From the Editors:
Big News in River City

We have a new sponsor. The Society for the Cognitive Studies of the Moving Image (SCSMI) joins our other sponsor, the Forum for Movies and Mind (FMM), in supporting the journal’s goal of investigating the ways in which film opens up the exploration of the mind and the ways in which studies of the mind deepen our understanding of film. (See pages 141–142 to learn more about our sponsors.) We continue to be both focused and eclectic; a term we have used for ourselves before is “parallactic”—we study the subject from a variety of points of view to achieve a fuller vision and understanding. Having SCSMI aboard enriches our journal. The organization has an excellent and renowned group of scholars, and the cognitive study of film is already influencing our understanding of film and mind profoundly.

We also inform you that Lesley Caldwell will be joining the journal as the Associate Editor for our psychoanalytic component. She is Hon. Senior research fellow in both the Psychoanalysis Unit and Italian Department at University College London, a practicing psychoanalyst, and a scholar and writer. She is also an editor of the Winnicott Trust and the current Chair of Trustees. Lesley Caldwell replaces Bruce Sklarew, who will continue an active role with the journal as a member of the Board of Editors. Bruce gets our “Where would we be without you?” award for co-founding both the Forum and Projections and for his invaluable service to this journal.

We begin our fourth year with an issue that presents an array of approaches—film studies, cognitive psychology, psychoanalysis, neuroscience, evolutionary biology—from an international array of people from Denmark, Germany, England, Australia, Hungary, and the United States. We are especially pleased to continue our practice of bringing the voices of important directors to our pages by beginning our issue with an interview of Lars von Trier on his most recent film, Antichrist. We believe these interviews give us remarkable insights both into the making of films and the mind of the artist responsible for them. This is especially true of von Trier who discusses his most recent and, so far, most controversial film in both a candid and personal way. Because the interview took place at the June 2009 SCSMI conference in Copenhagen, printing it here is an auspicious way of beginning our relationship.

We also introduce a new practice in our journal of publishing longer than normal essays on rare occasions and only when we feel that the subject itself
and the author’s approach and accomplishment supports our doing so. In this issue we publish such discussions of two of the basic elements of film—character and sound. Jens Eder makes available some of the major ideas he developed in his monumental book *Die Figur im Film*, published in Germany in 2008. His article suggests a comprehensive and categorical way of approaching the seemingly vast and overwhelming subject of character in cinema. Edward Branigan’s article gives a full and readable survey of the many and various approaches to sound in film, drawing similarities and distinctions in such a way that he clarifies for the reader the essential issues and questions about the subject in general.

John J. Hartman, Kim Vaz, and Lycia Alexander-Guerra’s article demonstrates how a psychoanalytic approach that avoids the “big truths” can draw from clinical experience a way of opening up the meaning of a film. The authors apply Leon Balter’s ideas about “nested ideation”—the dream or work of art in the work of art—to *Idlewild*, a 2005 film that features the hip-hop duo, Outkast. With their analytic approach and Balter’s “nested ideation,” the authors show how what at first appears to be a superficial popular film can possess a surprising depth.

From our inception we have considered book reviews an important means of opening up the discussion beyond the pages of the journal and making our readers aware of important developments in the field of film studies. In this issue, we bring together a number of books that examine film and mind from diverse perspectives. The year 2009 has been extremely rich in the field of cognitive film studies and its correlates—philosophy, film, and evolutionary biology. Thus we have asked Robert Sinnerbrink, a specialist in philosophy and film in Australia, to write a review essay of the three works on the subject that we think will have an important influence on the discourse about film and mind.

We also examine books that employ different disciplines to understand the movies-mind relationship. The books reviewed cover diverse topics, including Charlie Chaplin, the icon of the child in film history, the cinema of India, the cinematic repressed, and the Art Films of the 1950s and 1960s. What is most important to us is the way that all these books with their various approaches seem to be interacting and partaking in the same investigation.

David Bordwell, former president of SCSMI, makes the following assertion on the home page of the organization’s Web site (http://www.scsmi-online.org/index.html): “Moving-image media are an unusual technology. We designed and created and improved them across a hundred years and more, yet we scarcely understand the mysterious power they wield. This is a puzzle that should make any academic researcher curious.”

This is the puzzle that binds together the various disciplines and writers that appear in our journal. We ask our readers to join us as we ponder and seek to respond to the “mysterious power” of the cinema.