



From the Editor

This issue of *Projections* ranges across the avant-garde cinema, tear-jerking melodramas, the nature of historical trauma, and narratives that assume playful, game-like formats and that may be found in title sequences and trailers.

Paul Taberham examines the ways that avant-garde filmmaker Stan Brakhage placed filmic design in relation to human perceptual processes, particularly those visual impressions that are entopic or occur within the eye itself. Often in cinema we see what we seem to see because it is what we have expected to occur. Cinematic seeing often is a matter of expectation and formal conventions as these are exploited by filmmakers. According to Taberham, Brakhage wished to re-educate the viewer's perceptions away from the conventional by returning a sense of innocence to vision. Taberham examines how Brakhage's emphasis on entopic vision and design strategies focusing on image surface enabled him to pursue these artistic goals.

Sad films—those that aim to make viewers cry—constitute an enduring genre, one that suggests that the provision of a vicarious experience of sadness may be one of cinema's core appeals to viewers. Cognitive cinema scholars have been quite interested in the processes whereby viewers find sadness to be an appealing emotion to experience in cinema. Many papers and volumes have explored the subject, and Jonathan Frome returns our interest to the topic by offering a hypothesis about how films succeed at the task of making viewers cry. He does so by exploring the structure and features of sadness and how these may be tied to formal properties of filmic images and narratives. He offers a fresh reading of *Stella Dallas*, which has functioned in cognitive literature on sad movies as an exemplar and an icon of successful tear-jerking.

Rina Dudai explores the nature of trauma at individual and collective levels and is especially interested in how a filmmaker might move from the discourse of psychology, where trauma typically is analyzed, to the poetic language of cinema. Poeticizing trauma, she suggests, is a necessary step for a narrative filmmaker to take in order to communicate artistically within the structures of cinema. She examines depictions of trauma in two recent and prominent films, Michael Haneke's *Cache* and Ari Folman's *Waltz with Bashir*.

Groundhog Day is a classic comedy about a television reporter caught in a strange time loop whereby he must repeat the same day over and over in ways that abolish time and even death itself. Because of this repetition compulsion he cannot die, though he tries several times to commit suicide. The movie's structure is ludic—playful, ironic, reflexive, game-like. Henriette Heidbrink explores ludic structures in movies like *Groundhog Day* that envision the deaths of main characters. Movies often play the death of a main character as a tragic event, eliciting empathy from viewers over the character's fate. Heidbrink examines how ludic structures may work to inhibit empathy, offering filmmakers a means of reaching viewers that does not depend on the elicitation of empathy.

Narrative films, of course, tell stories, but they often do so in ways that go beyond the main body of the film, that which occurs between the opening and closing credits. The last two articles in this issue explore narrative strategies occurring in title sequences and in trailers (previews of coming attractions). Kathrin Fahlenbrach and Barbara Flueckiger explore emotional priming in the title sequences of long form television shows ("Dexter," "Six Feet Under," "True Blood"). They are interested to learn how trailers position viewers for experiencing the emotions that the ensuing episodes of the series will elicit. Significantly, these shows elicit mixed emotions by virtue of the characters and situations they depict. Fahlenbrach and Flueckiger identify several priming strategies that these immersive title sequences employ.

Charlotte Sun Jensen considers how movie trailers function as alternative narratives. Many of us have had the experience of seeing a movie and realizing that it bears little resemblance to what the trailer had promised. Jensen examines how trailers must simultaneously hold back information and provide it to viewers. They construct concentrated narratives that sometimes become alternative narratives to what the larger film actually offers. She discusses how the concentration of narrative in a trailer can result in an intensification of emotion.

We close this issue with a book review by Ted Nannicelli of Arthur Shimamura's *Psychocinematics*, which Nannicelli calls "a milestone for cognitive film theory."

—Stephen Prince
