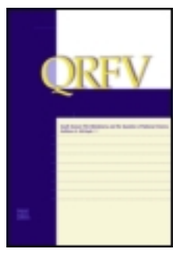

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ON SCREEN, IN FRAME: FILM AND IDEOLOGY

Stephen Heath

I

Something changes between 22 March and 28 December 1895. Between the scientific presentation and the start of commercial exploitation, the screen is fixed in its definitive place. The spectators are no longer set on either side of a translucent screen but have been assigned their position in front of the image which unrolls before them—*cinema* begins.

There are any number of anecdotal items which might have their significance in this context—the Japanese audiences to whom it used to be necessary to explain the facts of projection prior to the showing of a film, the organization of shadow theatre in certain cultures where the screen divides the audience into two with only the men allowed to move freely from one side to the other, to go behind the screen (much of the significance of these items is in their non-Western reference)—but more immediately important here are the images of screen and position in Marx and Freud and what they have to suggest for a consideration of film and ideology.

In Marx, of course, it is precisely the description of ideology which runs into such terms: "Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life-process. If in all ideology, men and their circumstances appear upside down as in a camera obscura, this phenomenon arises from their historical life-processes just as the inversion of the retina does from their physical life-process. . . We begin with real, active men, and from their real life-process show the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process. The phantoms of the human brain also are necessary sublimates of men's material life-process, which can be empirically established and which is bound to material pre-

conditions. Morality, religion, metaphysics and other ideologies no longer retain therefore their appearance of autonomous existence. They have no history, no development. . . " (*The German Ideology*). Men and their circumstances appear upside down as in a camera obscura—everything is projected in the darkened room but inverted. The conception is clear but difficult in the comparison with the camera obscura: the match between idea and model, as it were, makes the problem, shows the work to be done. As the individual faces the screen of ideology—the wall, the side of the machine onto which the image is projected—he or she sees a real image, in true, aligned, and him/herself in position with it, screened too, presented and represented. There is no turning round (or back) to reality as to a direct source of light, no putting the eye to a hole in another wall so as to see the world outside. Ideology arises from the historical life-processes taken up in it. The struggle is in reality which includes ideology as a real component of its presence, historical, social, and subjective. The model of the camera obscura stops on the screen, hypothesizes subject and reality in the simple figure of inversion at the very moment that it seeks to stress the relations of their production, a process that crosses subject and reality in ideology.

It is the process of the subject, its construction, that occupies Freud in the elaboration of psychoanalysis, and it is the displacement of the subject from a simple coherence of consciousness which leads to the introduction of terms of screen and position. Mental processes exist to begin with in an unconscious phase, only from which do they pass over into the conscious phase—"just as a photographic picture begins as a negative and only becomes a picture after being turned into a positive." Once the photographic comparison has been made, Freud faces the problem of the selection of the conscious "images" with a spatial picture, another image: "The impulses in the entrance hall of the unconscious are out of sight of the conscious, which is in the other room; to begin with they must remain unconscious. If they have already pushed their way forward to the threshold and have been turned back by the watchman, then they are inadmissible to consciousness; we speak of them as *repressed*. But even the impulses which the watchman has allowed to cross the threshold are not on that account necessarily conscious as well; they can only become so if they succeed in catching the eye of consciousness. We are therefore justified in calling this second room the system of the *preconscious*." (*Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*). The subject is no longer given in front of the screen of ideology but divided in the very process of its construction for that confrontation. The camera obscura becomes a series of chambers with nega-

tives and positives, movements and repressions, screenings for and from the eye of consciousness. The irony is that it is just this kind of image—there is a similar one five years earlier in the *Five Lectures on Psychoanalysis*—that is filmable in Freud, that attracted the attention of directors and producers from Goldwyn to Pabst. There is something absolutely right and wrong in Goldwyn's approach to Freud—something of the enormity of Laemmle greeting Eisenstein by asking whether Trotsky could manage to knock up a script for him, but more so—film and psychoanalysis joining and disjoining on the image, the subject, the reality of their positions.

Thus, already, we have a certain power of cinema: just after Marx, just before Freud (or contemporaneously with him), it furnishes another image, the Image ("The discovery of the universal language! " cries one spectator to his neighbor in the Grand Café), in movement and set firm on the screen. The images of Marx and Freud—camera obscura, photographic printing, the dark chambers which filter material to catch the eye of consciousness—bear exactly on the image, bear against the phantoms or the phantom of consciousness. Hence, these—their own—images are at once necessary and dangerous (witness Freud's reaction to the filming of the metaphors he proposes), explicit and complicit. It is this encounter of images, this crisis of complicity, that can guide us. Cinema brings historical materialism and psychoanalysis together in such a way that the consideration of film and ideology begins from and constantly returns us to their conjuncture, in such a way that from the analysis of cinema, of film, we may be able to engage with theoretical issues of a more general scope, issues crucial for a materialist analysis of ideological institutions and practices.

II

Let us start with the classic—"naive"—thesis, (often adopted as a version of "content analysis" by those who nonetheless refuse it). Film, a film, is precisely an image, the image of an image (of reality), the reproduction of existing representations: in short, a reflection. Since we have been occupied with beginnings, it may as well be said that this conception is that of Louis Lumière but taken one notch down. Instead of holding to a reproduction of life, ("The film subjects I chose are the proof that I only wished to reproduce life"), it holds to a reproduction of the image of life. Of Lumière one has the right to demand to know where this "life" comes from—and

the answer is certainly not from itself, for life is composed on the screen of work, family, and leisure, *La Sortie des ouvriers*, *Le Repas de bébé*, and *L'Arroseur arrosé*, chosen subjects indeed; of the reproduction thesis one has the right to demand to know where the image comes from and what it is doing in the film.

This last question is important, and first and foremost in that it prevents us from stopping at the image, at the idea of the image, obliges us to specify the *work* of ideology in the film, of the film in ideology, its production and productions, its multiple determinations (by what it is determined and what it determines). There is a Biograph film listed for 1902 (it may recall a scene in Godard's *Les Carabiniers*) entitled *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show*: a "country bumpkin who becomes so overwhelmed by watching his first motion picture from a stage box that he tears down the screen in his enthusiasm to help the heroine of one of the films." Uncle Josh can see well enough that it is the screen that is at stake, but then he only sees its images (which he loves) and so misses it completely, passes through it. The image goes on, *continues* (doubtless the self-confirming force of the demonstration, the reason why it figures in the film and in films)—and at the very moment that Uncle Josh pulls away the screen or that the ideologist notes the illusion to lift it off as unreal. Uncle Josh should have turned, as we must turn, in the other direction: the need is to work out the screen, hollow in the image, examine the relations—the real relations—it sustains (produced and producing), what it sets up, the complex of representations, positions and movements, the machinery of cinema (and of film as cinema). The initial question is not "where is reality?" but, "how does this function?," "where is the reality *in that*?"

A second thesis here requires attention. In ideology, it is said, is represented the imaginary relation of individuals to the real relations under which they live. It has also to be stressed, however, that this imaginary relation in ideology is itself real, which means not simply that the individuals live it as such (the mode of illusion, the inverted image) but that it is effectively, practically, the reality of their concrete existence, the term of their subject positions, the basis of their activity, in a given social order. The imaginary is not just in ideology (it is in relations) and ideology is not just reducible to the imaginary (it is that real instance in which the imaginary is realized). What is held in ideology, what it forms, is the *unity* of the real relation and the imaginary relation between men and women and the real conditions of their existence. All of which is not to forget the economic instance nor to ideologize reality into the status of an impossible myth; rather, it is to bring out ideology in its reality and to indicate that reali-

ty—as against ideology, as its truth—is posed only in process in the specific contradictions of a particular sociohistorical moment.

Thus, ideology is to be seen as itself productive within a mode of production, taking the latter—Marx's *Produktionsweise*—to refer precisely in historical materialism to the articulation of the economic, political, and ideological instances; the ideological instance determines the definition, the reproduction, of individuals as agents/subjects for the mode of production, in the positions it assigns them. To acknowledge this is to recognize the materiality of ideology and to grasp analysis accordingly: ideology is not a kind of cloud of ideas hanging over the economic base and which analysis can "dispel" to reveal the coherent image of a simple truth, but a specific social reality given in a specific set of institutions (or "ideological state apparatuses"); to analyse an ideology involves its analysis in this existence within the dynamic of a mode of production. When Marx comments that ideologies "have no history," he means that their history is to be understood exactly in the analysis of the dynamic (the task of historical materialism) and not in some pure autonomy. At the same time, however, the recognition of the material existence and function of ideology demands—and this will be important for thinking about film—the understanding also of a certain historicity of ideological formations in relation to the processes of the production of subject-meanings (meanings for a subject included as the place of their intention), demands, in other words, the understanding of the *symbolic* as an order that is intersected but not resumed by the ideological (ideology works *over* the symbolic *on* the subject *for* the imaginary). A history of cinema could be envisaged in this perspective, which would be not that of the straight reflection of ideological representations, nor that of the simple autonomy of an ideality of forms, but, as it were, the history of the production of meaning assumed and established by cinema in specific relations of the individual to subjectivity.

There are one or two remarks which follow immediately from these initial emphases. Firstly, it must be seen that the notion of determination which has proved—or been made to prove—such a stumbling-block for ideological analysis cannot be conceived of as a problem in cause and effect with its answer an explanation from an absolute point of origin (as though, says Engels, historical materialism were to be "easier than the solution of a simple equation of the first degree"). Analysis will be concerned not with determinations in this mechanistic sense but with contradictions, it being in the movement of these contradictions that can be grasped the *set* of determinations—the "structural causality"—focused by a particular social fact, institution, or work. Secondly, inevitably, a broad conception is

emerging of what might be the *critical* role of art, of a practice of cinema, and in terms precisely of a production of contradictions against the fictions of stasis which contain and mask structuring work, in terms of a fracturation of the vision of representation to show, in Brecht's words, that "in things, men, processes, there is something that makes them what they are and at the same time something which makes them other." This last remark, which engages the very *edge* of the present paper, its constant horizon, leads, moreover, from the more general discussion of ideology to the necessity to consider the vision of cinema, the nature and the area of its intervention. What is the role of cinema in capitalist society as a point of investment and a form of representation and meaning production? What does it sell *on*? At what levels—how—does analysis need to operate?

III

The distinction can be made between industry, machine, and text. *Industry* refers to the direct economic system of cinema, the organization of the structure of production, distribution, and consumption. Studies have shown that such organization has, at least in Britain and America, by and large conformed to typical patterns of capitalist activity. The *text*, the film, is a particular product of that industry. Currency is occasionally given to the idea that the film industry is one of "prototypes," but it is clear that the optimal exploitation of the production apparatus, which ties up considerable amounts of capital, requires the containment of creative work within established frameworks and that genres, film kinds, even so-called studio styles, are crucial factors here. As for the *machine*, this is cinema itself seized exactly between industry and product as the stock of constraints and definitions from which film can be distinguished as *specific signifying practice*. That formulation in turn needs to be opened out a little. *Signifying* indicates the recognition of film as system or series of systems of meaning, film as articulation. *Practice* stresses the process of this articulation, which it thus refuses to hold under the assumption of notions such as "representation" and "expression;" it takes film as a work of production of meanings and in so doing brings into the analysis the constructions of the subject within that work, its inscription of the subject. *Specific* is the necessity for the analysis to understand film in the particularity of the work it engages, the difference of its conjuncture with other signifying practices. This last does not entail pulling film as specific signifying practice towards some aesthetic idea of a pure cinematicity (on

a line with the idea of "literarity" derived in literary criticism from Russian Formalism and often become a way of avoiding crucial issues of ideology in its appeal to a technicist "structuralist poetics"); specificity here is semiotic, and a semiotic analysis of film—of film as signifying practice—is the analysis of a heterogeneity, the range of codes and systems at work in the film text; specificity, that is, is at once those codes particular to cinema (codes of articulation, of sound and image, codes of scale of shot, certain codes of narrative disposition, etc.) *and* the heterogeneity in its particular effects, its particular inscriptions of subject and ideology, of the subject in ideology.

These effects of inscription are fundamental, the area of the intersection of film in ideology by industry and machine as institution of the subject, as institution of image and position, and their shifting regulation *on* the figure of the subject. The hypothesis, in short, is that an important—determining—part of ideological systems in a capitalist mode of production is the achievement of a number of machines (institutions) which move—which *movie*—the individual as subject—shifting and placing desire, the energy of contradiction—in a perpetual retotalisation of the imaginary. The individual is always a subject of ideology, but is always more than simply the figure of that representation (just as the social cannot be reduced to the ideological which is nevertheless the very form of its representation as society); what the machines undertake is the realignment of such excess—desire, contradiction, and negativity. As far as analysis is concerned, the hypothesis tends to suggest a kind of returning movement, whereby the industy is to be grasped (in terms of "film and ideology") from the point of the ideological determination of the institution-machine and the latter from the point of its textual effects. In fact, of course, this complexity—this *complex*—may be broken by analysis into its own levels of contradiction: each film is specific in the ideological operation of its text *and* in its operation of the ideological specificity of film. The aim now must be to sketch something of these limits as the necessary focus for critical—creative—resistance.

To focus limits, in other words, is not to declare cinema by nature reactionary but to attempt to dialectically exploit comprehension in the interests of a demonstration/transformation of the cinematic institution in its ideological effects. Yet the difficulties should be remembered and they can be seen by considering for a moment the example of Brecht. It is the question of limits that occupies Brecht in his thinking on cinema; the terms of his assessment alter, but in Hollywood he comes to regard cinema as inevitably regressive (identificational) insofar as it cuts off the

spectator from production, from performance: "the public no longer has any opportunity to modify the actor's performance; it is confronted not with a production but with the result of a production, produced in its absence." This "fundamental reproach" gains in intensity in the light of the *fundamental* importance attached by Brecht in his theatrical practice to the *Lehrstück* (and not finally to the epic theatre play) as "model for the theatre of the future": the purpose of the *Lehrstuck*, the "learning-play" (Brecht's own preferred translation), is "to show a politically wrong mode of behaviour and hence to teach a correct mode of behaviour," the realization of such a purpose lying "in the fact that it is acted, not in the fact that it is seen"; "it completely transforms the role of acting; it suppresses the system actor/spectator, knows only actors who are at the same time apprentices"; as model for the future, the *Lehrstück* is thus, in fact, a kind of school of dialectics. Nothing of the sort in film: cinema as art of the product, the public screened from production, fixed in the image. Brecht poses the problem, the difficulties, precisely with regard to subject-position and the implication of cinema in a founding ideology of vision as knowledge, the specularization of reality for the coherence of a subject outside contradiction; the assessment, the reproach, follows from that relation.

IV

What are the terms of this relation of vision? Those of a *memory*, the constant movement of a retention of the individual as subject, framed and narrated.

The screen is the projection of the film frame which it holds and grounds (hence the urgency of the need to fix the position, to forbid the other side). It is not by chance that the word "frame"—which etymologically means "to advance," "to further," "to gain ground"—should emerge from painting to describe the material unit of the film ("the single transparent photograph in a series of such photographs printed on a length of cinematographic film," "twenty-four frames a second") and that it should then be used to talk about the image in its setting, the delimitation of the image on screen (in Arnheim, for instance, "frame" and "delimitation" are synonymous), as well as to provide an expression for the passage of the film in the projector relative to the aperture—"in frame"—and for the camera view point, "framing" and "reframing." In an Eisenstein, moreover, there is a veritable aesthetics of the staging of the frame, of *mise en*

cadre ("Just as *mise en scène* will be taken to mean the placing of elements, temporally and spatially, on the theatre stage, so we will call *mise en cadre* the placing of these elements in the shot").

It is the differences in frame between film and painting that are generally emphasized: film is limited to a standard screen ratio (the three to four horizontal rectangle) or, as now, to a number of such ratios (Eisenstein in Hollywood proposes a square screen which would permit the creation of rectangles of any proportion by the use of masks); film destroys the ordinary laws of pictorial composition because of its moving human figures which capture attention against all else. In his essay on "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Walter Benjamin has a comparison of film and painting which develops their incompatibility in this way from the position of the spectator: "The painting invites the spectator to contemplation; before it the spectator can abandon himself to his associations. Before the movie frame he cannot do so. No sooner has his eye grasped a scene than it is already changed. It cannot be arrested. . . The spectator's process of association in view of these images is indeed interrupted by their constant sudden change." There is much there that would call for comment (the comparison stems from the initial valuation of cinema by Brecht and Benjamin as a new mode of organizing and defining artistic production and, in fact, as a potentially epic mode—a conception that the *Threepenny Opera* lawsuit had begun to call into question even before Benjamin's essay was written): what needs to be stressed here, however, is the insistence of the frame which stays in view throughout the comparison, in place, the constant screen. The same constancy (or consistency) carries over to the other classic comparison, that of film and theatre. Where the stage has "wings," fixed limits, the screen in this comparison is said to be lacking in any frame, to know only the implied continuation of the reality of the image. Thus Bazin will write: "The screen is not a frame like that of a picture, but a mask which allows us to see a part of the event only. When a person leaves the field of the camera, we recognise that he or she is out of the field of vision, though continuing to exist identically in another part of the scene which is hidden from us. The screen has no wings. . ." Once again, however, the frame simply stays put, transposed as the field of vision of the camera, and there is no necessity to emphasize the importance of what Vertov calls "theatrical cinema" (not least in Bazin with his consecration of the deep focus scene in the films of a Welles or a Wyler). Moreover, the illimitation which the theatre comparison seeks to stress is exactly the confirmation of the power of the frame, its definition as a "view" that has ceaselessly to

counter absence by the assertion of the coherence of its presence, its "being-in-frame."

In frame: the place of image and subject, view (in early French catalogues a film is called a *vue*) and viewer; frame, framing, is the very basis of disposition—German *Einstellung*: adjustment, centering, framing, moral attitude, the correct position. Nijny reports a remark of Eisenstein's to the effect that metaphor is often the key to solutions of problems in *mise en cadre*; what can be added is that the frame itself is the constant metaphor, the transfer—the *metaphora*—of center and eye (the early circular masks, shaped mattes, etc., are so many signs of this veritable drama of the centered eye—a film like *Grandma's Reading Glass* still has its lessons, its resonances).

The stake of the frame is clear (it is this that is finally crucial in Marx's camera obscura, not the inversion): the frame is the reconstitution of the scene of the signifier, of the symbolic, into that of the signified, the passage through the image from other scene to seen; it ensures distance as correct position, the summit of the eye, *representation*; it redresses (here, paradoxically, is the inversion) reality and meaning, is the point of their match. Analysis must then begin (and much has been done in this field) to examine the history, the techniques, the movements, of the alignment of cinema-eye and human-eye and subject-eye (where Vertov wished to give the disalignment, the difference of the first two in order to displace the subject-eye of the individual into an operative—transforming—relation to reality), must trace the windowing identity of subject and camera, the setting of the gaze to accompany the play of "point of view" between characters in the diegetic space of the film (always the drama of the eye) which organizes the images in the coherence of the fiction.

The fiction, the view, of the characters—the human figures who enter film from the very first, as though of right, spilling out of the train at La Ciotat, leaving the Lyons factory or the photographic congress (is the fascination with people "arriving" in film simply coincidental?) and who can only be evacuated with great difficulty, in certain modern "experimental" films—encloses the film as narrative, establishes that diegetic space. Specifying cinema-the-machine as mode of communication at the start of *Langage et cinéma*, Metz comments that it has "no particular sector of meaning (no portion of the matter of content in Hjelmslevian terms)." Yet narrative is there immediately in film, in cinema, to lay out the images, to support the frame against its excess, to suggest laws to hold the movement, to ensure continuity, to *be* "cinematic form" (thus, for Lawson, "The total rejection of a story, and the accompanying denial of

syntax or arrangement, can only lead to the breakdown of cinematic form."). In the intermittence of its images (Benjamin's "constant sudden change"), film is a perpetual metonymy over which narrative lays as a model of closure, a kind of conversion of desire (metonymy is the figure of desire in psychoanalytic theory) into the *direction* of the subject through the image-flow (representation, the positioning of the subject, is as much a fact of the organization of the images as of the fact of the image itself).

Narrative, that is, may be seen as a decisive instance of framing in film (the determining links between narrative constraint and conventions of framing have often been stressed): its economy—a relation of transformation between two homogeneities ("beginning" and "end") in which the second is the replacement of the first, a reinvestment of its elements—*checks* the images, centering and containing, prescribing a reading as correlation of actions and inscribing a subject as, and for, the coherence of that operation, carried through against possible dispersion, the multiple intensities of the text of the film. Frame, narrative placing, subject inscription cut short the interminable movement of the signifier, impose—subject-in-position, on screen, in frame—precisely the continuousness of representation.

V

The narrative elision of the image flow, the screening of point of view as the ground of the image, the totalizing of image and space in the frame of field/reverse field—these are some of the procedures that have been described in terms of *suture*, a stitching or tying as in the surgical joining of the lips of a wound. In its process, its framings, its cuts, its intermittences, the film ceaselessly poses an absence, a lack, which is ceaselessly bound up in and into the relation of the subject, is, as it were, ceaselessly recaptured *for* the film. Formulated thus, the description is both important—since it can bring us round again to the articulation of film and ideology on the figure of the subject—and inadequate—since it misses, or masks, a functioning which may perhaps have implications for thinking that articulation.

In psychoanalysis, "suture" names the relation of the individual-as-subject to the chain of its discourse where it figures missing in the guise of a stand-in (its place is taken and it takes that place); the subject is an effect of the signifier in which it is represented, stood in for. Ideological repre-

sentation depends on—supports itself from—this "initial" production of the subject in the symbolic (hence the crucial role of psychoanalysis, as prospective science of the construction of the subject, within historical materialism), directs it as a set of images or inversions, of *fixed* positions, metonymy stopped in coherence. What must be emphasized, however, is that the stopping—the functioning of the suture in imaginary, frame, narrative, etc.—is exactly a *process*: it counters a productivity, an excess, that it states and restates in the very moment of rejection in the interests of coherence—thus the film frame, for example, mined from within by the outside it delimits and poses and has ceaselessly to recontain. The process never ends, the construction-reconstruction has always to be restarted: the machines, cinema included, are there for that. Ideology is *in* the suture.

Coming back to cinema, moreover, it can be seen that in a sense the cinematographic apparatus itself is nothing but an operation of suture. To cross the coherence of a patient's discourse in the analytic situation at the point of its process of suture (the point of construction and hence of exposure, of weakest resistance) is to grasp "the structure of the subject articulated as a 'flickering of eclipses,' like the movement that opens and closes number, delivering the lack in the form of the one to abolish it in its successor." The description has all the echoes of Boully's patent of 1892 with its "*mouvement saccadé*": "The movement of the strip in the apparatus is jerky; that is to say, it is immobile for the time sufficient to register the image and mobile while the shutter closes the access of light." The images registered in their continuity as differences are then placed in another apparatus for reproduction in that continuity by a similar mechanism on the basis of these very differences. All in all, from machine to film with its own tie procedures, cinema develops as the apparatus of a formidable memory, the tracing of a subject defined, to quote the psychoanalytic account of suture once again, "by attributes the other side of which is political, disposing as of powers of a faculty of memory necessary to close the collection without loss of interchangeable elements." Or, as Godard put it more succinctly, "je pense, donc le cinéma existe."

It is here that the hypothesis of machines for the shifting regulation of the individual-as-subject can be specified. The imaginary—the stand-in, the sutured coherence, the fiction of anticipated totality—functions over and against the symbolic, the order of language, the production of meanings, within which the subject is set as the place of an endless movement (identity as a function of repeated difference) and from which, precisely, there

is image and desire and suture. The subject thus placed supports and is supported by ideological formations as the prospect—the perspective—of desire, its images. The "attributes" of construction described by psychoanalysis are at once formal and "political" (ideological)—"the other side," like the recto and verso of a piece of paper. The individual as subject is simultaneously a subject-support, and the images of the one are the terms of the other's representation. Cinema, with its screen, its frames, its binding memory, is perhaps *the* image machine; not because it is the "good object" (conditioned by the desire exposed in the symbolic, the energy of division, the imaginary is not to be equated with the "good object" in a straight Kleinian sense), but because it holds the subject—on screen, in frame—in the exact turning of symbolic and suture, negativity and coherence, flow and image (the "screen" as it figures in various Lacanian diagrams has a similar kind of ambivalence, locus of a potentially lucid relation between the subject and its imaginary captation and the sign of the barrier—the slide—across subject and object of desire).

Which is why care is needed with such received ideas as that of a simple commitment in the mainstream development of cinema to the effacement of the marks of cinematic practice in favor of a transparent presentation of "reality" (cinema—"the art of the real"). Continuity, invisible editing, matches, and so on are important (indeed, they have here been stressed) but there is a sense in which the point of cinema was always this very process itself. D. W. Griffith will furnish an emblematic example. We know that, along with others of his time, he was apparently opposed to pans on the grounds that they showed up the mechanics of film (there are films where pans have been truncated in the editing as soon as they begin); we also know that in 1913 Griffith took a full page in the *New York Dramatic Mirror* to announce the break with Biograph, ostentatiously listing his claimed inventions—"the large or close-up figures, distant views as represented first in *Ramona*, the 'switch-back,' sustained suspense, the 'fade-out' and restraint in expression" (*Biograph Bulletin* entries often drew attention to striking innovations or filmic achievements). The conjuncture of the two facts gives something of the feel: the displayed jubilation in the "modern techniques of the art" and the limits of that display, and then the realization anyway of those techniques (as in the Griffith list) as procedures of suture. The display differs, the balance varies (from the outset almost the problem is the variation of the limits); genres are instances of equilibrium, characteristic relatings—specific relations—of subject and machine in film as particular closures of desire, forms of pleasure (the other factor in a

double determination, conjoining with the need for industrial optimalisation mentioned earlier); what is constant is film as narration of subject and desire.

VI

Constant narration, different narratives: each text has its particular operation, its particular ideological intersections, its constancies and differences, its terms and their reworking of limits. The analysis in the text of film and system is always imperative, the premise of any consideration of film, of a film, in its specific signifying practise.

The limits sketched out here have done no more than to envisage the ideological place of cinema as an aid to such a consideration and as a response to a Brechtian principle: "For as long as one does not criticize the social function of cinema, all film criticism is only a criticism of symptoms and has itself a merely symptomatic character." Is this to come back finally to the "fundamental reproach?" Yes, perhaps, but displaced a little in its working out, the beginnings of a comprehension to exploit. The problem, the political problem, for film in its intervention can be given as the transformation of the relations of subjectivity and ideology. Question of limits: open within the limits—film as theoretical fiction, sociological experiment, learning play, history lesson—the other scene, another memory, a new subject, in process, transforming. Once again, Brecht has outlined the term and the task:

> "All the productivity of men is not contained in the actual production, which is always limited. Those elements that are not entirely absorbed into it, however, do not simply fall outside, they contradict; they are not simply lacking in meaning, they disturb. Thus only a very attentive scheme will be able to grasp their activity, and you need an ear which is extremely sensitive to what is productive. It is a real achievement to keep these elements from destruction, that is, from destroying and being destroyed.

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Note

This paper has been left in the form in which it was delivered; as the opening address, its aim was to suggest the problems involved in the analysis of film and ideology and, in so doing, to touch on a number of issues raised by the various sections

into which the Symposium was divided (narration, history, semiotics, etc.).

The overall context of the piece, and at every moment, is work done in the journal *Screen* over the last few years. The initial consideration of ideology starts from points developed by Louis Althusser: *Pour Marx*, Paris 1965 (trans. *For Marx*, London 1969); "Idéologie et appareils idéologiques d' état," *La Pensée*, June 1970 (trans. "Ideology and ideological state apparatuses," *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, London 1972). Quotations concerning the psychoanalytic concept of suture come from: Jacques-Alain Miller, "La suture," *Cahiers pour l'analyse* No. 1, Paris 1966; itself stemming from the teaching of Jacques Lacan: *Ecrits*, Paris 1966, and *Le Séminaire*, Paris 1973 (3 volumes so far). Translation of the concept into film theory was undertaken by Jean-Pierre Oudart: "La suture," *Cahiers du cinéma* No. 211, April 1969; this article then being utilized in English by Daniel Dayan: "The tutor-code of classical American cinema," *Film Quarterly* Vol. XXVIII No. 1, 1974. Brecht's writings on cinema are to be found in: *Gessammelte Werke* Vol. XVIII, Frankfurt 1967. Much help was derived from Christian Metz: *Langage et cinéma*, Paris 1971, (trans. *Language and Cinema*, The Hague 1974); "Le significant imaginaire," *Communications* No. 23, 1975 (trans. "The imaginary signifier," *Screen* Vol. 16 No. 2, 1975). Finally, an unpublished paper by Jackie Rose on "The imaginary—the insufficient signifier," and discussion of that paper at a British Film Institute (Educational Advisory Service) seminar, contributed a great deal to the formulation of certain ideas.