

## Moving Pictures

### Arthur C. Danto

#### Section I

Perhaps there is no serious reason to consider film as especially nearer of artistic kin to drama than to painting. Indeed, the expression “moving pictures” implies an evolutionary expansion of representational possibilities of much the same order as we would find were painting to have developed out of drawing, and the new forms called “colored drawings” (though we ought to be cautious in regarding any artistic genre as a progressive step beyond an established one, inasmuch as a colored drawing is not thereby demoted to the stature of a painting, any more than a black-and-white painting is demoted by monochromy to drawing).

Possibly a basis for considering film and drama together lies in the fact that both are viewed in theaters by a seated audience focused on a common spectacle. But this may be adventitious, inasmuch as concert-halls and opera houses are not remarkably different at this level from theaters; nor, for the matter, are hippodromes, circus tents, sports arenas or even churches – there being *some* basis, I suppose, for regarding theaters as mutations of churches and audiences as secularized congregations. The race-track and the basilica were equally charged with religious energy in Byzantine culture, where supporters of different teams were divided along lines of theological partisanship. In any case, it is not essential to films that they be projected onto screens; early films were viewed in peepboxes. I do not wish to deny that our response to film is in some

measure a function of our being members of an audience, since some of our feelings are doubtless collective and due to contagion, and I doubt anyone would be very deeply moved by something seen through a hole while assuming the compromised posture of a voyeur. Or if there *is* a special artistic experience to be had here, it is due less to *what* is seen than to the fact that it is seen *in a box*: for the box encloses and transforms a space encapsulated in, but distinct from, real space – the space of the spectator – like a holy object deposited in the real world but not of it, belonging to another domain of reality.

That there should be a space we can see into but cannot enter explains in part the uncanny power of Joseph Cornell’s boxes or the perspective boxes of seventeenth century Holland or the looking-glass world – all of which give a kind of literal exemplification of something essentially true of art; namely, that it logically excludes its spectators from the space and often the time it occupies. We can see in a play, for instance, the transpiration of events in which we have no possible point of intervention. I can stab the man who plays Hamlet, but only Laertes can stab Hamlet; Juliet is logically restricted to the embraces of Romeo, even if the woman who plays her is in fact a rake. I own a crystal paperweight, vintage Baccarat, scarred by a hammerblow which I cherish for its philosophical meaning. Some child must once have been frustrated by the distance he thought physical, which in truth is metaphysical between himself and the spun-glass flowers embedded in

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the transparent hemisphere, and he tried to collapse it by shattering the glass, not realizing that the value of those colored bits lay precisely in the fact that they escaped his touch. **The invention of the projector enabled the audience to enter the box, which then receded into the mere walls of the theater, and some different method for marking the space between audience and spectacle was required: but this way a lot of people could see the same show at once, with measurable economic advantages to the impresario, chairs being cheaper than optical contraptions like Reynaud's praxinoscopes.**

Proust, who practiced voyeurism to the point of genius and who sought to transfigure his life into art by taking a stand outside it from which to look in on it as a whole (and who almost literally stopped living in order to do so), imagined as a child (or at least his narrator imagined) that the theater was a kind of elaborate peepshow: a columbarium of matched spectacles. And I suppose if we bred actors for smallness, like bonsai trees, plays could be mounted in boxes for Gulliver-type spectators. **But there would still be a difference to draw between film and drama, which we may see if we elaborate Proust's fancy, in which *chaque spectateur regardait comme dans un stéréoscope un décor que n'était que pour lui, quoique semblable au milliers d'autres, chacun pour soi, le reste des spectateurs.*** I wish to stress the phrase '*quoique semblable au milliers d'autres*' since '*quoique*' would have no application to the different showings of the same film in the same peepbox at different times or different peepboxes at the same time. The set of performances of the same play stands to the latter in something like the relationship in which the set of platonic particulars stands to the same archetype, or as the various interpretations of it stand to the same sonata, while the showings of the same film stand to one another somewhat as copies of the same newspaper do (hence Wittgenstein's joke), so that there is no relevant difference between reading the same paper twice or two papers one time each.

A missed inspired performance of a certain play or opera is unrecoverable, but I have no idea what a man might mean who tells me that I missed something marvelous if I did not see *Last Tango in Paris* at the Trans-Lux 85th Street on Friday at 8:00 p.m. I don't mean to deny the possibility of a kind of perversion of connoisseurship of the sort which animates stamp-collectors, but conceptually I shall have to suppose he is not talking about *Last*

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*Tango*, since nothing stands to it as a playing by Alicia stands to a piece by Granados, the relationship between negative and print being too mechanical to count. Showings of the same film stand to one another in the manner of classes as conceived of by Aristotle rather than Plato, with the basis of similarity in *rebus* rather than *ante rem*. **Whether this difference is deep enough to subvert a natural comparison between film and drama may be questioned, and it in any case equally subverts a comparison between film and paintings.** If we have two paintings which resemble each other as much as two showings – or two performances – this will either be a coincidence or more likely a matter of one being a copy of the other, while two showings of a film are not copies of another at all, and though one actor may imitate another, it is not part of the concept of performances that **they should be copies of each other in the sense in which A is a copy of B only if B explains A.**

A fresh performance of one of Goldoni's plays may not be explained at all by earlier ones, and we may indeed have no idea *how* such plays were first put on. And neither, save adventitiously, are two showings of the same films related as copy to original. We may appreciate this more profoundly if we recognize that our experience of a painting is seriously compromised when we are told it is a copy – certain historical presuppositions regarding provenance and history having a deep relevance even if copy and original should exactly resemble each other. But nothing remotely parallel compromises our appreciation of a showing which happens exactly to resemble another one, since matters of provenance and history are irrelevant here; and neither does it compromise our appreciation of a *performance* of it, were we to learn this performance was copied from another – unless its being copied was an artistic ingredient in the performance, as when we are told that a certain performance is exactly like the performances of Shakespeare's day and the result of hard antiquarian research.

In the end, showings are related to one another more or less as closely as are prints from the same plate – each being members of what we might pay homage to Walter Benjamin by terming “Mechanically Reproducible Classes” it not mattering conceptually if by accident or decision there is only one showing or only one print drawn from a given plate.

But to use this as a basis for drawing serious artistic parallels between prints and films would be

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to use taxonomic principles with the same crazy accuracy with which Ucello used those of linear perspective; to produce something distorted to the point of parody. Prints seem vastly more to belong to the same artistic phylum as do paintings, as may be seen from the fact that historical beliefs function here as well – our experience of a print being compromised by the knowledge that it did not come from the same plate as an original it exactly resembles. And nothing like this matters with films at all, so far as I see – not that historical beliefs are irrelevant to their appreciation, but that they enter at a different point in their ontology. It is difficult to see that “an original” has any artistic significance in the appreciation of films, even though there are originals and epigones amongst the filmmakers. And films still seem to have some more natural affinity to plays than either has to paintings or to prints.

Possibly this felt parity has less to do with dramatic form than to the way in which each involves *events* in some special temporal way. “Some special temporal way” is a makeshift way of saying that there will remain a difference with paintings, even though paintings may involve time in the sense of showing an *event*, e.g., the Rape of the Sabine Women or The Drunkard’s Farewell. We mark this to a degree with verbs of perception, for while we indifferently speak of seeing or watching a show (as of hearing or listening to a piece), we do not *watch* paintings, save in senses irrelevant to experiencing them as art, e.g., guarding them against theft, or observing them disintegrate, as with the frescos in *Roma*. We don’t, because everything to happen is already before us; there is nothing further to watch *for*. The most energized baroque figures will never move a step, but stand locked in logically immutable postures like the personages on Keats’s urn: “Bold lover, never, never canst thou kiss,/Though winning near the goal. . . .”

This is so even if there are films in which nothing happens. Imagine, for instance, if inspired by Warhol, I produce a film called “War and Peace,” based on the novel. It consists of *eight* hours of footage – a saga! – of the title page of Tolstoi’s novel. Or suppose an ill-advised avant garde dramatist mounts a play consisting of an actor seated on the stage through three acts. “Lessness” by Beckett has an immobile figure this way. Nothing happens either in the film or the play in the sense that what happens *is* nothing. But the contrast remains even so with a painting

even of the most energetically deployed figures: for a person who stood before such a painting in anticipation, say, of an event – like the dancers in Breugel taking some step – would be mad, or hoping for a miracle of the sort which earned Pygmalion a place in mythology: whereas one has every right, however frustrated, to expect an event in the monotonous film or play just described. It would be a sardonic concession to the legitimacy of this expectation if the title-page burned up to end the film, or the seated man scratched his ear in act three.

Film and drama seem essentially temporal in a way somewhat difficult to pin down directly, though perhaps one way to do it indirectly would be to mark the difference between projecting a *slide* of the title-page for eight hours and running a *film* of the “title page” for eight hours. There is a considerable difference here in the circumstances of projection – none of which need be reflected as an element in the image projected on the screen – and we can imagine matters so arranged that there *is* no difference there, so one could not tell by patient visual scrutiny whether it were a slide or a film. Even so, though *what* they experience will be indiscernible as between the two cases, *knowledge*, however arrived at, that there is a difference, should make a difference. Although nothing happens in either case, the truth of this is logically determined in the case of the slide whereas it is only a matter of a perverse artistic intention in the case of the film, where something could happen if I wished it to. So a perfectly legitimate right is frustrated in the case of the film, whereas there is no legitimate expectation either to be frustrated or gratified in the case of the slide. Again, at the end of eight hours, the *film* will be over, but not the slide. Only the session of its dull projection will have come to an end – but not it – since slides logically lack, as do painting, beginnings and endings. Our viewing of a painting may indeed have beginning and ends, but we don’t view the beginning and endings of paintings.

The same contrived contrast may be drawn between a *tableau vivant*, in which living persons are frozen in certain positions, and a play, in which by artistic design the actors do not move. Again, though no difference may meet the eye, there is a difference conferred by the logical differences of the two genres. We have, in brief, to go outside what is merely viewed to the categories, which define the genre in question, in order to establish differences, and to understand what is philosoph-

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ically distinctive of more natural artistic examples. Finding the difference between pictures and moving pictures is very much like finding the differences between works of art and real objects, where we can imagine cases in which nothing except knowledge of their causes and of the categories which differentiate works of art from real things make the difference between the two, since they otherwise *look* exactly alike. It is this initial foray into categorical analysis that has given us some justification for considering films together with plays, since both seem subject to descriptions which, though in fact false, are not *logically* ruled out as they are in the case of pictures. If in a film “bold lover” does not succeed in kissing “maiden loth,” this will not be because the structure of the medium guarantees these works of art to be a joy forever in consequence of logical immobility. Here, immobility has to be *willed*.

## Section II

Let us stand back, for a moment, from this proliferation of cases and ponder the methodology which generates them. I am not engaged in botanizing, in seeking for a new classification of the arts. Rather, I am seeking for what may be philosophically relevant in film as an art. And one method for isolating philosophical relevance is to look for principles which must be invoked if we are to distinguish between things which are otherwise exactly alike.

Consider epistemology. The skeptic supposes that our experiences might be exactly as they are, only, in fact, the product of a dream. Then the difference between dream and veridical experience is that experiences are caused by what they are *of*, but causality and reference are relations at right angles to the experiences, which the experiences then underdetermine. Thus there is no possible hope for finding – *within* the experiences in question – whether these external connections hold or not. But the method of matching experiences in this manner is certainly a method of conceptual discovery, for without it we might never have appreciated how complex the analysis of experience must be, and how dependent, finally, it is on factors logically external to what we experience, on what does not meet the eye.

Or consider, again, induction, where a body of data supports not only a natural hypothesis, but also an immense set of unnatural ones (this is

Goodman’s “New Riddle of Induction”). Because the data underdetermine the set of possible hypotheses, we plainly have to look outside the body of our data in order to determine which is the correct inference and, more importantly, what are the factors other than consistency with known data that have to be invoked in order to identify an inductive inference as correct.

In art, an important sort of case arises with fakes. We are asked what difference it makes if a work is produced exactly like the genuine one. Obviously, the distinction between *genuine* and *fake* must be established with reference to factors external to the works themselves – for example, with reference to their histories. However, the serious question is whether knowledge of these differences in any way impinges upon our appreciation of a work whose structure underdetermines the difference between authenticity and trumpery, or whether it makes no difference. I think one cannot say in advance whether it makes a difference or not. Consider for example, the possibility of duplicating persons. Suppose a man is killed in an automobile accident, but the widow is promised delivery in say three weeks of someone exactly like her husband in all obvious respects. Would it matter? Is she required to love, honor, and obey the exact simulacrum of her husband, or what? Would the *known* history of this reconstituted mate make a difference or not? I am certainly unprepared to say, but my feeling is that it would make an *enormous* difference, and my philosophical point is that the possibility of doubles, in which the pairs are exactly alike relative to some schedule of descriptions, may reveal factors outside this set with reference to which our attitudes toward one or the other of the counterparts may differ. The method of philosophical duplication is a powerful lever for lifting factors into consciousness which otherwise never would have been alive – presuppositions upon which our attitude toward the world has always depended though we might not have realized their crucial role since it never had been challenged. These factors will always be logically external to the thing in question.

The most striking contribution to have been made to our understanding of art by the artworld itself has been the generation of objects – in every manifest regard like perfectly ordinary objects – things like bottle-racks, snow-shovels, Brillo boxes, and beds. We are (1) to regard these “things” as artworks, and not as the sort of mere real objects from which they are indiscernible: and (2) to say

what difference it makes that they should be artworks and not mere real things. Indeed, I regard the matter of furnishing answers to these questions the central issue in the philosophy of art. But since it hardly can have been a question before the possibility arose, philosophers of art who merely studied artworks would have been blind to just the sorts of factors with which a philosophy of art must deal; for these factors would be logically external to the objects in question, which underdetermine the difference between artworks and real things.

In times of artistic stability, one might have learned to identify artworks inductively and to distinguish them from other things (much in the way we learn to distinguish cabbages from carrots) and to think the essence of art must then lie in the differentiable features. Theory of art which is based upon such induction has necessarily to fail if something can be an artwork but share all the manifest features of an erstwhile ordinary object, and to understand what art then is requires us to avert our eyes from the manifest appearances of things and ask what it is that does not meet the eye, which makes the difference between art and reality: where knowledge of this difference then makes the difference in our experiences of objects as artworks or as real things. Think, after all, of the difference it makes whether the man in the lobby is threatening the woman or – using the same words he would use were he to be threatening her – is merely going over his lines as he waits for the elevator to carry him to his audition. It is not merely a difference in attitude in which the difference consists: the difference is ontological and between things which otherwise are indiscriminable.

This is my purpose in manufacturing cases in which things – though they may appear the same – are seriously different, and it is what animates my preoccupation in section I between slides and films. Usually the differences are obvious, but we don't learn much philosophically by sticking to obvious differences. It is with this in mind that I want to explore some differences between film and drama.

Section III

Although there are many ways in which one can directly modify a strip of film to produce a cinematic image (through the techniques of the photo-

gram, by actually drawing or painting on the film and using the latter after the manner of a microscopic slide, or even by gluing things onto film), I shall primarily be concerned with photography, largely because photographs stand in interesting relations to the real world (almost as interesting as the relations in which perceptions do) and because the camera has so many remarkable analogies to the eye. Consider, for example, what is involved in identifying a photograph as being of something – of the Cathedral of Rouen, for example, or of Princess Anne. Here I believe we have an almost spontaneous representationalist theory of photographic content which almost precisely resembles a parallel theory of perception. Something is a photograph of x when it is caused by what it denotes, so that if the causal condition fails, the semantical identification fails as well, in that it no longer is of x if x does not enter into a causal explanation of the state of the photograph we speak of as the picture, and in a natural sort of way.

It seems to follow that there are no false photographs; that is, photographs which retain a constant semantical content invariantly as to their semantical value. Unlike a sentence, the meaning of which does not vary with variations in truth-value, a photograph has its closest linguistic peer in the "proper name," (if Russell is right that names without bearers are noises and if Kripke is right that a name denotes only what it is causally connected with). Thus something exactly like a photograph of Rouen Cathedral is itself not of Rouen Cathedral if not caused by the Cathedral of Rouen. I am thinking here of exposing a sensitized surface to the light in some random way, developing and fixing the result, and finding that one has produced a pattern of darks and lights exactly of the sort one would identify as of Rouen Cathedral had it a proper causal history. This has nothing to do with the sharpness of the image. A blurred snapshot of Rouen has this identity, and a sharp but fortuitously-caused pattern does not; or to suppose the latter after all to be of Rouen is to suppose Rouen after all to explain its provenance. To see the most sharply articulated pattern as of Rouen when uncaused by Rouen is like seeing faces in clouds: a cloud can look exactly like the profile of Voltaire – as much so as the bust of him by Houdon – but this is merely the result of an uncanny happenstance, a lucky bit of nebular configuration which is to be explained by whatever are the forces which account for cloud-formation, not Voltaire! We refer to Voltaire only with reference

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Handwritten notes in Korean: Knowledge of diff of diff → exp. perception, with diff. with diff.

Handwritten notes in Korean: cinema a displaced knowledge to structure montage, Movement → Subject

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to why *we see* the cloud as we do, not with reference to why the cloud is the way we see it.

So photographs are very tightly linked to their causes when construed representationally rather than as abstract patterns of light. Indeed, they are linked in just the way in which ideas are in a Lockian or Cartesian view of representation: (1) as *of* their causes, in the respect that their having any real content at all is put in question the moment we have doubts as to their provenance; (2) if my ideas are caused by some condition of myself rather than, as I would spontaneously believe, by things in the external world, they directly lose their representational qualities and have just the sort of content clouds do, which is to say none; (3) as ideas they become meaningless, even if they exactly resemble what would be representations of the world on the routine assumptions of causality and denotation.

Suppose a drunken driver has a car which leaks oil, and you notice that the erratic trail of drips has just the shape of an English sentence, for example, "Your dog is pregnant." Are you, if a dog owner, going to *heed* this and treat it as a message? And suppose you do, and the dog indeed – and to your surprise – is pregnant? Will this still be anything but an accident? I am not going to advise you regarding signs and strange portents, but *if* you regard the marks as a sentence, with truth and meaning, you are going to have to suppose a very different causal structure than the one I have just described, concerning the way those marks get deposited in the world. In this case, all the signs are evidence for is that something is wrong with the driver and something amiss with his engine.

We can, of course, liberate ourselves from these severe constraints by letting a photograph be *of* something other than its cause, if we transform the cause into a model and (1) let *it* acquire a semantical structure of its own; (2) let it stand for something ulterior – in which case we require a rule of interpretation. Reynolds painted a portrait of Mrs Siddons as the Muse of Tragedy, and the subject of the painting was Mrs Siddons who was got up as the tragic muse. The subject was not the tragic muse *tout court*. But imagine an alternative history for Mrs Siddons – a possible world (if you like that sort of semantics) in which Mrs Siddons, rather than having become a famous actress, instead became merely an artist's model whom Reynolds happened to use as a model for a painting of the muse of tragedy. Then the subject of the painting would be not Mrs Siddons – she was only the

model – but the Tragic Muse herself, though the painting looks exactly like "Portrait of Mrs Siddons as Tragic Muse" does. The model here would become a vehicle of meaning through which we see the muse as we see *L'embarquement à Cythere* as an allegory of love, rather than a group portrait of some of Watteau's chums, although indeed they were his models.

Much the same thing is available to photography. The famous 1857 collodion print of Henry Peach Robinson's 'Fading Away' is *of* a dying virgin, a bit of Victorian "saccharinity." However, he was not *documenting* a touching demise; he instead used models who stood for the dying girl, the grieving parents, and the like. The model becomes the subject only of pictures of models, whether the pictures be photographs or paintings; whereas the model becomes, as it were, semantically opaque and stands this once for nothing, or for itself. Leonardo may have used a bit of available majolica in setting up the Last Supper, but it *stands* for the vessel of the Lord, and the vessel is the subject of that portion of the fresco, not the crockery itself. Leonardo was not painting still lifes.

Let us resurrect the term *motif* from the vocabulary of yesterday's art schools, where something was a motif *if an occasion for painterly representation*, for example, an old fisherman's shack – and the identical object may be motif or model – the latter, if by dint of some rule of interpretation, is to stand for something other than itself. Then in Reynold's portrait, Mrs Siddons as tragic muse is motif, whereas in the other possible world she is model, and the tragic muse herself is subject. Of course, we may learn a good deal about florentine ceramics by studying the dishes Leonardo used as models by disinterpreting them and viewing them as motifs. And this will be remarkably and inevitably the case with photography, whatever the interpretive intentions of the photographer. A tremendous amount of sheer reality – simply in consequence of the physical circumstances of the process – is recorded through the blank uninterpreting eye of the camera, which simply transcribes whatever is before it, discounting for retouching, which raises problems of its own. The objects that we see in old movies have often far greater interest as motifs than as models, and the films themselves have a greater interest as inadvertent documentaries than as screenplays. They stand as testimonials to vanished realities. But this takes us considerably ahead of our analysis. In any

Photography's limitation  
→ Cause  
Cinema modifies cause.

case any representational form has the option of treating objects as motifs, in which case it is documentary, or as models, in which case it is anagogic. What is immediately important to us in photography is that it is inescapably dependent upon the objects it records, a limitation which may be overcome in cinema by the other sorts of techniques for modifying film I began this section by mentioning, where spontaneous reference to an external reality is considerably more elastic and less direct than in the photographic case, and where the option of documentarity is compromised if not lost. This is part of the reason I am making photography so central. We would lose considerable interest in the so-called photographs of the Earth taken from outer space were we to discover they were painted on film – unless the astronaut were painting what he saw and had adequate mimetic gifts.

Let us utilize these somewhat gross semantical distinctions to differentiate between a *film of a play* and what we might speak of as a *screenplay proper*, where the play, so to speak, is in the film, but there is in reality no play which is actually photographed; for example a film version of *Hamlet*, say, and the filming of a stage-version of *Hamlet* (before the advent of the medium of cinema, we could not have spoken of stage versions since plays were *only* staged, this being a case where the advent of new genres create boundaries for old ones). Filming a staged play may employ specifically cinematographic techniques by showing the action from angles not normally available to a fixed and seated audience (though science fiction theaters might be imagined in which the spectator is moved around: sometimes seeing the spectacle from the “normal” vantage point of the fixed seat, sometimes from above the stage, sometimes being literally brought up to where a closeup would place him, etc.) But even so, it is a staged play which is being filmed, an external event having an existence external to the film, which could in principle take place whether recorded or not, much in the way in which, on a realistic epistemology, we regard the world as there and determinate invariantly as to whether we perceive it or not. Of course, the knowledge that they are being filmed may have some effect in transforming the reality we think of the film as recording, much in the way in which the knowledge that we are being perceived (or observed) may alter the way in which we behave: the presence of an eye – or a camera – may precipitate a kind of *pour autrui* different through the

fact of perception from the stolid *en soi* the realist intends, but this intervention, however interesting, leaves the semantics of the situation unaffected: even if the fact that it is being filmed modifies the reality the film itself records, the play in question is an external, ongoing event, there whether filmed or not, and the same perturbations of consciousness would, for instance, occur if the actors merely believed they were being filmed, or if the director forgot to put film in his cameras, and believed he were making a film, falsely as it happens. In any case, the film here is a documentary, as much so as a newsreel, and the play in question is what the film is about, as much so as a newsreel of the events of May 1968 in Paris is about those events. The difference, of course, in the subjects here mentioned is that the events themselves were not *about* anything in the way in which the play happens to be about something rotten in the state of Denmark, or whatever *Hamlet* is about: but a photograph of a piece of New York graffiti remains about the piece of graffiti even though the latter may be itself about something, and have a content in its own right. And as denoted by its filmic representation, the film of a play in this sense is subject to the rigid semantical structures of photography as such. It is about a particular performance of a particular play, whatever may be the subject of the play itself. Of course, we may, in seeing the film, get caught up in the play, just as we may read the piece of graffiti; however, the play remains the motif of the film, even if we happen spontaneously to treat it as model. In a screenplay proper, by contrast, the film is not about what is photographed, any more than Delacroix's *Liberty at the Barricades* is about a certain woman, whatever her identity, whom Delacroix happened to pose in a phrygian cap with a flag in her hand in his atelier in the Place Furstenbourg. Delacroix meant us to see through that woman to what she stood for, which is the subject of the painting. A film of the play is about actors, whereas a screenplay is not about actors, except in the special sense in which what the actors play is actors, as in a certain Hollywood genre in which films were made about struggling young actors or skaters or singers or whatever; it continues to be not about the persons who play the roles, but about the persons whose roles they play, and even if the film should actually show the play in which they get their break and become stars, the play is in the film and the film itself is not documentation of the play. Of course, the inverse possibility to the one

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we noted before is a danger here: just as we may treat the actors in a filmed play as models rather than as motifs, see Hamlet rather than the man playing Hamlet, so in screenplays we may see the actors as motifs rather than as models, refuse to see Hamlet but rather Olivier: which is one of the problems of the star system, in which the actor becomes so autographic a cultural artifact as to render himself opaque. Which perhaps explains the motivation for finding anonymous actors, or just ordinary passersby. This is supposed to enhance realism, whereas what it does in fact is to enhance artifice, for the very naturalness of the persons 'playing themselves' renders them transparent in a way in which Garbo or Gable never could be. Or Elizabeth Taylor, who is to movies in which she plays, like Mrs. Siddons was in Reynolds's portrait. These movies provide mixtures of document and anagogy, and about Elizabeth Taylor as . . . , hence compromising the illusion since we are always aware of the actor as actor: something which Proust's Berma managed to overcome. One wonders, for example, if in the typical Hollywood film, the audience even remembered the name of the characters their favorite stars played: for in describing the film they speak not of what, say, Diana Medford did, but what Joan Crawford did in *Our Dancing Daughters*. The movie star is a metaphysically-complex personality, retaining an identity so strong as to swamp the role he or she plays to the point that we speak of Eliot Gould rather than Philip Marlowe as doing this or that, as though roles were like lives through which a Hindu soul transmigrates, which is false of opera stars or stage stars, nor merely because the roles in the dramatic or operatic repertoires have a strong identity of their own, whereas film roles are often ephemeral, but also because the same role may in opera or theater be played by different actors, and we can compare their performances of films in the same respect, and the role is exclusively preempted by one person who plays it in a movie, so much so that we almost cannot separate the person from the role. Of course, different versions of the same thing are possible in films, but if someone today decides to do the *Thin Man*, it would not be like a new staging of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with its largely invariant lines and scenes, but a whole new work – like a version by Giraudoux of the same general story also but differently done by Euripides and Racine. In a movie, a role belongs to the person who plays it in the sense that were another to play the so-called same role, it would

be in a different *work*. So the fact that films use actors ought not to mislead us into thinking of film as an essentially performative art inasmuch as nothing counts as a different performance of the same work. So the star is intimately woven into the substance of the film, almost in the way in which Mrs. Siddons' appearance is woven into her portrait; but even so, the film is not *about* its actors or stars, any more than a play is. And this returns me to my subject.

Let us consider once more the difference between a film about a play in the documentary sense, and a film in which a play is put on. Imagine a film in which the famous star Delilah De Lillo plays the role of Mary Mutt, a struggling actress waiting for a break, which she gets at the climax of the movie. And we see her in her moment of triumph, playing the role of Blossom Beauchamps in the Broadway hit *Tepid Latitudes* – the name of the film is *Our Daughters, Our Dreams*. *Tepid Latitudes* can be a play, if you wish, about Blossom Beauchamps's moment of triumph as an actress in a play called *Broken Playthings*, in which she plays the role of Susan Seaward, a debutante who achieves erotic redemption. The high-point of the film shows Delilah-Mary-Blossom-Susan leaving her fiancé, a stock-broker, and embarking towards orgasmic authenticity with someone named Brian. *Tepid Latitudes* is in the film much as *Broken Playthings* is in *Tepid Latitudes*. Neither is in real life, and the film is never documentary. But the point I wish to make is that the difference is considerable between seeing a play and seeing a play of a play – as considerable as the semantical distinction between use and mention. Consider the Second Act of *Ariadne auf Naxos* in which a play is presented which is discussed in Act One. In a recent staging of this at the New York Opera, the second act did not so much present the play, but presented instead a play *of* it, putting a small stage onto the stage along with some people playing the part of the audience. So what *we* saw were some people seeing a play, along with seeing the play they saw; however, we saw the latter as a play. The play itself was then what the act was about, rather than whatever the play itself, were we to see it, would have been about. Thus, instead of seeing the characters, Ariadne, Zerbinetta, and the like, we saw actresses and actors *playing these parts*: hyphenated personages, which complicates identification of the dramatic object. In a staging of *Ariadne* in Rome, by contrast, we were actually presented with the play, rather than the play of

the play, and so saw Ariadne and Zerbinetta directly. The difference is astonishing. Since in the New York production, we saw actors, there was nothing strange but only something comical in seeing *commedia del arte* actors on the same stage with classical tragedians. But in the Rome production, where we saw Ariadne on her island, singing out her heart, it was an artistic shock to see *commedia del arte* figures occupying the same *dramatic* space. How could they *be on that island*? How could figures from eighteenth century Italy be contemporary with a figure out of Greek mythology? Someone may represent Ariadne next to someone representing Zerbinetta, with no more shock than seeing a painting of Ariadne next to a painting of the Italian Comedians. What we cannot see without shock is Italian comedians in the same painting with Ariadne; it would be like seeing one of Picasso's cubist women being carried off on one of Titian's bulls. So in the documentary film of a play, we are supposed to see actors playing roles, whereas in a screenplay – apart from the complexities introduced by the star concept – that there are actors is not part of what the film is about. There being actors is not supposed to be part of what we see, or something which, if we fail to see, we will have misidentified what the film is about. It would, then, be consistent with a film which documents a play that it should also show members of the audience without in the least inducing aesthetic shock. But there is no room for shots of an audience in a screenplay except in the sort of contrived genre I sketched above. What a nondocumentary film is about cannot be photographed. Nondocumentary films stand to documentary ones – a common photographic base notwithstanding – in the relationship in which perception stands to imagination.

And this strong conclusion holds even if the director decides that the way he is going to proceed in making a film version of *Hamlet* is to have his actors actually *put Hamlet on*, which he then shoots, so that there would be no internal difference between the film he produces and the film a man might make who is documenting a performance of *Hamlet*. Of course this is not the ordinary way in which movies are made. Scenes can be shot anywhere; the man who plays Hamlet can recite his soliloquies in New York and stab Polonius at *Cinecitta*. In a parallel way, Leonardo might have painted the *Last Supper* by setting up a table in Milan with twelve models for the disciples and a thirteenth for Christ, in which case a documentary

painting of Leonardo's model setting might in fact be indiscernible from the *Last Supper*. Of course, Leonardo did not do it this way at all, so far as we know, and drew his models from here and there, and perhaps there was no such table as the one we see in the *Cenecolo*. At the same time, it would be an interesting fact were we to learn that he painted Christ from a model who happens to have had very broad shoulders. Then the fact that Christ in the *painting* has very sloping shoulders – supposing we can discount draftsmanly ineptitude on Leonardo's part – acquires iconographic or at least expressionistic content. But the *History of Models*, alas, is yet to be written.

It would be instructive at this point to discuss such matters as space and time in films; how the space of a photographed setting differs from the space of the action; and the time of the photographed scene differs from the time of the action meant. I recall how striking it was to recognize that in *Avventura*, Antonioni used *real time* as *artistic time*. (In *Simon Boccanegra* twenty-five years lapses between Prologue and Act One.) But I want to say a few words about movement, which the decision to treat films as *moving pictures* appears to demand.

## Section IV

Moving pictures are just that: *pictures* which move, *not* just (or necessarily at all) *pictures of* moving things. For we may have moving pictures of what are practically stolid objects, like the Himalayas and nonmoving pictures of such frenetically-motile objects as Breugel's reeling peasants and Rosa Bonheurs's rearing horses. Before the advent of moving pictures, it would not have been illuminating to characterize nonmoving pictures as nonmoving; there would have been no other sort. With statues, of course, because they already existed in a full three dimensions, the possibility of movement was an ancient option, with Daedalus being credited with the manufacture of animated statuary, and not just statuary of moving things. Any good carver was up to that (though possibly not Daedalus's contemporaries, it being difficult to know how to characterize the content of archaic sculptures in terms of the presence or absence of overt kinesis). Calder introduced movement into sculpture as an artistic property of them, but it is not plain that his mobiles are *of* anything, even if, they are so interpreted, it seems almost foreclosed that they would be of moving things: of branches

in the wind or bodies in orbit or graceful spiders or whatever. Calder invented the striking predicate “stable” to designate his non-moving statues, but I suppose all statues, even such dynamic representations of movement as Bernini’s *David* or Rodin’s *Icarus* would retrospectively be stables or at least nonkinetic as such. Keats’s observation holds true of these works. *David* remains eternally flexed in his gigantocidal posture in the Villa Borghese, though the slinger he represents could not have maintained that position, given the reality of gravity. He is represented at an instant in a gesture where a next and a preceding instant would have to be anatomically marked, in contrast with Donatello’s or even Michaelangelo’s *David*, whose models could have held their pose: subjects for a daguerreotype, on which Bernini’s model would have registered a blur. But Keats’s observation would not have been logically true of sculptures or pictures as such, as mobiles and moving pictures demonstrate: things of beauty can be joys just for a moment.

In a philosophically stinging footnote to the *First Critique*, Kant observes that a representation of permanence need not be a permanent representation, and comparably a representation of motion need not be a moving representation – conspicuously in descriptions of motion, which do not swim about the page. But even with pictures, it had long been recognized that the properties of the thing represented need not also be properties of the representation itself. This was obviously so in one main triumph of representational art, the mechanism of perspective rendering where it would not have been the trivially present third dimension in a canvas which accounted for the depth in the painting. Though I suppose an artist could have introduced real depth as Calder introduced real movement; for example, by using boxes in which figures were deployed and one real space to represent another. But, in fact, it is not clear that this would have enhanced his powers of representation, and might have had in fact the opposite effect, just as animation of Bernini’s *David* might have reduced or severely altered its representational power, resulting in something more like a toy than a man, more like the fetish of Abraham Lincoln delivering the Gettysburg Address as misbegotten by Walt Disney. We are struck with the discrepancies between representation and subject which we have learned to overlook, unless technicians, in routine examples of representational art.

On the other hand, the first movies used moving pictures to represent motion, and despite Kant’s dictum, it is difficult to think that this is not a breakthrough of sorts of representation, much in the way in which it would have been a breakthrough to use colors to represent colored things, heretofore represented only in white and black (in contour drawings, for example) and perhaps the difference can be brought out this way. Chiang Yee told me of a celebrated Chinese painter of bamboo who, having repeatedly been importuned to make a drawing for a certain patron, decided to comply, but had at hand only the red ink normally used for seals. The patron thanked him, but asked where had he ever seen *red bamboos*, to which the artist replied by asking where the patron had ever seen *black* ones. Why infer from the fact that if the representation is red, the subject must be red, if we don’t infer from the fact that if the representation is black that the subject is black? In a way, it may be a matter merely of convention. We handle sanguine and grisaille drawings in stride. However, there is more to the matter than that, since the *shape* of the image is the shape of the subject, and if the artist had painted his bamboos *zigzag*, he would hardly have been in position to counter the obvious question by asking where had the patron ever seen *straight* ones. So some properties one feels must be shared by representation and subject; some structural parities must hold, for at least this class of representation.

So perhaps the difference is this. In describing our experience with *David*, we might say that we see he is in movement, but we don’t see him move. And with the bamboos, we see that they are yellow, but we don’t see their yellowness. “Seeing that he moves,” or “seeing that they are yellow” are declarations of inference, supported by an initial identification of the subject and some knowledge of how such things in fact behave. To paint the bamboos in color reduces the inference, and there is always a serious question as to whether, say, the use of red ink is merely a physical fact about the medium, or if it is to have *representational* (or, today, *expressional*) properties in its own right. Obviously, we have to learn. An emperor was fond of a concubine and commissioned that her portrait be done by a jesuit painter in China who was master of chiaroscuro. She, however, was horrified at the result, believing that the artist showed her with a face half-black, not able to see yet that he was representing shadows rather than hues and that the portrait showed solidity

rather than coloration. But the problem remains and is as much a function of our antecedent knowledge of the world as of our mastery of pictorial convention: a painting of a tapir could appear, I suppose, to the zoologically ignorant as of a monochrome animal half in shadow, rather than a dichromatic animal in full illumination. In any case, with the movies, we do not just see *that* they move, we see them *moving*: and this is because the pictures themselves move, the way the pictures themselves must be colored when we would correctly describe ourselves as seeing the colors of what they show.

The earliest moving pictures, then, also showed things moving: not trains as such shown as moving, such as we see in Turner, but moving trains we see move: not just moving horses but horses moving, and the like. Of course, photography is not required for this, but a series of pictures moving past at a certain speed, which can be drawings, as in the Zoopraxinoscope, or for that matter the animated cartoon, where the several representations are synthesized into one, in a manner strikingly anticipated in the First and Second Analogies of the Critique of Pure Reason, and which requires the viewer to see these as pictures of the same thing in different stages of a movement, which the optical mechanisms we are born with spontaneously smooth out to continuity. That the matter is conceptual as well as perceptual is illustrated, I think, by the fact that if the pictures are of different things, or of the same thing but not at different stages of the same movement, we would simply register a quantized stream of images rather than a smooth motion – as we do in a way with some of Brakages' films in which, though the pictures move, they do not show movement, since the discontinuities are so abrupt. So we have, as it were, to synthesize the images as of the *same* thing at different moments of the *same* motion or the optic nerve will not help us at all. As students of Descartes's bit of wax would know, however ignorant they might be of the physiology of perception.

At the level of kineperception, I think, the distinction between photography and drawing comes to very little. Indeed, photography was originally less satisfactory in certain ways. The problem Leland Stanford's cameraman had was how to make it look like the horse was moving when in fact what the eye registered was the background moving and the horse deployed statically before rushing trees, disconcerting in something like the way it ought to be to us that the wagon's wheels

turn backward as the wagon goes forward; we have learned to live with the eye and mind being in a conceptual antagonism.

Where photography opens up a new dimension is when, instead of objects moving past a fixed camera, the camera moves amongst objects fixed *or* moving. Now to a degree we could do the same thing with drawings. We could have a sequence of drawings, say, of the Tower of Pisa, displayed in increasing order of size; of the Cathedral of Rouen, seen from different angles. And we know as a matter of independent fact that buildings are not easily rotated or brought across a plain. Still, though we may describe our experience here in terms of seeing the Tower closer and closer up, or seeing the Cathedral from all sides, phenomenologically speaking is our experience of the Tower's being brought closer to us or ourselves closer to the tower: of the Cathedral's turning before us or ourselves circling the Cathedral? I tend to feel that when the camera moves the experience is of *ourselves* moving, which the phenomenon of Cinerama dramatically confirms. And on this I would like to say a few words which will bring us back to the semantical preoccupations of the last section.

An experience of kinesis need not be a kinetic experience. The experience itself based on rather natural cartesian assumption, is a kinetic – neither kinetic nor static – but beyond motion and stasis, these being only the content of experience, like colors and shapes, and logically external to the having of the experiences as such. It would be wholly natural to treat the camera in essentially cartesian terms, logically external to the sights recorded by it – detached and spectatorial. When the early cameraman strapped his apparatus to a gondola and rolled the film while riding through the canals of Venice, it was his philosophical achievement to thrust the mode of recording into the scenes recorded in a remarkable exercise of self-reference.

At this point cinema approaches the proper apprehension of architecture, which is not something merely to be looked at but moved through, and this, in turn, is something the architect will have built into his structure. I think, in a way, the kinetification of the camera goes some way toward explaining the internal impact films make upon us, for it seems to overcome, at least in principle, the distance between spectator and scene, thrusting us like movable ghosts into scenes which a-kinetic photography locates us outside of, like disembodied cartesian spectators. We are within scenes

which we also are outside of through the fact that we have no dramatic location, often, in the action which visually unfolds, having it both ways at once, which is not an option available to the audiences of stageplays. Or this at least happens to the degree that we are not conscious of the mediation of the camera, and transfer its motion to ourselves, inversely to our deepseated geostatic prejudices. Whether, of course, the film actually achieves instillation of kinetic illusion – in contrast with the illusion of kinesis, which is the commonplace form of cinematic experiences – is perhaps doubtful, especially if the film is in black and white and manifestly representational; e.g., in contrast with holographs in which it is difficult to believe we are not seeing three-dimensional objects, even if we know better.

Even so, I think the chief innovation the moving camera introduces is to make the mode of recording part of the record, and thus thrusts the art of cinema into the image in a singularly intimate way. This happens when, for instance, the swinging of the image through an abrupt angle is to be read as a movement not of it but of the camera, for instance in a mob scene where the camera is, as it were, “jostled,” or where, more archly, the camera literally climbs the stairway with an eye and a lubricity of its own, and pokes into one bedroom after another, in search of the lovers, as in one of Truffaut’s films. In such cases, the movement of the camera is not our movement, and this has precisely the effect of thrusting us outside the action and back into our metaphysical cartesian hole. When this happens, however, the subject of the film changes; it no longer is the story of young lovers, but of their being observed and filmed which the movie is then about, as though the story itself were but an occasion for filming it, and the latter is what the film itself is about. Film becomes in a way its own subject, the consciousness that it is film is what the consciousness is of, and in this move to self-consciousness cinema marches together with the other arts of the twentieth century in the respect that art itself becomes the ultimate subject of art, a movement of thought which parallels philosophy in the respect that philosophy in the end is what philosophy is about. As though the director had become jealous of the characters who heretofore had absorbed our artistic attention to the point that we had forgotten if we ever thought about art as such, and at his ontological expense. Of course, we have to distinguish a film about the making of a film – which is

merely another form of the Hollywood genre of films in which the making of a play is what the film is of – from films whose own making is what they are about, only the latter, I think *graduating* (if that is the term) from art to philosophy. But of course a price is paid, and a heavy one. When, instead of transforming real objects into artworks or parts of artworks, the transformation itself is what we are aware of, the film becomes a documentary with the special character of documenting the making of an artwork, and it is moot if this will be an artwork in its own right, however absorbing. For the artwork which is being made is not in the end what the film is about when the film is about its making, and if this were perfectly general there would be no artworks at all.

Or perhaps the model is wrong. Perhaps films are like consciousness is as described by Sartre with two distinct, but inseparable, dimensions, consciousness of something as its intentional object, and a kind of non-thetic consciousness of the consciousness itself: and it is with reference to the latter that the intermittent reminders of the cinematic processes as such are to be appreciated.

*Then a film achieves something spectacular, not merely showing what it shows, but showing the fact that it is shown; giving us not merely an object but a perception of that object, a world and a way of seeing that world at once; the artist’s mode of vision being as importantly in his work as what it is a vision of.* This is a deep subject, with which I end this paper, and I cannot hope to treat it here. I wonder, nevertheless, of the degree to which we are ever conscious of a vision of the world when it is ours. We are aware of the world and seldom aware, if at all, of the special way in which we are aware of the world. Modes of awareness are themselves transparent to those whose they are. And when they become opaque then, I think, they no longer are ours.

Atget was recording the city of Paris. His photographs are precious for their documentary value, preserving a reality which has achingly dissipated, but they also reveal a way of seeing that reality which, I am certain, Atget was not aware of as a way of seeing. He simply saw, as do we all. What is precious in old films is often not the “gone” artifacts and the dated modes of costume and acting. The people who made those films did not see their dress as a “mode of costume” but merely as clothes, nor their gestures as modes of acting, but as acting, tout court. A way of viewing the world is revealed when it has jelled and thickened into a kind of spiritual artifact, and despite the philosophical

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reminders our self-conscious cineastes interpose between their stories and their audiences, their vision – perhaps in contrast with their style – will take a certain historical time before it becomes visible. In whatever way we are conscious of con-

sciousness, consciousness is not an *object* for itself; and when it becomes an object, we are, as it were, beyond it and relating to the world in modes of consciousness which are for the moment hopelessly transparent.