



Introduction

Film Studies and Analytic Aesthetics in Dialogue

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Since the 1970s with Stanley Cavell's work, and later with contributions such as those by Noël Carroll, George Wilson, Gregory Currie, and Berys Gaut, film has become a respectable object of philosophizing among Anglo-Saxon philosophers. Still, when it comes to the relationship between film and philosophy, the focus is mostly on how philosophy can help better understand film with little or nothing on how film studies can contribute to philosophical aesthetics. This special issue is aimed at encouraging a more balanced interaction between analytic aesthetics and film studies.

Two exemplary domains in which analytic aesthetics and film studies can fruitfully interact are film experience and film appreciation. Analytic aesthetics traditionally explores the role that mental states such as perception, imagination, and emotions play in film experience, while a recent tendency in film studies leans toward emphasizing the embodied nature of film experience and the relevance of neuroscience to its proper understanding. Two contributors to our special issue question such neuroscience-based approaches to film experience. Joerg Fingerhut proposes supplementing them with the notion of twofoldness introduced by Richard Wollheim ([1980] 2015) in his account of depiction. Malcom Turvey criticizes the uses of the mirror-neurons hypothesis to explain film experience, arguing that the latter is more complex than the way neuroscience-based approaches portray it.

As for film appreciation, analytic aesthetics traditionally investigates its role in the process that leads from film experience to evaluative judgments, while film studies help us to relate it to notions such as genre, form, and style. Four contributors to our special issue address such topics: Filippo Contesi focuses on the horror genre, Melenia Arouh discusses the form/content distinction, Philip Cowan discusses the notion of film style, and Laura Di Summa investigates the domain of film criticism.

This special issue has its roots in the "Analytic Aesthetics and Film Studies" conference held at the University of Warwick in 2018. Although some of the

articles in the issue were not originally presented there, they all share in the ethos of the conference—to genuinely bring about dialogue between two disciplines and afford mutual enrichment and growth. What had initially been imagined as a one-off event is now already in its third year with the continuing financial support of the British Society of Aesthetics. Whereas in the first year all intersections of analytic aesthetic and film studies were welcome, in 2019 the conference focused on documentary film and the fiction/non-fiction distinction. This year, the conversation will concentrate on experimental film.

With its interdisciplinary approach, which favors the dialogue between cognitive film theory and analytic aesthetics, *Projections* is, of course, the ideal venue to start this exchange in print. But it is also especially encouraging that other venues are becoming open to it. *Studies in Documentary Film*, for instance, will host a special issue deriving from our conference last year. We believe that this is, in large part, due to the shift from monodirectional influence from analytic aesthetics to film studies to a relationship on a more equal footing, a relationship evinced by departmental affiliations of editors and contributors alike. Or, to put it in yet another way, if earlier Carroll (2003, 188-189) called on film scholars to become philosophers, we would also like to invite philosophers, especially those who work in analytic aesthetics, to try to become film scholars.

References

- Carroll, Noël. 2003. "Postmodernist Skepticism and the Nonfiction Film." In his *Engaging the Moving Image*, 165–192. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Wollheim, Richard. (1980) 2015. *Art and Its Objects*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
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