



From the Editor

If people generally do a poor job of recognizing liars, it is interesting that so many movies employ deceptive characters. Duplicity and prevarication are common plot devices whereby scheming characters maneuver to get their way. Such movies often rely on viewers' abilities to recognize the deception at hand. Does this represent a disconnect between movies and life, with viewers tasked in one arena with a skill set that doesn't seem to function well in the other? J. Brandon Colvin explores movies that rely on character deception and explains how such films employ cues to alert viewers to deceptive screen behavior. Using film noir as examples, his work approaches a familiar genre from a fresh perspective and helps to clarify relatively understudied dimensions of narrative and performance.

A quantitative analysis of formal design across a filmmaker's body of work may yield results that differ from common critical impressions of that work. Sometimes the way a film seems to be working, or the way that it feels to viewers, is at odds with the actual design elements with which it has been constructed. Jaakko Seppälä examines the films of Aki Kaurismaki and gives us a quantitative analysis of shot lengths and shot types that point to a mismatch between the films and aspects of critical consensus regarding them. Seppälä maintains that the film style is significantly more heterogeneous than critics have recognized.

James Cutting and Ayse Candan also offer our readers a quantitative analysis of shot design, in this case as part of a large-scale historical analysis that focuses on the increasing pace of modern movies. They demonstrate a linear decline in mean shot duration in a large sample of films released between 1912 and 2013 and show that this decline is uniform across 15 types of shots. The reasons why movies have gotten more fast-paced are multifarious, and Cutting and Candan suggest that they include shifts in the types of shots that directors are favoring, such as an increase in the use of close-ups.

Katalin Bálint and Ed Tan move in a qualitative direction in their study of narrative absorption. Viewers like to immerse themselves in fictional narrative worlds, and movies are an excellent medium for doing so. But what is this experience like when viewers are asked to describe it? Bálint and Tan interviewed viewers in depth about their perceptions of being absorbed by written and visual narratives, and they examine the results by drawing on mental mod-

els employing image schemas, using these to clarify dimensions of embodied meaning in cinema.

Book reviews in this issue examine David Caputo's *Polanski and Perception*, Patrick Keating's *Cinematography*, and Linda Williams's *On "The Wire"*.

—Stephen Prince
