of a higher order providing them with meaning in the process (Barthes 1983: 288). In the process of articulation, narratives are characterized by their ability to distend their signs by inserting new significative material in between those semantic units. So the narrative creates a kind of artificial time that does not correspond with the time of reality, a «logical» time that arises from the mere expectancy that the semantic units will be united. A logical process whose only concern is the regrouping of units at a merely formal level, not at the level of their content or meaning. The aim of this process is to close formal sequences, to ensure that no sequence remains open at the end of the text. Suspense is therefore an exacerbated form of distortion, a game with structure. Through the process of integration the units of the different semantic levels of the narrative (characters, actions,...) are united and acquire a meaning. Integration involves a vertical reading that is superimposed on the horizontal reading that the distortions determine.

So, in a narrative the principal function that is carried out is not the mimetic function but the dynamic of following the inner logic the narrative has created both horizontally and vertically in a quest for meaning that keeps the reader's «passion» for reading on alive: «What takes place in a narrative is from

the referential (reality) point of view literally nothing; what happens is language alone, the adventure of language, the unceasing celebration of its coming» (Barthes 1983: 295).

Barthes says that the passion that leads us on in a narrative is not «that of a 'vision'. Rather, it is that of meaning, that of a higher order of relation» (Barthes 1983: 295). By this he means that the quest for meaning in a text constitutes its essence and not the mimetic portrayal of reality. This position of Barthes's misses some implications that appear when considering other art forms which do not use written language, cinema for instance.

The symbolic nature of written language, the fact that its signifiers are different from the things they designate (the signifieds) allows the reader a distance from which he/she can easily reflect and perceive all the relationships between semantic units. Written language demands an effort on the part of the reader to fill in, to complete with his/her fantasy and imagination what the symbolic language cannot offer: the signified itself, as material entity. This distance the reader has to bridge also provides him/her with a certain independence from that language, as the reader is free to picture things as he/she likes to a certain extent.

While it is obvious that in a filmic text the quest for meaning through the integration of its semantic units is essential for the understanding of the narrative, it is also evident that the basically mimetic nature of cinematic language adds new nuances. Cinematic language is highly iconic: the signifier and the signified are very much alike, and that makes it impossible to eliminate the physical portrayal of reality that it contains while offering the significance of a sequence with respect to the meaning of the narrative. We can say that an image qualifies itself independently of its importance for the narrative line of action (Chatman 1981: 135,136) or of the qualification given to it by the text. For Barthes, the adventure of narrative is not mimetic but structural; a logic that the text sets up and fulfills. It is, then, the adventure of language. But filmic language is different from written language in that the text cannot eliminate the mimetic quality of its signs.

In *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944), as in many other musicals, Judy Garland stops for a moment in the middle of a scene and starts singing. While walking across a wood in *Road to Utopia* (1945) Bing Crosby and Bob Hope see the Paramount logo in the distance, but nobody in the audience stirs in his/her seat; rather, these ruptures of the conventional narrative rules by flaunting their artificial nature, which in theory should shatter the viewer's suspension of disbelief, work in the opposite direction. The songs interspersed in Minnelli's film and the continuous references to the narrating activity in *Road to Utopia* engage the viewer's attention by their quality as spectacle (romantic or comic).

In this paper I will try to prove that *Dr. Strangelove* exemplifies how that mimetic logic of spectacle takes over and relegates the audience's search for meaning in the text to a secondary place. I will show how the text's defamiliarizing devices and marks of a self-conscious narration are taken as essential components of the satiric, comic genre to which the film belongs; and how they, together with an organization of the story elements typical of a classical narration, work to produce spectacle.

Doctor Strangelove's fabula[1] deals with a nuclear attack on Russia launched by a paranoid American General, Jack D. Ripper, who is convinced of the existence of a Communist plot to conquer the world. He is the only one who knows the secret code of the B-52s' communication systems and cuts off all communications with his base. When informed of this fact, President Merkin Muffley summons the Generals and the Russian ambassador De Sadessky to the Pentagon War Room. General Turgidson proposes that, as there is nothing they can do to prevent the attack, they should take measures to make the attack a successful one and destroy Russia with the minimum American casualties, which he estimates in about twenty million people. While the President contacts the Russian premier, Dimitri Kissoff, and suggests that the Russian airplanes shoot the B-52s down, Group Captain Mandrake, an RAF officer, manages to get the code and recall all the airplanes, except for one (piloted by «King» Kong) whose radio has been damaged. De Sadessky has informed the President that his country has built a «Doomsday Machine» which will cause total nuclear destruction if his country is attacked. Dr. Strangelove, an ex-Nazi scientist, estimates that mankind could survive if a few individuals remain in an underground shelter for a hundred years. Kong drops the bomb and the world explodes as Vera Lynn's «We'll Meet Again» sounds in the background.

Such an incongruous story reveals both a comic treatment of the theme and a temporal organization which provides the narrative with a quick rhythm that builds up suspense as the text alternatively shows three settings where the action takes place: Burpleson air base, the War Room and inside the B-52.

Comedy is only one of the strategies that the text uses to present a shocking, unusual view of reality. These strategies are used to throw a new light on the questions that it raises: the view of a world in which men's distrust of one another has led them to give away the controlling power to machines that rebel against their masters when threatening to carry out their «inhuman» logic. The text strives to satirize the paranoia and incongruity of the military system prevalent at the time the film was made, the Cold War and the sixties. The process to satirize it consists in the distortion and exaggeration of that reality. One of the basic principles of the Russian Formalists was the idea that «the essence of art

lay in renewing perceptions about reality which daily life tended to automatize, to make mechanical, perfunctory, and therefore, imperceptible» (in Eagle 1981: 4). Shklovsky's concept of defamiliarization, and the analysis of the ways in which art tries to transform reality into an independent system capable of offering new points of view on it, are relevant to the study of a film like *Dr. Strangelove* which systematically offers a distorted view of things to the audience.

Single-source lighting is one of the elements of mise-en-scene which can be regarded as belonging to the stock of defamiliarizing textual strategies used in *Dr. Strangelove*. Classical Hollywood films showed a method of lighting a scene that, after many years, came to be associated with realism. Three-point lighting (key light, fill light, backlight), proper of studio filming, responded to a narrative mode which made of the clear depiction of a story-action its principal task; the character was the most important element in that conception of narration because it was him/her who made the action advance and, therefore, it was essential that the character and its relation to the surrounding space were clearly and quickly established (Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson 1988: 20).

Single-source lighting generally falls outside the realm of lighting possibilities considered to be realistic because it does not help the activity of the narrative. It responds to an effort on the part of the text to shock the audience by offering an unusual, consciously artistic view. Most of the shots in Ripper's office and in the War Room show that sort of lighting, which works to emphasize the increasing dementia of the characters who inhabit those spaces and to suggest a nightmarish atmosphere in which men are seen to be so detached from their reality that they can play with life and death without questioning the coherence of their statements. A similar use of lighting appears in noir films to depict a mysterious, threatening milieu in which the hero tries to survive, and where moral ambiguity reigns.

Characterization, another component of mise-en-scene, also works in order to defamiliarize reality. Characters are reduced to caricatures. They are ridiculed by their names (Turgidson, Kissoff, De Sadessky, Merkin Muffley, «King» Kong, Mandrake, Ripper) a fact which at the same time points at their flat nature. Each of them is characterized by a single trait: Turgidson's childishness, Kissoff's sentimentality, De Sadessky's inability to realize the seriousness of the situation, Muffley's incompetence, Kong's faith in the American system, Mandrake's British politeness, Ripper's paranoia. Acting contributes to exaggerate characters and situations. Turgidson freezes in what look like childish postures, he falls to the floor and gets up in the way a clown would. Ripper's excessive self-confidence is manifested by the prepotent way in which he smokes his cigar. Dr. Strangelove's uncontrolled desire to destroy arises in the form of an orthopaedic hand that tries to kill even its owner. Physical appearance and posture are key visual elements in the film to depict the characters' mental state.

Another aspect related to the defamiliarizing activity of many of the previously mentioned elements is the overtly self-conscious narration the text practises. This activity is evident in the use of extradiegetic music: music not produced by any element of mise-en-scene, but rather external to the realm of the story, which is highly self-conscious in general because it only exists for the audience. *Dr. Strangelove* contains three instances of extradiegetic music: «Try a Little Tenderness» in the opening scene, «When Johnny Comes Marching Home» that accompanies the scenes of the B-52 heading towards its target, and Vera Lynn's «We'll Meet Again» (Don't Know Where, Don't Know When) in the final scene of the explosion of the bomb. At least two of these examples have a clearly ironic purpose: the notes of «When Johnny Comes Marching Home» mix the nostalgic, cowboy reminiscences with the irony of its title (if the B-52 reaches its target, nobody will come home); Vera Lynn's sentimental song is also ironic in its lyrics (we shall not meet anywhere because we shall be dead). Both these instances point to an extradiegetic comment on the action of the film and to a narrating activity external to the story which consistently uses irony to make its points clear.

Mise-en-scene also reveals how the narrative clearly shows its inner mechanisms. In the first scene of the film, Mandrake gets a phone call from Ripper. The text shows both interlocutors as they are framed by elements of setting (titles) that read; «Peace is our profession»; in the case of Ripper he is also framed by his own name on the table: «Jack D. Ripper». According to Tynjanov, «every shot creates a special semantic relationship which would not be present if we were viewing the scene in real life» (in Eagle 1981: 8). This is true of every filmic text, but *Dr. Strangelove* takes it beyond the limits of what might be recognized as unobtrusive from a narrative point of view. The shots of a character plus a title tend to qualify the action or the characters, usually with a comic or ironic purpose which indicates the existence of an underlying ideology that the text wants to convey. The frequent appearance of this unusual arrangement of elements in the shot (Turgidson and the title «World Targets in Megadeaths»; Burpleson's air base men and «Peace is our profession»; Kong and the bombs with «Hi there» and «Dear John» painted on them) shows a narrative which lays bare its inner mechanisms in too obvious a way, a narrative aware of being addressing an audience —a self-conscious text.

Nevertheless, the textual strategy that most clearly breaks the laws of classical or «invisible» narration, a narrative mode that only uses those strategies

that help to develop a story without showing its conventionality, is focalization. By focalization we understand the capacity of the text to portray an action from a point of vision belonging to a character in the story (internal focalization) or not belonging to any character (external focalization).[2]

When Mandrake appears in Ripper's office, puzzled because he can hear normal civilian broadcasting on the radio, which means that no Russian attack can be in progress as Ripper has said, he is still ignorant of Ripper's madness. This scene shows Ripper from the back, and a view of his office and the door through which Mandrake enters the room at the far end. The scene is composed of a semi-subjective shot from behind Ripper's back that is held until Mandrake's suspicions about Ripper's mental state are confirmed when he threatens him with a gun. The semi-subjective shot consists in a shot which includes both Ripper looking in the foreground and what he sees in the background: his office, the door and Mandrake who begins to look puzzled. From this moment on, a sequence of shot / reverse shots starts, but not a conventional one; the shots of Ripper are very low angle close-ups that, after the long, static, semi-subjective shot with which the scene had begun, take the audience by surprise. These low-angle shots show Ripper as if enclosed in a claustrophobic space and, together with single-source lighting, contribute to produce a visually exaggerated, expressionistic view of Ripper lost in his madness.

This strategy of delaying the start of the shot/reverse shot sequence to conceal information, followed by shots from unusual angles, with an overtly stated aesthetic purpose, appears again in the War Room scene. Turgidson is framed from a low angle and the words «World Targets in Megadeaths» appear below him on a briefcase he has left on the table. On this occasion the shot / reverse shot sequence that is taking place between Turgidson and President Merkin Muffley is constantly interrupted by this low-angle shot that once more gives away the text's efforts to characterize Turgidson through his megalomania and incapacity to understand the real meaning of what he is going to propose. Finally, this strategy will reappear when Ripper realizes that he has been defeated, seconds before he shoots himself as logical conclusion of his behaviour.

So, a textual strategy whose main aim is to depict a character's reaction or attitude towards what is happening in the scene, or simply to attribute the vision to him/her (both subservient to a general purpose of conveying a story clearly and unambiguously) works to manipulate information and create surprise, to create a distorted visual composition or to offer a commmentary on the image through the arrangement of mise-en-scene elements and cinematography. This distortion of a relatively stable cinematic formula is another example of a self-conscious narrative, a narrative which knows that it is addressing an audience

and uses spectacular effects that go beyond the rules of an unobtrusive narrative activity.

The sound, mise-en-scene and editing elements that we have discussed so far are also defamiliarizing devices. They, together with the comic strategies, lighting and characterization present a new insight into the way we perceive reality with one effect: because of their comic, distorting or self-conscious nature, they distance the viewer from the contents of the narrative. The result is a comic, grotesque narrative that tells the viewer how the world is ruled by maniacs and is about to cease to exist while the audience laughs at the characters and ridiculous situations enjoying every minute of it. The question is: are those deviations from the classical method of presenting a story regarded as such by the audience or not? Do these devices really lead the viewer to understand the narrative as an artificial construction?

Cinema is a fairly recent artistic manifestation, but its popularity and universal language has allowed it to develop very quickly, providing us with a huge number of examples of its fertility. From the Classical Hollywood films in the United States to Art-cinema in Europe, films produce in their audiences the capacity to distinguish what kind of a text they are watching and what they can expect from it. Because of its massive production of moving pictures, Classical Hollywood filmmaking has for a long period of time been considered the paradigm of filmmaking, the style that sets the rules of what can and cannot be done in a film. This Classical Hollywood style accepts a certain degree of self-conscious narration that is put down to and understood as a brief moment of what Bordwell calls «artistic motivation». When an element cannot be said to be motivated by its compositional relevance (it is necessary for the story to proceed), by realistic motivation (its presence justified on the grounds of verisimilitude), or by intertextual motivation (the element is justified on the grounds of the conventions of certain classes of art works), then it can only be said that it may be justified by «its power to call attention to the system within which it operates» (Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson 1988: 21), that is, by artistic motivation.

This artistic motivation systematically tends to play an important role in certain kinds of films, so that certain genres could not be understood without those irruptions of components that «lay bare the device.» This is the case of musicals, in which the story-line stops for a moment to let a character sing a song, or comedies, in which references to the conventionality of the medium such as the appearance of the Paramount logo in *Road to Utopia* are frequent. Because of its systematic appearance in specific genres these deviations are not considered to be such by the viewer: they are regarded as essential components of the genre.

We can say that they are codified generically as being common constituents. They stop being justified for their artistic motivation and become generically, intertextually codified elements as a result of their recurrent appearance in a specific kind of films.

Dr. Strangelove is a satiric comedy and it consequently includes elements common to both comedy and satire: a mixture of realism and fantasy; depiction of characters as caricatures; grotesque, exaggerated acting; self-conscious textual narrative strategies in order to create visually spectacular effects or drive their points home. All these elements are codified as belonging to a satiric and comic text. Generic motivation makes all of them acceptable because one of the characteristics of satiric comedy / comic satire is the overtly achieved «defamiliarization» of reality. They offer a distorted, more spectacular view of reality but do not break the illusion of the telling activity, although they distance the viewer from a completely serious understanding of the film because they identify the text as satire, based on reality but not totally faithful to it. They become an essential part of the text.

The quick pace of the text is the product of the peculiar arrangement of its fabulaic contents. *Dr. Strangelove'* s story resembles what Bordwell calls canonic narration (Bordwell 1985: 157-162).[3] Its characteristics are easily recognizable in *Dr. Strangelove* although the nature of the text offers altered versions of some of them: characters are clearly defined in their insanity or their incapacity to handle the situation; their struggle is to avoid the certain death that is threatening all of them, except for Kong whose task is to drop the bomb (both are clearcut problems and goals). The principal causal agent is the character; although Ripper sets the machine of death loose, it is not the machine that governs the narrative, it is the characters' struggle to avoid that death in the case of the War Room and Mandrake, and Kong's task that move the narrative forwards. Each character is given a motif that keeps appearing and that both identifies and describes the character for us: so Kong's cowboy hat, Turgidson's chewing gum, Ripper's cigar or Strangelove's mechanical hand among others. The locales in which the various lines of action take place are distinct and remain so for the whole of the narrative, so becoming easily identifiable. The temporal arrangement of the narrative relies on two classical devices: deadlines and crosscutting. The action is punctuated by the deadline that the flight of the planes towards their targets implies and both Mandrake's line of action and the characters' in the War Room are based on how they can recall the wing before the B-52s reach their targets. As was pointed out before, the text alternates successively between three locales: Burpleson air base (where Ripper and Mandrake are), the War Room (Turgidson, President) and the B-52 («King»

Kong). This crosscutting structure creates suspense by witholding information for a certain time until the narrative gets back to the same locale again and retakes the line of action left open.

Dr. Strangelove's text contains enough elements to define it as a classical, canonic narration. The purpose of this kind of narration is to facilitate the viewer's quick and easy understanding of the narrative, which will engage his/her attention and will make him/her view the film with interest. We could say that the only purpose of this narrational mode is to excite the audience's curiosity while, at the same time, withholding and retarding the final outcome or meaning of the text until its conclusion.

We have also said that crosscutting builds up curiosity by retarding the completion of a line of action. In *Dr. Strangelove* the fact that the crosscutting of the narrative takes place between three locales strengthens the mechanisms to produce curiosity as the number of lines of action provides more possibilities to do so. This game with information relies on the assumption that the viewer proceeds through the text in the hope of finding out what the relationships of all the elements in the narrative are and reaching an ending that will give a meaning to the whole text. This classical assumption resembles Roland Barthes' statement that the reason why a reader reads a novel is because he/she hopes to find a meaning in it out of the relations between the high order elements of the text (Barthes 1983: 295).

This is exactly the process that Classical Hollywood enhances by rewarding the audience's search for coherent information in the text. *Dr. Strangelove*'s crosscutting-based structure and what we could call classical treatment of its scenes stimulates both a horizontal and a vertical reading, the suspense produced by sequences left open is progressively rewarded and the semantic units are integrated in the whole of the narrative line of action. It is the wish to know, curiosity, that leads the audience through the film towards what Brooks calls «the revelation of meaning that occurs when the narrative sentence reaches full predication» (Brooks 1984: 18). Brooks puts more emphasis on the temporal nature of this process and the retrospective quality of narratives that makes the reader/viewer proceed with the hope that what is to come will provide what has already gone with a new meaning. Both Barthes and Brooks make of the acquisition of meaning the principal advancing force of the text.

So far we have seen how *Dr. Strangelove* regards the defamiliarizing strategies as its essential constituents and how their main aim is to produce spectacle. By their continuous appearance, those strategies cue the audience to expect them all along the narrative. They create an inner logic of expectation comparable to the «logical» time Barthes perceives in narratives. The typically

classical narration the film uses also clearly favours both a horizontal reading and a vertical integrating quest for meaning through all its semantic elements (characters, actions, dialogue,...).

The detachment proper of a satiric text makes part of the vertical quest for knowledge irrelevant and replaces it with a visual, horizontal inner logic (the logic of spectacle, with the final stroke of the appearance of Dr. Strangelove at the end; horizontal, because it only concerns elements at a formal level) of the film that has to be fulfilled, leading to the only outcome that the visual inner logic can provide: the explosion of the bomb. The iconic nature of cinematic signs favours the creation of a textual inner logic of a different kind; it is visual, mimetic as much as temporal. The mimetic side of language that can more easily be disregarded in written narratives is used by the text to build up a logic of its own, it is an intrinsic quality of the medium, one so strong and effective that it works independently of the «logical» time. In the same way that broken sequences are completed and integrated in the textual process, the inner logic of spectacle needs a development and a completion in the ending.

As an example of the former points, we can now focus our attention on some key scenes from the film. Halfway through the film the President tries to contact premier Kissoff to inform him of the attack in progress. This scene takes place in the War Room, in front of the generals, General Turgidson included. President Muffley manages to get Kissoff on the phone and tells him the news and how they are going to help them destroy their B-52s as they cannot recall them. The scene provides, then, new information and leaves a cause dangling at the end which will sustain suspense (the Russian ambassador says they have a «Doomsday Machine» and he looks worried but we are not told why).

The text now changes locale and moves to Ripper's office. It is a scene in which Ripper reveals his theory of fluoridation, the reason why he launched the attack on Russia (he believes the Russians have been «fluoridating» the water in a clearly anti-American tactic). We gain knowledge about the characters, about their actions and their motivations; the vertical quest for meaning is rewarded here as well as in the preceding scene.

Now the narrative goes back to the War Room. We are told what this Doomsday Machine is: a sequence is thereby closed in the horizontal reading of the text and in the vertical one, as it emphasizes the deadline and makes the struggle to recall the airplanes more dramatic: time is running out and they need to recall the wing before they reach their targets.

In these three examples we can note: the first scene's photographic quality of the shots in the War Room, with the comic performance of the President, who treats the Russian premier like a child in one of the funniest scenes

of the film; in the second scene, the incongruous reasons given by Ripper, Mandrake's out of place exquisite politeness that results wonderfully comic, and the use of lighting; and the third scene's caricatures of the Russian Ambassador and Turgidson, and Dr. Strangelove's over the top performance as an ex-Nazi scientist whose mechanical hand rebels against its owner. All these elements contribute to create that mimetic logic of spectacle that contends with the horizontal and vertical readings for the narrative advancing role.

As the film progresses, the weight of this mimetic logic of spectacle increases, especially in the last two scenes that precede the explosion. The first one takes place in the B-52. It starts by showing the characters carrying out their task (getting ready to drop the bomb) in a usual way. But at a certain point in the scene Kong goes down to the bomb cellar to check what is wrong with the bomb doors that refuse to open. From that moment on the scene gets carried away by Kong's monkey-like behaviour (the film uses here a shot in fast motion in which he looks like a mad monkey) that culminates when he rides the bomb to the ground as if it were a bronco, in a completely unrealistic outcome of the scene that gives away its purpose to please the viewer, and make him/her laugh rather than reflect about the consequence of what Kong is doing. The bomb explodes and, in the next scene, Strangelove goes on with his incongruous show. He proposes to hide people in mines for a hundred years until the radioactivity caused by the bomb has disappeared. Here the scene also gives away its desire to please by making the president (one of the few characters who had been fairly reasonable and sensible all along the film) take them into consideration. Strangelove's characterization is so exaggerated and comic that it makes us forget what is happening and fosters its pure enjoyment. Besides, the scene adds no meaning to the development of the narrative because we have just seen the explosion of the bomb and know that everything is finished now.

The text's efforts to produce a certain visual style, and the audience's recognition of it as an essential component of a genre helps to expect this ending, to expect a consistent visual style all along the text. Texts belonging to different genres are recognized as having their own visual elements that keep appearing in the films that belong to that genre: long shots of landscapes or deserts in Westerns, Chaplin and Keaton's difficulties to handle objects of the mise-en-scene, Wim Wenders's shots of desolate urban or country milieu; they all, voluntarily or involuntarily, cue the audience's expectations and constitute a distinctive feature of a genre or an author's work.

Barthes's conviction that the essence of a literary narrative lies in its capacity to build up an artificial structure, independent of the mimetic side of the text, whose fulfilment becomes its main purpose, has to be altered when applied

to films, where the inherent mimetic nature of the cinematic medium has to be acknowledged. In the case of films, their contents can create a visual inherent logic parallel to the structural logic that arises from their arrangement, and sometimes this mimetic logic can even relegate the structural quest for meaning to a secondary place as in *Dr. Strangelove* . After all, the film's complete title is *Dr. Strangelove or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* .

NOTES

1. I am here adopting Mieke Bal's terminology which distinguishes between fabula (series of events), story (ordered events qualified by various points of view) and text (story converted into linguistic signs by a relating agent, a narrator) (Mieke Bal 1985: 6-9). In cinema, the existence of narration does not necessarily involve the presence of a narrator. Most films do not provide a narrator and the viewer will not identify one unless the text provides explicit cues for its construction.

2. External focalization is characteristic of the filmic medium. Internal focalization can be achieved through various textual devices such as a shot containing both a character looking and the object of his/her gaze. Jean Mitry calls this shot «semi-subjective» (in Branigan 1984: 215). Another focalization device is the use of shot / reverse shot sequences which alternatively show two characters (or two objects, or a character and an object) from a point in space that does not wholly correspond to the position of any of the two participants in the sequence. Each shot must represent «from a more or less oblique angle, one endpoint of an imaginary 180-degree line running through the scenographic space» (Bordwell 1985: 110). In a way these sequences also constitute another focalizing method as they usually show the attitude of the characters to what has just been shown to the viewer at the other end of the space of the scene.

3. This kind of narration is typical of Classical Hollywood filmmaking. It presents psychologically defined individuals who try to solve a clear-cut problem or achieve a specific goal. This narrative is heavily based upon the existence of a story-line which follows a cause-effect pattern; the configuration of space and the arrangement of temporal units is designed to depict effectively how causes lead to effects: unity of time (continuous or consistently intermittent) and of space (a quickly identifiable locale) which develop a distinct cause-effect chain. Temporal organization relies on the setting of deadlines that arise expectations in the viewer and motivate the showing of whether the deadline is met or not. Within the scenes, this narrative mode practises temporal and spatial continuity, this is achieved by an editing method that makes a point of showing the events in chronological order, of respecting their frequency of appearance in the story and of only omitting actions that are not relevant for the audience's construction of the story. The construction of the space of the narrative also has as its principal aim to create an «unambiguous» space that leaves the viewer the only task of following the action prompted by the character.

REFERENCES

BAL, Mieke. 1985. *Narratology. Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*. Trans. Christine Van Boheemen. Toronto: U of Toronto P.

BARTHES, Roland. 1983. «Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives.» 1966. In *Barthes: Selected Writings* . Ed. Susan Sontag. Oxford: Fontana / Collins.

BORDWELL, David. 1985. *Narration in the Fiction Film* . Madison: U of Wisconsin P

BORDWELL, David, Janet STAIGER, and Kristin THOMPSON. 1988. *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* . London: Routledge.

BRANIGAN, Edward. 1984. *Point of View in the Cinema* . Berlin: Mouton.

CHATMAN, Seymour. 1981. «What Novels Can Do That Films Can't (and Vice Versa).» In *On Narrative* . Ed. W. J. T. Mitchell. Chicago: U of Chicago P.

EAGLE, Herbert. 1981. *Russian Formalist Film Theory* . U of Michigan, Michigan Slavic Publications.