Situating the Camera:
Third-Person Images and the Question of Point of View in Narrative Cinema

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ABSTRACT

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Despite being used to great effect in a handful of films, the technique of "third-person images" remains a largely unexplored topic within film studies. This peculiar phenomenon constitutes a particularly interesting and challenging object of research, as its demands a larger, multi-layered understanding of points of view in narrative cinema. The purpose of this thesis is thus divided into two parts: First, to present an expanded definition of the expression "point of view" that more adequately deals with the various technical, aesthetic, and narrative elements of a film; and second, to introduce and examine third-person images in an attempt to discover the fundamental qualities of this peculiar technique. In so doing, the goal of this study is to determine what makes third-person images so unique and what they might contribute to the films that feature them.

Using an approach I term techno-aesthetic, this thesis examines with equal focus the technical, aesthetic, and narrative elements of a film. Specifically, these are discussed in terms of their various interactions, rather than independently of one another. Precise descriptions of the technical apparatus are paired with a rigorous analysis of the camera movements it produces. In turn, this informs an examination of the type of narrative subjectivity that this technique represents on screen. A scene from *Requiem for a Dream* (Darren Aronofsky, 2000) serves as the object of these analyses, and illustrates both the specificities of third-person images, as well as the complexity of points of view in narrative cinema.

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INTRODUCTION

By now, there is an image most of us have experienced in some way or another (through video games, film, television, or the GoPro's extreme sport videos), often without fully understanding it: a character is frozen at the centre of the image while the world continues to move around it. The character is seemingly detached from its environment, unmoved by the latter's constant transformations. While the films that use this unusual image are few and far between, it is typically used to convey a similar impression: characters appear detached from the world because they are in a peculiar or altered psychological state. Despite being used to great effect in films including *Mean Streets* (Martin Scorsese, 1973), *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* (Guy Richie, 1998), and *Requiem for a Dream* (Darren Aronofsky, 2000), little is written about this mysterious technique, which might in turn explain why no simple term has been established to describe it properly. In video games—where this of point of view is used most prominently and systematically—this is called a "third-person perspective," an expression I will import to the following discussion of these images in cinema. Originally, the third-person perspective in games is defined in opposition to the more prevalent "first-person perspective," which places the camera *within* the character so that the player acts through the eyes of its avatar. In accordance with this definition-by-contrast, let us for a moment look at first-person images in cinema before moving on to third-person images, the true object of the following study.

In games and moving image media alike, first-person images are designed to enable audiences to experience narrative events vicariously through the eyes of a character. From *Lady in the Lake* (Robert Montgomery, 1947) to *Hardcore* (Ilya Naishuller, 2015), several films have boasted the ability to immerse spectators in their narrative by having it shown entirely—or significantly—from the subjective perspective of the protagonist. While these two examples push this notion to the extreme by taking place exclusively through the eyes of a character, a great number of films include in their narrative structure this type of first-person sequence in an attempt at creating a more intense and intimate experience for audiences. By presenting to

spectators the character's *optical* perspective of narrative events, these subjective sequences in film effectively aim to convey the character's personal, *emotional* point of view as well.

Taking a radically different approach, the film *Worm* (Andrew Bowser, 2013) shares the unique perspective of a single character during an uninterrupted 90-minute take, captured not from his optical point of view, but rather from a point outside of him, looking in. The goal of this point of view is to focus entirely on the character's experience of the narrative events in such a way that also allows us to see his emotional reactions to the events as they unfold, in real-time. In contrast to the first-person perspective of *Hardcore* (which relies on GoPro cameras placed as close as possible to the eyes of the performer in order to replicate the character's optical perspective, as shown in figure 1), *Worm* was captured by a GoPro camera attached in front of the actor's body, looking back at him (see figure 1). Instead of *Hardcore*'s first-person point of view, then, *Worm* presents us with a third-person perspective.[1]

Fig. 1 - On the left, the first-person rig used in *Hardcore* (http://www.iwanthardcore.com). On the right, the third-person rig used for *Worm* (© Andrew Bowser, 2013).

Contrary to the use of the expression in linguistics (in which case the *grammatical* third person refers to an entity other than the enunciator or the enunciatee), the third-person perspective in cinema, as I will define it throughout this thesis, shares the material characteristics of that in games: it is a view captured from outside of a character, but attached to it, looking back at it. To a degree, it is also an image that is *intimately* tied to a character, even if we only see

[1] Throughout this thesis, the expression point of view and perspective are used synonymously, except where otherwise explicitly said.

from *alongside* it and not *within* it. While first-person points of view aim for the reduction or elimination of the distance between the spectator and the character—so that the former might experience the world vicariously, through the eyes of the latter—the third-person perspective is characterized by the distance it creates between the body of the camera and that of the character, which allows it to show what the character is doing as well as the character doing it. This means the character can be shown reacting to narrative events in real time, rather than sequentially through editing. The third-person point of view, therefore, seems to work around the limitations which preclude first-person images from truly conveying the subjective experience of a character (relying instead on external close-ups of an actor's face to properly express the character's emotional state).

The film *Lady in the Lake* is often cited as a proof of this limitation. For example, Barthélemy Amengual writes of the "absolute (and unfeasible) identification of the hero's point of view with our own."[2] For Amengual, Vivian Sobchack writes, "the spectator's assimilation of [the character]'s perception is impossible because of the 'constant suppression of the image of the hero'."[3] As Sobchack also indicates by quoting an essay by Edward Branigan: "The failure of *Lady in the Lake* […] has been attributed to the fact that in order to internalize a character's look, one has to know the character… One cannot know a character from a purely personal narrational stance (I, or I see) because psychology is an external construct which depends upon the perspective of an *apersonal* narrational voice."[4]

As these comments suggest, seeing narrative events from a character's optical perspective does not equate to experiencing them from their emotional or psychological perspective. Instead, and as Jean Mitry suggests, "in order to 'experience' the feelings of a given character, all the

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[2] Barthélemy Amengual, "Le Je, le Moi, le Il au Cinéma," *Image et Son - La Revue du Cinéma* 61 (March 1953). Quoted in Jean Mitry*, The Aesthetics and Psychology of the Cinema*, trans. Christopher King (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 209.

[3] Vivian Sobchack, *The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 232.

[4] Edward Branigan, "Formal Permutations of the Point-of-View Shot," *Screen* 16, no. 3 (1975): 62. Emphasis in original.

audience had to do is be *with* the character, alongside him."[5] Since third-person images, as introduced thus far, are used to show the development of narrative events from a point of view alongside the character, can we assume that they also convey the subjective experience of that character to a degree that eludes first-person images (defined by their representation of events from a character's optical perspective)? Inasmuch as several films include third-person points of view as part of a greater narrative structure, can we infer that this unusual technique possesses certain unique qualities (technical, aesthetic or narrative) that make it more suitable than others for conveying narrative events? If so, what are the particular characteristics of the third-person perspective that make it—at particular moments within a narrative structure—a contextually more valuable alternative to other options, such as the more prevalent first-person point of view? What, specifically, does the third-person perspective possess that would lead Darren Aronofsky (who used the technique extensively in his films *Pi* (1998), and *Requiem for a Dream*) to declare that it creates "the ultimate in subjective filmmaking"?[6]

While the first-person subjective point of view is a standard element of narrative cinema —most films that feature characters can easily include it in their narrative structure—the third-person perspective found in *Worm*, *Pi*, and *Requiem for a Dream* remains largely unknown, unrecognized, and arguably under-deployed. The core goal of this thesis lies, then, in defining the third-person image. This includes determining the technical and aesthetic characteristics that are unique to it, as well as examining the potential benefits of using this technique as part of a narrative structure. What *is* the third-person point of view? What does it *do*? *How* does it do so? *Whose* (narrative) point of view does it represent? What is the *point* of using technique? Such are some of the questions that will guide the process of defining third-person images throughout this thesis.

As it is constructed, this thesis aims to pique the interest of two groups of readers: those who want to discover more about this unusual technique called third-person images and those

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[5] Mitry, *Aesthetics and Psychology*, 215. Emphasis in original.

[6] Darren Aronofsky, "Production Notes," *Requiem for a Dream*, directed by Darren Aronofsky (2000, Lionsgate Home Entertainment, 2007), DVD.

interested in the larger question of points of view in narrative cinema. To the former group, this thesis presents a precise description of the technique required for the creation of third-person images, as well as an in-depth look at how these images present themselves to viewers. In so doing, this project fills a gap in film theory and analysis by offering a comprehensive account of an image that is now becoming ubiquitous within contemporary moving image culture. To the latter group, the following study offers a more flexible understanding of the concept of point of view, as well as the model for a techno-aesthetic approach (described below) that makes full use of this new information. Indeed, this project proposes a broader and more versatile definition of the expression point of view that is more adequately suited to the discussion of technical and aesthetic devices, and their influence on filmic narration (rather than limiting itself to the narrative connotation of the term). Additionally, while each group of readers might initially be interested in only one part of what this thesis has to offer, this project aims to demonstrate how each part builds off of and complements the other. In order to further demonstrate the relevance and interest of this subject, the literature review presented in the following pages explains how each of these two contributions fit within larger discussions that are taking place in our field of study.

Literature Review

The topic addressed in this thesis is multi-faceted, and thus demands an equally multi-layered methodological framework. As a result, this thesis enters into conversation with two distinct forms of scholarly writing. These focus respectively on technology and aesthetics, on the one hand, and subjectivity in narrative cinema, on the other. The technological approach to film analysis, or what Jakob Nielsen calls "craft discourse,"[7] is typically found in industry journals (e.g., *American Cinematographer*, *Cinema Technology*, *Motion Imaging Journal*) and in books such as Barry Salt's *Film Style and Technology*,[8] or Raymond Spottiswoode's *Film and Its*

[7] Jakob Isak Nielsen, "Camera Movement in Narrative Cinema: Towards a Taxonomy of Functions" (PhD diss., University of Aarhus, 2007), 2, 10.

[8] Barry Salt, *Film Style and Technology : History and Analysis,* 2nd ed. (London: Starword, 1992).

Techniques.[9] Topics in technological writing on film can range from precise technical descriptions of the devices used in the various stages of a film's production (including discussions of the newest cameras and lenses, or of video codecs and standards) to the statistical account of particular techniques, in Salt's case. A broader understanding of technological approaches to film studies might also include discourses that focus instead on the larger cultural or philosophical implications of media technologies. This wider branch would include texts such as André Bazin's "L'Ontologie de l'Image Photographique,"[10] Ariel Rogers' *Cinematic Appeals*,[11] and, to a lesser degree, even sources such as Jean-Louis Baudry's "Le Dispositif."[12] In these examples, the technical phenomena that are the topic of discussion tend to be subordinated to an examination of the philosophical, cultural, or ideological issues they raise.

The path taken during the development of this thesis has led me through all of these variations of technological methodologies, at one point or another. From an initial, purely technological, fascination with the devices used to produce third-person images (fuelled in part by my own experience as a camera operator), the following study has matured into a project that provides extremely detailed technical descriptions as a way of informing and supporting discussions of other aspects of the filmic object, namely its aesthetic and narrative elements.

A number of sources in the category of technological approaches to film studies also make a clear attempt to connect descriptions of technical devices with analyses of the aesthetic results they create. While some forms of aesthetic analysis do try to consider formal elements independently of their technical origins, a number of authors make this connection clear by discussing with equal emphasis both the technical characteristics of a particular device as well as its aesthetic results. Notably, Serena Ferrara's *Steadicam: Techniques and Aesthetics*[13] and Jean-

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[9] Raymond Spottiswoode, *Film and Its Techniques* (University of California Press, 1958).

[10] André Bazin, "L'Ontologie de l'Image Photographique," *Qu'est-ce que le Cinéma?* (Paris: Cerf, 1981), 9-17.

[11] Ariel Rogers, *Cinematic Appeals: The Experience of New Movie Technologies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

[12] Jean-Louis Baudry, "Le Dispositif," *Communications* 23, no. 1 (1975): 56-72.

[13] Serena Ferrara, *Steadicam: Techniques Aesthetics* (Oxford: Focal Press, 2001).

Pierre Geuens' "Visuality and Power"[14] both use this approach in their study of the Steadicam and the images it produces. Although they each deal with a very different technique than the one analyzed in this project, Ferrara and Geuens' texts offer blueprints for the techno-aesthetic methodology developed for this thesis. The goal of a techno-aesthetic approach—as inspired by Ferrara and Geuens and developed throughout this thesis—is precisely to deal with both the technical and aesthetic aspects of a particular phenomenon, specifically in a manner that emphasizes the interactions between each element and their influence on the way a film is represented. Thus, despite the similar terminology, this approach is distinct from Gilbert Simondon's notion of the "techno aesthetic" or "aesthetic technique."[15]

On the one hand, Ferrara's book offers extremely detailed descriptions of the technical apparatus called the Steadicam, as well as a reading of the peculiar aesthetic qualities that are unique to this device. Both of these elements are also predominant features of the following study. However, because this thesis focuses on the narrative point of view as much as it does on the technical and aesthetic characteristics of third-person images, Ferrara's extensive use of interviews with practitioners do not carry over as a suitable research tool. Instead of featuring interviews, this project focuses on an analysis of the influence of third-person images on the narration of a film.

Geuens, on the other hand, writes a short article in which he pairs his precise descriptions of the technical aspects of the Steadicam with a reading of the ideological implications of the device's uncanny, transcendental gaze.[16] Once more, although Geuens' techno-aesthetic account of the Steadicam, just as Ferrara's, is a source of inspiration for this research, the author's conclusions about the ideological powers of the Steadicam find no equivalent in this thesis. In

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[14] Jean-Pierre Geuens, "Visuality and Power: The Work of the Steadicam," *Film Quarterly* 47, no. 2 (1993-1994): 8-17.

[15] Gilbert Simondon, "Lettre sur la Techno-Esthétique," *Les Papiers du Collège International de Philosophie* 12 (1992): 2. Simondon's concept of the "techno aesthetic" aims to reintroduce technique into discussions of aesthetics, rather than approach the aesthetic aspects of an object as pure and distinct from any technique. This idea differs from the techno-aesthetic approach used in this study and its focus on the interactions of both technical and aesthetic film analyses.

[16] Geuens, "Visuality and Power," 16

other words, unlike Geuens, I will not try to suggest that the images analyzed in this project are symptomatic of the socio-political context in which they were used. Nevertheless, since the analyses found throughout this project are also concerned with the hybrid analysis of a technical device and the formal qualities of the images it creates, both Ferrara and Geuens' prototypical techno-aesthetic approaches remain crucial influences.

The second type of theoretical framework within which this thesis is developed is found in studies of points of view and subjectivity in narrative films. While the technical and aesthetic methodologies do not necessarily deal with theoretical questions, approaches to the notion of point of view in cinema, including those that focus on the idea of subjectivity, are purely conceptual. From Francesco Casetti's structural linguistic account of the enunciative processes of filmic narration,[17] to Bruce Kawin's examination of the "first-person film,"[18] to Edward Branigan's precise classification of levels of narration in film,[19] theories of narration and point of view constitute a rich and complex body of knowledge. Among all the types of narrative theories one can draw from, this thesis enters in dialogue with those that focus on specific forms of subjectivity, especially unconventional ones. For this purpose, the two main sources from which this thesis builds are Jean Mitry, in *Aesthetics and Psychology of the Cinema*,[20] and Edward Branigan, in both his *Point of View of the Cinema*[21] and *Projecting a Camera*.[22] Interestingly, the question of unusual narrative points of view is not the main topic of these books; Mitry's book, for instance, is described as "the apotheosis and grand summation of the psychological and formalist views on film,"[23] while Branigan's *Projecting a Camera* deals instead with "the

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[17] Francesco Casetti, *Inside the Gaze: The Fiction Film and Its Spectator*, trans. Nell Andrew and Charles O'Brien (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998).

[18] Bruce Kawin, *Mindscreen: Bergman, Godard, and the First-Person Film* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).

[19] Edward Branigan, *Narrative Comprehension and Film* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 87.

[20] Jean Mitry, *Aesthetics and Psychology of the Cinema*, trans. Christopher King (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997).

[21] Edward Branigan, *Point of View in the Cinema : A Theory of Narration and Subjectivity in Classical Film* (Berlin ; New York: Mouton, 1984).

[22] Branigan, *Projecting a Camera: Language-Games in Film Theory* (New York & London: Routledge, 2006).

[23] Mitry, *Aesthetics and Psychology*, Fourth cover.

complicated sets of meanings devised for the word 'camera'."[24] Nevertheless both authors, through their respective enterprises, suggest types of narrative points of view—both poised between the subjective and objective extremities of the narrative spectrum—the characteristics of which inform how this thesis defines third-person images.

In addition to these sources on levels of subjectivity in narrative cinema, this project also draws from theories that deal with the potential for the subjective engagement of audiences with characters or narratives. In sources such as Katherine Thompson-Jones' *Aesthetics & Film*[25] (specifically her chapter "The Feeling Film Viewer"), Murray Smith's *Engaging Characters*,[26] or even in Herbert Lightman's "The Subjective Camera,"[27] the interest of these authors lies in the spectator's experience of a film and their subjective engagement (or lack thereof) with certain characters. However, these questions of engagement and spectator identification are delicate topics, too easily dealt with through broad and all-encompassing statements. As a result, while this thesis is concerned with these questions, it also steers clear of absolute claims about a spectator's engagement with the narrative or identification with character.

Structure

Although the impetus behind this research project and the main objective throughout is to offer a definition of third-person images in film and moving image media, one of the goals of this thesis is also to revisit the notion of point of view in narrative cinema. Indeed, before being able to discuss third-person images in requisite detail, Chapter One begins with a reconsideration of the expression "point of view" according to the etymological definition given by Jacques Aumont in his 1983 article "Le Point de Vue."[28] Starting from Aumont's four-part definition,

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[24] Branigan, *Projecting a Camera*, xiv.

[25] Katherine Thompson-Jones, *Aesthetics & Film* (London & New York: Continuum, 2008).

[26] Murray Smith, *Engaging Characters: Fiction, Emotion, and the Cinema* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

[27] Herbert Lightman, "Subjective Camera," *American Cinematographer* 27, no. 2 (1946): 46, 66-67.

[28] Jacques Aumont, "Le Point de Vue," *Communications* 38, no.1 (1983): 3-29.

Chapter One introduces the notion of point of view as a complex amalgamation of physical, optical, narrative, and critical elements. Despite the links between these various points of view, each is defined in section 1.1 as an independent entity that can influence the others, as well as the way a film is represented or understood.

Sections 1.2 and 1.3 of this chapter then introduce the theoretical notions that are used in the analyses of third-person images found throughout the thesis. Namely, section 1.2 presents theories from Vivian Sobchack and David Bordwell that deal with the contrasting nature of the physical movements of the technical device we call a camera, and the optical movements perceived on screen we call camera movement. These notions play an important role in the task of situating a camera, carried out in Chapter Two. The desire to situate a camera also continues in section 1.3, which concludes Chapter One with an overview of what I call the "narrative spectrum," a range within which we can position the particular level of narrative subjectivity conveyed through third-person images.

To contrast with the emphasis on theory found in Chapter One, Chapter Two offers precise descriptions of the device necessary for the creation of third-person images (section 2.1 and 2.2), as well as an in-depth shot-by-shot description of the camera movements this technique creates on screen (section 2.3). Through such precise descriptions, Chapter Two puts to use the theoretical vocabulary introduced in Chapter One in order to better grasp the importance of this particular kind of image. After these technical and aesthetic descriptions, section 2.4 interprets the unusual movements perceived in third-person images using notions that section 2.5 subsequently adapts to discuss how this technique might affect the narrative point of view of the scenes in which it is used.

In trying to discover what makes the third-person technique an interesting alternative to first-person images for certain filmmakers, as well as what these images might bring to our understanding of cinema—two ongoing concerns throughout these chapters—the true purpose of this thesis is to determine what the inherent qualities and limitations of this technique might be. In other words, what are the fundamental characteristics of third-person images? Since these

essential attributes are spread across physical, optical and narrative spheres, an auxiliary goal of this study is also to demonstrate the benefits of what I call a *techno-aesthetic approach,* which considers the various levels of interaction of the technical and aesthetic aspects of a film, along with their influence on the representation and eventual reception of the narrative. Ultimately, in the context of narrative films, analyses of purely technical or aesthetic elements are most meaningful in terms of their effects within a narrative structure; the study of techniques and aesthetics is made more significant when it also addresses their effect on narrative representation. However, when the time is right for such a study, the natural progression of this analysis of third-person images will eventually lead us to ask how this unusual perspective asks to be read perceptually, outside the limits of its use in narrative structures; this thought permeates the thesis.

Dealing with the "Unattainable Text"[29]

How does one do justice to the appearance of camera movements as originally perceived on screen? Specifically, how can one do so using the written word? Such is the dilemma this thesis faces. While the descriptions and analyses of third-person images presented in this study do their best to convey the unique and most fundamental characteristics of the technique in question, nothing can compare to seeing these camera movements in action. Given the importance of these images—and the relative difficulty in finding them within the films that do use them—I have collected, for the reader, excerpts of every film, television series, and music video in which I could find this technique. In an attempt to facilitate the access to these excerpts, I have also uploaded them to my personal YouTube channel, where I hope they might remain accessible for the foreseeable future.

The annex to this thesis contains, as of June 2015, the most up to date list of productions that have used third-person images, along with links to their respective clips. Music videos, while included in this list, are however accompanied by links to the page where the clips were originally found. Additionally, it is important to note that, for the sake of relevance and brevity,

[29] Raymond Bellour, "The Unattainable Text," *Screen* 16, no. 3 (1975): 19-27.

other types of productions (e.g., television ads, or extreme sports videos shot with GoPro cameras) are not included in this list. That being said, this list is by no means exhaustive and more examples will be added as I find them.[30]

These clips can and should be used as a resource while reading this thesis.

[30] "'Third-Person Images' in Film and Television," Youtube playlist, 41 videos, posted by "Philippe Bédard," last updated June 24, 2015. https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLH_e1Wql0QlqEqWKSX0I7tNQ5OuxvW9Mb

CHAPTER ONE: THE POINT OF VIEW IN NARRATIVE CINEMA

1.1 Rethinking the Point of View in Cinema

The notion of point of view is fundamental in the cinema, given that it is a primarily visual medium. However, this notion is also one that necessitates significant framing. Among the myriad of theoretical approaches one may take in order to define the point of view, Jacques Aumont is notable for taking an etymological approach to this question, attempting to define the four meanings that the expression *point de vue* has had in the French language throughout its history. The four types of point of view Aumont notes are as follows (see figure 2.1):

1. The point from which an image is seen
2. The view resulting from this point
3. The narrative point of view
4. The mental attitude of the narrator

Fig. 2.1 - Four meanings of the expression "point of view"

For the most part, nothing is lost in translation, and the connotations of each point are found just as well in the English expression "point of view" as they were in French. In either case, we can summarize these four positions with the following terms: physical, optical, narrative, and critical. For each of these four types of point of view there corresponds a particular theoretical background and methodological approach, as well as a unique mode of engagement with the spectator. Below, I would like to look at each definition one by one.

First comes the physical point of view. Although it is typically only spoken of in tandem with the optical point of view, both possess certain distinct and mutually exclusive characteristics. As such, both should and will be discussed separately. To begin, the physical point of view puts the emphasis on the *point* from which an image is seen and captured. For Aumont, this is "the point, the location from whence one looks: hence, the location of the camera

relative to the object at which it looks."[31] The physical point of view, then, refers to the pro-filmic camera, its position in space, its orientation, and its movements. As David Bordwell notes, "The very notion 'camera' already situates us not before the cinema screen, but in a film studio, in production surroundings which include a mechanism called *a camera*."[32] Thus, when we discuss the physical apparatus used to move this camera, and the particular ways in which it moved during the production of a film, we are in fact referring to idea of the physical point of view.

Second, and conversely, the optical point of view emphasizes the *view* that is captured from the point qualified above. In Aumont's description, "it is the view itself, as it is taken from a certain [physical] point of view."[33] In the context of cinema, this second instance is understood throughout this thesis as referring to the aesthetic results of a given camera position or movement. In Bordwell's terms, this would be "*the perceived screen event* which we identify as camera movement."[34] While the optical point of view does depend on the physical point of view, "the movement of the camera during production does not guarantee that a perceptible camera movement will appear on the screen."[35] Indeed, as Bordwell indicates, certain perceptual cues are needed to convey the impression of on-screen movement. In the vast majority of camera movements, the images captured throughout the displacements of the physical point of view convey the necessary perceptual cues and as a result succeed in representing on screen the correct and corresponding movement. However, it is also possible—if such is the effect desired, or perhaps by mistake—to move the camera in such a way that also omits certain essential visual cues, thereby eliminating from the perceived screen event the impression that the camera is moving. Conversely, an immobile camera during production can also create an illusion of

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[31] "C'est d'abord le point, l'emplacement depuis lequel on regarde : donc, l'emplacement de la caméra relativement à l'objet regardé." Jacques Aumont, "Le Point De Vue," *Communications* 38, no. 1 (1983): 4.

[32] David Bordwell, "Camera Movement and Cinematic Space," *Ciné-Tracts* 1, no. 2 (1977): 20. Emphasis in original.

[33] "Corrélativement, c'est la vue elle-même, en tant que prise depuis un certain point de vue […]" Aumont, "Le Point de Vue," 5.

[34] Idem. Emphasis in original.

[35] Idem.

mobility within the optical point of view, assuming that enough convincing perceptual cues are conveyed to the spectators, in some way or another.[36] As I mentioned previously, and as is discussed throughout this thesis, it is important to remember that despite their ontological connection, the physical placement of the camera and the resultant optical points of view are two distinct entities, of which the division can be illustrated through a lack, or a misrepresentation, of perceptual cues.

To address the physical and optical points of view, specifically in terms of their unique characteristics, this thesis relies on Bordwell's "Camera Movement in Cinematic Space," as well as on Vivian Sobchack's "Toward Inhabited Space."[37] Although these two texts take extremely different approaches to the question of camera movement, they share an interest in the material nature of the camera, and the spectator's perception of on-screen movement. While Bordwell deals explicitly with the question of the pro-filmic (physical) camera and its potentially tenuous relation to the resulting on-screen (optical) point of view, Sobchack's interest lies in the way camera movements are originally perceived by viewers, specifically as it is opposed to how they are typically described by film scholars (i.e., *ex post facto,* in purely mechanical terms).

Those physical and optical points of view—literally those of the camera—are also important to consider in terms of their influence on spectatorial engagement with the filmic text. Included below is a description of a number of ways in which film scholars have addressed the relation of spectators to these forms of point of view. One such case concerns the process known as identification.[38] In his "Imaginary Signifier,"[39] Christian Metz presents identification as a

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[36] To illustrate these examples, Bordwell mentions the "Lullaby of Broadway" number in *Golddiggers of 1935*, in the first case. This is because, despite the actual movements of the camera, the image simply seems to suggest that a disembodied head is floating towards the viewer. In the second case, Bordwell points to camera movements of animated films, which create an illusion of mobility even though the camera is stationary. See Bordwell, "Camera Movement," 20. For the second example, see also Thomas LaMarre, "From Animation to *Anime* : Drawing Movements and Moving Drawings," *Japan Forum* 14, no. 2 (2002): 329-367.

[37] Vivian Sobchack, "Toward Inhabited Space: The Semiotic Structure of Camera Movement in the Cinema," *Semiotica* 41, no. 1-4 (1982).

[38] I share the concerns of Katherine Thompson-Jones when she writes, "This is not meant to suggest that identification represents the only way in which we engage with film characters. […] identification is perhaps the most mysterious and misunderstood, but also the most powerfully intimate aspect of our felt engagement with film characters." Katherine Thompson-Jones, *Aesthetics & Film* (Continuum, 2009), 13-14.

[39] Christian Metz, "The Imaginary Signifier," *Screen* 16, no. 2 (1975): 14-76.

process that takes place first and foremost between a spectator and the point of view of the camera (physical and optical). Metz's contention is that, in order to "make sense of films,"[40] a viewer must project herself onto the camera in a process that resembles the role of identification, as it is understood by Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic work. Katherine Thompson-Jones summarizes Metz's relation to Lacan, his understanding of identification, and their relation to film:

> The fact that I have to identify with someone in order to understand what she is telling me suggests to Metz that I also have to identify with the source of telling (and showing) in a film in order to understand the film. The source of a film's telling and showing is, in a literal sense, the camera. Thus the fundamental role of identification in communication leads Metz to claim that identification with the camera is the primary form of identification in film. Identification with characters is secondary because the intelligibility of film in general does not depend on it. After all, there are intelligible films that do not have characters.[41]

This understanding of a spectator's identification with the camera is once more tied to the notion of the physical and optical points of view of the camera—rather than the narrative or critical points of view that Aumont describes. However, Thompson-Jones warns that Metz's clinical descriptions do not relate to the way in which identification really works for viewers. She expands, "Personally I have never heard anyone emerge from the cinema saying, 'gosh, I could really identify with the camera in that film!' Indeed, insofar as psychoanalytic identification is subconscious, we wouldn't be in a position to comment spontaneously on our having identified with the camera."[42] On the one hand, it is important to recognize this notion of primary identification—with the camera rather than with the characters—as it is notable for its significance in a key moment in the development of film studies as an academic field. However, when the notion of spectatorial engagement is discussed throughout this thesis, it will not be

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[40] Thompson-Jones, *Aesthetics*, 115.

[41] Idem.

[42] Ibid., 116.

through primary identification, but rather in terms of a spectator's potential identification with the characters on screen, a topic which relates to the narrative point of view.

Third in the types of points of view described by Aumont is the narrative point of view. As the author tells us, this is the instance to which most of film theory and criticism refers when speaking of a point of view in cinema. "It is interesting to see," Aumont says, how often "the expression 'point of view' is monosemic: it always refers to the narrative point of view."[43] Simply put, a narrative point of view refers, in cinema, to the degree of subjectivity that a camera represents in any given shot (from the inner thoughts of single character to the omniscient gaze of the narrator). As Aumont puts it: "The frame, for example, is always more or less, in the narrative cinema, the representation of a gaze, that of the author or the character."[44] Aumont also adds, "the history of narrative cinema concerns the acquisition and the establishment of rules of correspondence between a POV_1, the resulting POV_2, and this narrative point of view."[45]

While the relation between physical and optical points of view can be tenuous at times, the rules correspondence between these first two instances, on the one hand, and the narrative point of view, on the other, is completely fabricated. Indeed, our ability to determine whose narrative voice the camera represents in any given shot depends on a combination of contextual clues, acquired rules, and codified practices. Despite the apparent fragility of this relation, the representation of a narrative point of view is fairly simple in the majority of cases. Typically, if a film wants to represent the point of view of a specific character, sufficient information will simply be conveyed to the spectator so that he or she may clearly understand *whose point of view* is being represented. For example, Branigan explains the structure typically used in classical cinema in order to introduce an image shown from the subjective perspective of a particular character (an image Branigan simply calls POV):

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[43] "il est instructif de voir à quel point, pour des auteurs comme Jost (voir son article de Théorie du film, p. 129) ou Vanoye, la locution « point de vue » est monosémique : elle renvoie toujours au point de vue narratif." Aumont, "Le Point de Vue," 25. My translation.

[44] "le cadre, par exemple, est toujours peu ou prou, dans le cinéma narratif, représentation d'un regard, celui de l'auteur ou celui du personnage." Ibid., 5. My translation.

[45] "là encore, l'histoire du cinéma narratif est celle de l'acquisition et de la fixation des règles de correspondance entre un PDV_1, le PDV_2 qui en résulte, et ce point de vue narratif." Idem. My translation.

> Subjectivity in film depends on linking the framing of space at a given moment to a character as origin. The link may be direct or indirect. In the POV structure it is direct, because the character is shown and then the camera occupies his or her (approximate!) position, thus framing a spatial field derived from him or her as origin. […] What is important, therefore, in determining subjectivity is to examine the logic which links the framing of space to a character as origin of that space.[46]

Branigan's definition clearly presents the type of connection that is drawn between the physical and optical points of view of the camera, on one hand, and the representation of a character's narrative point of view, on the other.

It is also worth mentioning Branigan's insistence on the question of *position*. From this description of the POV structure it appears that, in order for a camera to represent the *narrative* point of view of a character, it must also assume the *physical* point of view that was previously established as that of the character. In so doing, the image shown on screen effectively represents the *optical* point of view that results from this physical position. This leads me to ask, if the representation of a character's point of view within a narrative structure is dependent on the position of the camera, can we also discuss the question of subjectivity in terms of position (i.e., in topographical terms)? This question, through the development of this research, led me to the idea of the "narrative spectrum": an infinitely divisible range of narrative voices that extends between the subjective point of view of a character, on one hand, and the objective point of view of an omniscient narrator, on the other.[47] This analogy of the narrative spectrum—delimited by two opposing poles—lends a physical connotation to the abstract notion of narrative points of view. While we are no longer talking about the physical position of the pro-filmic camera or the optical point of view found in scenographic space, this thesis deals with the notion of narrative points of view as something that we can situate on a spectrum, as if topographically.

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[46] Branigan, *Point of View*, 73. Emphasis in original.

[47] This notion is discussed in greater detail in section 1.3 of this thesis.

To address some of the narrative points of view that can be found in the grey areas of the spectrum between the purely subjective and the purely objective, this thesis presents certain concepts from Jean Mitry's *Aesthetics and Psychology of the Cinema*, and from Branigan's *Projecting a Camera* and *Point of View in the Cinema*. Mitry develops the idea of a hybrid narrative point of view that combines elements of both the subjective and objective image. This is a process of "subjectivizing the objective," to use an expression by Branigan.[48] The "semi-subjective image,"[49] as Mitry calls his concept, is addressed in section 1.3.1 of this thesis. From Branigan's work, this project borrows the notion of the "perception shot" (section 1.3.2). Among the variety of points of view the author describes throughout his work, this instance refers to a process in which a technical device (e.g., colour, depth of field, frame rate) is added to, or modified within, a normal point of view in order to suggest the alteration of a character's mental state. As was the case with Branigan's description of the POV structure, his concept of the perception shot is notable for its illustration of the links between the physical and optical points of view, and the representation of a narrative point of view on screen.

Here again, in the context of the narrative point of view, the notion of identification comes into play. From the primary identification with the eye of the camera, we now move on to an identification with the film's characters. Katherine Thompson-Jones defines it as follows: "By 'identification' we mean, not 'melding' with a character, but 'living' with her: sharing her cares and coming to understand her in a particularly intimate way."[50] Thompson-Jones' account of identification recalls a definition of empathy, as "a kind of 'vicarious introspection' in which one thinks and feels oneself into the inner life of another person."[51] For Thompson-Jones, this *empathetic* identification "requires the imaginative adoption of the grounds of another's emotion,

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[48] Branigan, *Projecting a Camera*, 54.

[49] Mitry, *Aesthetics and Psychology*, 214.

[50] Thompson-Jones, *Aesthetics*, 118-119.

[51] Lisa Cartwright, *Moral Spectatorship: Technologies of Voice and Affect in Postwar Representation of the Child* (Durham & London: Duke University Press), 9. Here, Cartwright is paraphrasing Heinz Kohut's definition of empathy. Although the original context of Kohut's definition comes from psychoanalysis, I believe it speaks to the process of empathetic identification Thompson-Jones describes in her definition.

or the particular experience and perspective which gives rise to just that emotion."[52] According to her: "Once I have imagined seeing and believing what the character sees and believes […] there is then every chance that I will also achieve some degree of motivational and affective identification with the character."[53] While the primary identification Metz describes takes place simply between the spectator and the eye of the camera, the interest in this mode of empathetic identification lies in the "variety of forms that [it] can take,"[54] which is "limited only by the variety of aspects of another's experience I can imagine having. Moreover, different forms of identification can combine simultaneously as well as foster one another."[55] Thompson-Jones' definition is a very useful and enticing one; it offers a tempting way of explaining why and how spectators engage with characters the way they do. However, just like Metz's concept of primary identification, this mode empathetic identification seems to apply only to a "best case scenario," in which the spectator wants and seeks this identification, and in which the film allows this process to take place. Neither of these forms of identification addresses those films that potentially deny a spectator's desire to identify with certain characters, or conversely, those cases in which audiences reject a film's offer to identify with its characters.[56] Although this thesis does engage with the notion of empathetic identification in relation to third-person images, it also addresses the potential limitations of this process when appropriate.

This brings us to the fourth and final part of Aumont's definition, which is the critical point of view of the author or narrator in relation to the filmic text. Of course, the narrator and author are two very different entities, with radically different roles. Nevertheless, this fourth meaning of point of view applies to both functions equally, since it refers to their opinion or attitude towards the film. For Aumont, this *predicative*[57] point of view "translates the opinion of

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[52] Thompson-Jones, *Aesthetics*, 120.

[53] Idem.

[54] Ibid., 119.

[55] Idem.

[56] One can easily imagine yet other situations in which the degree of, or the desire for, identification might also shift during the progress of a film.

[57] Aumont, "Le Point de Vue," 5.

the narrator on the event."[58] This recalls a point made by Branigan, who writes "it is often said that an image appears onscreen for some (particular) reason and therefore must have a 'point,' must represent an attitude or viewpoint."[59] This also echoes one of the driving questions behind this thesis: what is the *point* of using third-person images within a narrative structure? As Branigan might suggest, this technique is used for some particular reason and, therefore, must have a purpose. This next thought also relates to the question of the critical point of view, and resonates throughout this study: behind every camera placement or movement, there is a decision that reveals, at the very least, that the technique chosen was deemed best suited for the task. Indeed, as Aumont indicates, the interest in the critical point of view lies in "the extent to which it is susceptible to influence the process of representation, and to shape the filmic matter of representation."[60] This topic appears in Chapter Two, where an analysis of third-person images tries to determine which of their qualities would lead filmmakers to choose this technique over other alternatives. This analysis will also address how the four types of point of view defined in this section—not just the critical point of view as in Aumont's case—interact with one another and influence the ways in which a film is represented and received.

Before moving on, however, I wish to add something to this account of the critical point of view. Although Aumont does not refer to this explicitly in his essay, I propose that this fourth type of point of view should also be understood as including the spectator's own critical relation to the film. If, as Aumont suggests, we should look at how these different points of view influence each other, should we not also consider the spectator's own viewpoint as part of the equation? If the author's attitude can influence how the narrative is represented, then the spectator's own point of view should also be thought of as affecting how the images are received and how the narrative is understood. For example, a spectator's critical viewpoint could influence the process of identification that this section introduced. One could also think of a situation in which problems within a given scene (technical or otherwise) would cause spectators

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[58] "[…] traduit le jugement du narrateur sur l'événement." Idem.

[59] Branigan, *Projecting a Camera*, 8.

[60] "je m'y intéresserai ici uniquement dans la mesure où il est susceptible d'avoir également des conséquences sur le travail de représentation, et de modeler le représentant filmique." Aumont, "Le Point de Vue," 5.

to "become conscious of the identification process by perceiving its contours, its identity."[61] If primary and empathetic identification are useful concepts when they relate to the successful or enjoyable identification of a spectator with the camera or a character, the critical point of view of the spectator, on the other hand, is a notion most productively discussed in the context of its disruption. For instance, consider this in relation to "the film viewer's disorienting moment of self-consciousness."[62] When the critical point of view of the spectator is used in this thesis, it will typically be to explain why certain "unconscious" processes of the film experience might not work as planned.

Among the variety of theoretical approaches to the notion of point of view in narrative cinema, Aumont's etymological definition offers the most productive model for addressing the peculiar characteristics of third-person images, a phenomenon comprised of technical, aesthetic, and narrative elements. Additionally, the purpose of Aumont's essay (i.e., to discuss how the viewpoint of a filmmaker might affect the way a narrative is represented) resonates throughout this project. Indeed, even though major parts of this study focus on precise technical descriptions or aesthetic analyses, the discussion always comes back to the narrative question: What makes third-person images a more valuable technique than other alternatives, such as the first-person subjective point of view, for instance? Ultimately, this question about technical or aesthetic qualities aims to determine the benefits or utility of this technique within a narrative structure.

The following section continues to build the theoretical foundation needed for the analysis of third-person images by addressing a question arising from Branigan's description of the POV structure. In his definition, the author emphasizes the role played by a camera's position in physical space (as well as the resulting optical point of view) in relation to the narrative voice that is represented as a result. To quote Branigan on the matter: "What is important, therefore, in determining subjectivity is to examine the logic which links the framing of space to a character

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[61] Michel Chion, "Extracts from *The Voice in Cinema*," in *Lacan: Critical Evaluations in Cultural Theory*, ed. Slavoj Žižek (London: Routledge, 2003), 122.

[62] Jennifer M. Barker, *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009), 88.

as origin of that space."[63] Following on this point, section 1.2 introduces the idea of "situating a camera," first in physical and scenographic space, and ultimately within the spectrum of narrative voices.

1.2 Situating the Camera

In addition to each falling under the umbrella of the expression point of view, the different concepts discussed in the previous section also share a concern for the question of *position*. This, of course, is most clear in relation to the physical and optical points of view. For instance, one can easily ask oneself *where* the camera was and how it moved relative to its pro-filmic environment when a scene was produced. The same could be asked about the camera in relation to scenographic space (where does the camera appear to be within the environment perceived on screen?). Although it might not be as obvious, this question can also relate to the narrative point of view. In this context, one could ask whether the camera is positioned *within* one of the characters, or if it is *standing in* for the author as an objective or omniscient observer. Finally, the idea of position is also interesting when it comes to the critical point of view, although here it also takes on symbolic connotations. For example, we can say that an author takes a particular *position* in relation to their film, while spectators can *distance* themselves from the film. Whether we understand it in factual or metaphorical terms, the idea of position is central to the notion of point of view. As a result, when we want to determine the nature of a particular point of view, we are in fact attempting to situate it (physically in pro-filmic or scenographic space, topographically on the narrative spectrum, or critically in term of one's relation to the text).

That being said, this section focuses on the concepts necessary in order to situate the camera within the physical and optical points of view, while the subsequent sections deal with the idea of a narrative spectrum within which we can situate the narrative voices contained in any given sequence. To address the question of the narrative spectrum, we must first know how to

[63] Branigan, *Point of View*, 73.

determine the camera's real position, both in physical and optical terms. Consequently, this section presents two concepts that will serve to identify the position of a camera as well as its movements through space. Additionally, this section addresses the potential distinction between the position of the camera at any given moment, and the source, direction and purpose of its displacements.

The two concepts the following section examines are *embodiment* and *intentionality*, as discussed by Vivian Sobchack in her essay "Toward Inhabited Space."[64] Sobchack introduces these terms, which she imports from the vocabulary of existential phenomenology, in order to help her make sense of the way camera movements convey meaning and speak to the viewers in the process. The impetus behind Sobchack's paper comes from her discontent with the abstract descriptions of camera movement we typically find in film theory and criticism. According to Sobchack, the vocabulary we use to describe camera movements (e.g., pan left, tilt down, dolly back, crane up, etc.) does not convey to readers its true appearance or purpose within films. She writes: "The particular aim of my essay is to describe and account for the phenomenon of camera movement on the screen as it is originally experienced and understood by us as viewers prior to the rather lame, objective, and static reflections upon it found in most film theory."[65] The author continues by stating the thesis of her essay: "In that original experience, I suggest, the motility of the camera is prereflectively understood as always meaningfully-directed, as *intentional*: the unifying embodied activity of a human consciousness as it is situated in and inhabits the world."[66] Finally, Sobchack concludes the introduction to her paper by writing: "Further, I suggest that such understanding arises because camera movement echoes the essential motility of our own consciousness as it is embodied in the world and able to accomplish and express the tasks and projects of living."[67]

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[64] Vivian Sobchack, "Toward Inhabited Space: The Semiotic Structure of Camera Movement in the Cinema," *Semiotica* 41, no. 1-4 (1982).

[65] Ibid., 317.

[66] Idem. Emphasis in original.

[67] Idem.

The first concept Sobchack introduces to tackle this objective is the notion of embodiment. For Sobchack: "Embodiment is characterized by existential phenomenology as the *situatedness* of consciousness, its mode of existence in the world, its access to the world."[68] The author continues: "It is our immediate and prereflective bodily knowledge as viewers that recognizes the finite and perspectival focus of the camera, its situatedness in the world as an implicitly embodied and functional subject, as the presence and movement of a consciousness rather than a machine."[69] The importance of movement, as a factor that reveals the existence of the camera as embodied subject, is further emphasized by Sobchack, who notes that "although capable of physical feats of vision and movement beyond the capability of human eye and body, the camera is originally understood as inhabiting and expressing space humanly rather than mechanically. […] Camera movement appears to us as the *unified* and *unifying* activity of an implicit—if invisible—*embodied subject.*"[70]

Sobchack's mention of consciousness pushes us toward the second of her two phenomenological concepts: intentionality. In Edmund Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, this notion relates to consciousness and "its essential status of always being *in relation,* of being *directed toward* an object *of* consciousness."[71] Sobchack clarifies, consciousness "is always *consciousness of something* (even when it is reflexive: consciousness of itself and its activity). For Husserl, then, *intentionality* was a term that described the invariant directedness of consciousness, its always correlational character or structure."[72] Adapting this notion for the purposes of her essay, Sobchack uses intentionality to suggest that, just like with our own consciousness, camera movement is always *in relation* to a particular object, that it is *directed towards* this object; focused, purposeful. In other words, intention is a directional and relational force stemming from the subject or camera that compels them towards the object of their "interest." Sobchack continues by arguing "It is our recognition of camera movement as

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[68] Ibid., 321. Emphasis in original.

[69] Idem.

[70] Ibid., 320. Emphasis in original.

[71] Ibid., 321. Emphasis in original.

[72] Sobchack, *The Address of the Eye*, 34. Emphasis in original.

intentionally structured that allows us to understand it as always meaningful and directed, and to identify it with consciousness, with an animate—if anonymous—'other' rather than with the inanimate existence and motor locomotion of a machine."[73] This reiterates the importance of intentionality for Sobchack, which is that it allows us to originally understand camera movement as actively driven, purposeful.[74]

As with many other methodological approaches to film analysis, the film-phenomenology Sobchack develops can appear very dense, even incomprehensible, to the uninitiated reader. It might even appear, to some, as the misguided or even mechanistic application of phenomenological concepts onto an interpretation of film. The primary point of confusion and source of criticism in relation to the two concepts introduced typically concerns the notion that a camera *lives* and *acts* in the world in a manner analogous to humans. Some might criticize this notion, arguing instead that a camera is a simple machine, a tool used by artists and filmmakers. To those, I suggest looking at Sobchack's arguments as a hermeneutic strategy. After all, one of Sobchack's main goals is to push us to read camera movements as more than simple mechanical displacements. For the author, camera movements appear to, and are understood by, viewers as those of a subject—similar to ourselves—with whom the spectator can identify. As a result, when Sobchack writes about the embodied quality of camera movement, we can understand her to be saying something along the lines of the following: *the appearance of camera movement on screen allows us to say that a camera moves through space as if it possessed a body like our own*.

That being said, some readers, myself included, might take issue more specifically with the idea that a camera possesses *intentionality*. Here, my reading of Sobchack leads me to suggest that this can be seen again as a way of getting the reader to think differently about how camera movements appear on screen and how they create meaning. As a result, when Sobchack writes, "The camera is intentionally directed towards the stagecoach as the *intentional object* of

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[73] Sobchack, "Toward Inhabited Space," 321.

[74] Of course, this immediate understanding can prove, later on, to have been caused by misinformation.

its *perception*,"[75] we should not understand that the camera has a mind of its own, but rather that the appearance of a "stagecoach crossing Monument Valley as it is revealed on the screen by the panoramic movement of the camera,"[76] is made to echo the viewer's own conscious interest as it is directed towards the moving stagecoach. As a result, the fact that a camera moves in such a way that seems to suggest it is driven by purpose or desire is what allows us to find meaning in its various movements.

Both of these concepts, despite some of the criticism we may direct towards them, remain central to the process of situating the camera, which the following chapter undertakes. First, the idea of the camera being embodied in the world enables us to determine its position in space. For instance, this can be done with the help of certain "visual cues,"[77] such as the "finite and perspectival focus of the camera,"[78] or the "dense stream of information about objects' slants, their edges, their corners, their surfaces, their relations with other objects"[79] that the mobile camera offers us. The embodied quality found in an image's perspectival focus typically offers sufficient information for us to determine with relative accuracy the position of a camera in relation to its surroundings. For instance, the analysis of third-person images found in Chapter Two uses this notion to describe in great detail the ever-changing relation of the camera to the body of the actor, and to their environment. Second, while Sobchack presents intentionality as the part of consciousness that drives the subject towards the object of its interest, this thesis departs from this understanding and instead uses intentionality to indicate the force that drives camera movements (i.e., the point of origin of the camera's movement, its directionality, its relation to the object of its gaze). Therefore, from its original relation to the movements of consciousness, this thesis uses intentionality to refer to the movements of the camera in terms of their origin, direction, and intensity (i.e., how, where, and why does the camera move towards or away from the object of its gaze).

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[75] Ibid., 323.

[76] Idem.

[77] Bordwell, "Camera Movement," 23.

[78] Sobchack, "Toward Inhabited Space," 321.

[79] Bordwell, "Camera Movement," 22.

This understanding puts intentionality as the locus of the subject's movement, as opposed to the origin of its vision, for which the idea of embodiment is still used. These two concepts, although distinct from one another, can and often do work in tandem. When this is the case—when the intentionality behind a camera movement is perceived as emanating from a point that also corresponds to the origin of the camera's gaze as embodied in the world—camera movement displays certain characteristics that bring Sobchack to suggest it "echoes the essential motility of our own consciousness as it is embodied in the world."[80] While in her essay Sobchack describes embodiment and intentionality as functioning in unity within camera movement—that is "particularly if we are used to viewing narrative rather than experimental films"[81]—it is useful to consider them as distinct notions. Just as section 1.1 did in relation to the division of the physical and optical points of view, this division of embodiment and intentionality is recognized for the simple purpose of respecting certain characteristics that are mutually exclusive to each concept, and to acknowledge the potential that they might function independently in certain cases. Indeed, following an in-depth analysis of the third-person technique in *Requiem for a Dream*, section 2.4 addresses the possibility that third-person images might, in fact, foreground this distinction between embodiment and intentionality.

According to Sobchack, even if we see the camera as a machine made to represent the gaze of a purely objective *other*, the embodiment and intentionality we perceive in its movements give it away. Sobchack clarifies, "even what we call the 'omniscient' camera is not transcendent in its vision and marks its perceptive senses through *direction* and *perspective*. Embodied in the clouds, the camera still has access to the world only from the Here from which it sees and the Now in which it is. *It is the world that is transcendent in existence*—and not vision, movement, or embodied consciousness."[82] Thus, if the camera can only see from the particular *here* and *now* it occupies when capturing the world, it follows that we should be able to situate it in relation to its environment, both pro-filmic and scenographic. In other words, we

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[80] Sobchack, "Toward Inhabited Space," 317.

[81] Ibid., 318.

[82] Idem. Emphasis added.

should be able to determine these *here* and *now*, as Sobchack calls them. In turn, and as Branigan suggests through his description of the POV structure,[83] this information about a camera's position can help us determine whether the camera is also positioned within one of the characters or not. In the case of third-person images—the following section proposes—information concerning the position of the physical and optical points of view in relation to their surroundings can also help us situate the image within the narrative spectrum; such information allows the viewer to determine where exactly, in relation to the subjective and objective poles of the narrative spectrum, the narrative point of view that is represented by the camera might be situated.

1.3 The Spectrum of Narrative Points of View in Cinema

In a previous section, I voiced my agreement with Jacques Aumont, who argued against the monosemic use of the term point of view as strictly referring to the narrative facet of the expression. Instead, following Aumont, I suggested an understanding of the point of view in narrative cinema that also considers its physical, optical and critical aspects. However, when I propose that we move away from this hermetic understanding of the point of view as a purely narrative concept, it is only so that we may come back to our discussions of narrative points of view with a greater sense of context, based, for instance, on information gained from an observation of the physical and optical points of view of the camera. This belief—which I have developed by reading Edward Branigan and F.W. Murnau, among others—is that technical and aesthetic elements are of crucial importance within cinema, indeed, but that they are most usefully discussed in terms of their contributions to the greater purpose of a fiction film: the conveyance of a particular narrative. That being said, this is why previous sections have introduced a multi-faceted understanding of the point of view, as well as the concept of situating a camera or point of view within the pro-filmic and scenographic space. Indeed, the purpose of this method of situating the camera is to gather sufficient information about the camera's position

[83] Branigan, *Point of View*, 73.

in relation to characters and their environment, in order to help us determine which degree of subjectivity a camera represents in any given shot; in other words, to help us situate this narrative point of view vis-à-vis subjectivity and objectivity.

This help is needed because, as Branigan reminds us, there are often "problems associated with evaluating the degree to which a perceived level of narration is *identifiable* or definite."[84] Narrative points of view differ from those that are physical or optical in that they do not possess clearly defined cues that we could identify and assign to a particular level of narration, or another. With physical and optical points of view, visual cues[85] such as the "finite and perspectival focus of the camera"[86] give us a great deal of information that allows the keen observer to accurately determine the position of the camera within pro-filmic or scenographic space. When cues are in fact available to help us determine whether we are seeing a scene through the narrative gaze of a character, narrator, or some other entity, these tend to rely heavily on codified information derived from the physical and optical points of view of the camera.

In my presentation of the notion of narrative points of view in relation to those that are physical or optical (see section 1.1), I mentioned a passage from Branigan's *Point of View in the Cinema* that addresses this very process. It is worth revisiting now that our discussion brings us to the task of identifying levels of subjectivity within a given image: "Subjectivity in film depends on linking the framing of space at a given moment to a character as origin. […] What is important, therefore, in determining subjectivity is to examine the logic which links the framing of space to a character as origin of that space."[87] As this passage suggests, the position of a camera within space plays a role in determining whether or not it represents, in one shot or another, the internal perspective of a given character (subjective image), the omniscient gaze of a narrator (objective image), or any other intermediary degree of subjectivity. Before attempting to discuss the variety of narrative points of view available to cinema—and before addressing

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[84] Branigan*, Projecting a Camera*, 238. Emphasis in original.

[85] Bordwell, "Camera Movement," 23.

[86] Sobchack, "Toward Inhabited Space," 321.

[87] Branigan, *Point of View*, 73. Emphasis in original.

specifically the point of view found in third-person images—it is necessary to describe, even in simple terms, the range within which these might be found. While theorists such as Edward Branigan and Jean Mitry have described in great detail the subtleties of narrative points of view in the cinema, these typically find themselves within a spectrum of narrative voices which extends between subjective images on one hand, and objective images on the other. Regardless of the manner in which these authors divide the levels of subjectivity they describe, these fall somewhere on or between the objective and subjective poles of what I call the narrative spectrum (see figure 2.2).

Fig. 2.2 - The Narrative spectrum is an infinitely divisible range of narrative voices that spans between the objective pole, on one hand, and the subjective pole, on the other.

Louis-Georges Schwartz gives us a point of departure for the definition of these two notions by contrasting "subjective shots, taken from a character's optical point of view, and objective shots, taken from a point of view that is objective."[88] For Schwartz, just as in the example given by Branigan, the idea of a subjective point of view hinges on the fact that the physical position of the camera corresponds to the position that was previously established as being that of the character. When this is the case, the optical point of view of the camera also corresponds to the character's, and the image represents the perspective of that character in this situation. But what of the objective image, which is not adequately defined in Schwartz's statement? Herbert Lightman clarifies Schwartz's recursive definition by noting: "Usually the camera maintains the role of a detached observer of the story. It is not, in itself, a part of the action—so it simply stands by and records what goes on, assuming whatever angle will best portray that action. When this is the case, and the camera remains apart from the action itself, we

[88] Louis-Georges Schwartz, "Typewriter: Free Indirect Discourse in Deleuze's *Cinema*," *SubStance* 108 vol. 34, no. 3 (2005): 109.

say that the camera is 'objective'."[89] Here once again, the position of the camera is a factor in the degree of subjectivity that is represented. If the camera is not positioned within one of the characters, but instead remains a distant observer, we can see that it represents the point of view of an objective entity: the narrator. On the other hand, according to Lightman, the subjective camera "assumes the point of view of one of the characters, and what appears on the screen is what that particular character sees in a certain filmic situation. Thus, the camera actually becomes his 'eye,' and when this is the case we say that the camera is *subjective.*"[90] Once again, this supports the definitions of the subjective image given so far: the camera acts as though it were *within* a character. Finally, Branigan offers another way of understanding subjectivity, "as a specific instance or level of narration where the telling is *attributed* to a character in the narrative and received by us *as if* we were in the situation of a character."[91]

From these initial definitions, we can gather certain key differences between subjective images, on the one hand, and objective images, on the other. Significantly, it is interesting to note that these descriptions rely on an alignment of the physical camera with the optical point of view of a certain narrative player (character, narrator, or otherwise). By doing so, these theorists offer definitions that have the camera *stand in* for a narrative role. In this model, the subjective camera takes the place of the actor and sees through the eyes of their character while the objective image "may be said to depict the attention of an invisible, ideal observer."[92] In other words, the former transforms the camera into a character within the story, while the latter gives the camera a higher order of narrative power, either as narrator or in place of an author. As a result, each of these narrative points of view has an effect on how spectators can read the images unfolding before them. What is more, varying levels of narrative agency can also offer the viewer particular privileges. For instance, by showing the world from the perspective of the all-seeing eye of the author or narrator, the objective image has the power to present the spectator with more information than is available to any of the characters at a given point in the narrative. The

[89] Herbert Lightman, "The Subjective Camera," *American Cinematographer* 27, no. 2 (February 1946): 46.

[90] Idem. Emphasis in original.

[91] Branigan, *Point of View*, 73.

[92] Branigan, *Projecting a Camera*, 80.

subjective point of view, on the other hand, aims to offer us the vicarious pleasure of seeing the narrative events unfold as a character of the story. This process, which may be felt as pleasant or unpleasant in some cases, is often described as beneficial to the experience and appreciation of a given film. For instance, Lightman describes this as follows: "The subjective approach, when well executed, tends to bring the audience *into* the picture. It is allowed to see part of the action as it appears to one of the characters, and it will subconsciously experience the same reactions he does."[93] Lightman's mention of the "subconscious experience" (an allusion to the process of empathetic identification defined in section 1.1), illustrates why the author believes a subjective point of view is useful to convey a story: it offers the spectator a greater level of involvement with the narrative. According to Lightman, by seeing the world through the optical point of view of a character, viewers may identify with and react to the experiences of the character whose subjectivity they share. While Lightman does not address this specifically, this identification presumably functions both emotionally and viscerally. Of course, it is possible to imagine how this level of identification could be uncomfortable for some spectators, yet Lightman paints this as a uniquely pleasant experience: "When a person viewing a film can lose himself in the story and react vicariously to the emotions of the actors—then he is quite apt to leave the theater with the glow of satisfaction of having seen an entertaining film."[94]

Lightman's position is interesting and tempting, but it also makes certain problematic assumptions, which allow him to sustain this argument in the first place. Lightman starts his article by introducing the term *subjective* in the context of a camera that "assumes the point of view of one of the characters."[95] This type of subjective point of view is purely *optical*: that is, the world is seen through the eyes of the character. Lightman then quickly affirms: "The modern photoplay appeals principally to the emotions. For this reason, it is desirable that an audience participate subconsciously in the action that is taking place on the screen."[96] Of course, I agree with Lightman that this effect is desirable. The key problem, however, is that the author simply

[93] Lightman, "The Subjective Camera," 46. Emphasis in original.

[94] Idem.

[95] Idem.

[96] Idem.

assumes that the optical point of view of a character is capable of offering the spectator this subconscious identification with the character. Lightman never truly supports this claim. Unlike this author, and in line with other authors before me, I will argue that a purely optical point of view shot is not adequate for nurturing a spectator's empathetic identification with a character. As Louis-Georges Schwartz writes, the (optical) subjective shot "cannot communicate to an audience [the character's] feelings about the events presented from her optical point of view."[97] Instead, as Schwartz suggests, this point of view "reminds the audience that they see someone else's experience, and nothing invites spectators to project themselves into [the] character."[98] This notion, which I have mentioned since the introduction to this thesis, is significant in the context of third-person images. Indeed, the following section introduces the idea of the semi-subjective image, a type of point of view that grew out of these limitations of the optical point of view (first-person image) and which offers a way of understanding how third-person images could, in fact, be "the ultimate in subjective filmmaking."[99]

Unfortunately, the use of the term *subjective*, here, invites some confusion, hence, some further explication is required. In the case of Lightman, this confusion is what leads him to mistake the character's optical point of view (what he calls subjective shot) with their psychological perspective (as in *subjective* thoughts and emotions). This mistake leads him to assume that the key to allowing us to react vicariously to a character's emotions is to make us see the world directly through their eyes. Instead, the two following sections introduce two theories of narrative subjectivity that demonstrate how images shown from outside a character's optical perspective might, in fact, offer a greater potential for empathetic identification with the character; in other words, for greater (emotional or psychological) subjectivity. This in turn will allow us to build the base necessary to understand how third-person images might represent the subjective experience of a character. This is a key factor in determining what makes this

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[97] Schwartz, "Typewriter," 110.

[98] Idem.

[99] Aronofsky, "Production Notes," *Requiem for a Dream*.

technique unique and why it might be a useful alternative to other images such as the first-person point of view (this so-called subjective shot).

1.3.1 Semi-Subjective Image

In his monumental *Aesthetics and Psychology of the Cinema*, Mitry offers us the first of two definitions for a type of point of view that might go beyond the limits of the optical point of view of a character: the semi-subjective image.[100] Mitry opens his section on the semi-subjective image with a definition of the subjective (optical) point of view: "the sole purpose of the subjective image (or what is described as such) is to show us what one of the characters in the drama is seeing."[101] The author also specifies, "this subjectivity is merely visual."[102] After mentioning certain key examples of the optical subjective image (e.g., the first-person perspective in *Lady in the Lake*) Mitry quickly notes, "it became abundantly clear that, though this method […] enabled things to be considered from his point of view, it did preclude the perception of any potential reaction that character may have had at the same time."[103] Indeed, even when first-person images are used as part of a larger narrative structure (and not as the only source of narration as in *Lady in the Lake* or *Hardcore*), they rely on close-ups of a character's face (i.e., images that are not taken from the character's optical perspective) in order to fully convey the emotional reactions to the narrative events. In other words, so-called "subjective points of view" do not truly convey the subjective experience of a character, and depend instead on external images that focus on the character's facial expressions. Such reactions, Mitry writes, are not available when the camera only shows what the character is seeing and not the character itself. Instead, the author suggests, "in order to 'experience' the feelings of a given character," which should be considered the purpose of a subjective shot, "all the audience had to do is be *with* the character, alongside him."[104] Interestingly, Katherine Thompson-Jones seems to

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[100] Mitry, *Aesthetics and Psychology,* 214.

[101] Idem.

[102] Idem.

[103] Ibid., 215.

[104] Idem.

paraphrase this passage when she gives her definition of empathetic identification: "By 'identification' we mean, not 'melding' with a character, but 'living' with her."[105] This idea—of *co*-habitation instead of *in*-habitation—is what leads Mitry to discuss the idea of a semi-subjective image. According to Louis-Georges Schwartz, this particular form of point of view is one "in which the camera sees the character and what the character sees at the same time, so that the subjective reaction is always given in the objective image."[106] In other words, this is a manner of "subjectivizing the objective,"[107] to use an expression by Branigan. For Mitry, Schwartz tells us, "the semi-subjective shot arose in order to surpass a limit in the ordinary point of view shot, which, without shots of a character looking, cannot communicate to an audience her feelings about the events presented from her optical point of view."[108] This echoes the sentiment expressed throughout this thesis: that first-person images are inherently limited and that other images—potentially third-person images—might, in fact, be better qualified for communicating the subjective experience of a character. Schwartz continues his account of Mitry's semi-subjective image: "Because the camera shows what the character sees and the character seeing it, the spectators become aware of the character's reaction at the same time as the character, so that their empathy is strongly solicited."[109] Here again, the mention of empathy (which as Thompson-Jones suggests depends on spectators being able to see the character's emotional reactions in order to react accordingly) leads me to believe in the subjective capacity of non-first-person images.

For Mitry, Schwartz summarizes, the semi-subjective image "implies an anonymous point of view accompanying the character,"[110] showing both "what the character sees and the

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[105] Thompson-Jones, *Aesthetics*, 118-119.

[106] Schwartz, "Typewriter," 110.

[107] Branigan, *Projecting a Camera*, 54.

[108] Schwartz, "Typewriter," 110.

[109] Idem.

[110] Idem.

character seeing it,"[111] "so that the subjective reaction is always given in the objective image."[112] As a result, this peculiar narrative point of view falls somewhere between the two poles of our narrative spectrum. The semi-subjective shot takes elements from both the subjective and the objective narrative points of view in order to create a new hybrid. In this hybridization, the semi-subjective shot aims to accomplish the purpose of the subjective image—to allow viewers "to 'experience' the feelings of a given character,"[113]—which authors such as Lightman believed the first-person images could succeed in doing. Instead of counting on the optical perspective of a character being sufficient to convey her feelings to the spectator, the semi-subjective image takes a different approach that relies on the spectator's empathy towards the characters seen on screen. The strategy, in other words, is for spectators to see how a character is reacting in a given context and to create an emotional reaction within them that will match that of the character. The semi-subjective image, therefore, should function as follows: having seen the character develop throughout the film, spectators, who now witnesses the character react in a certain manner at the same time as they see it themselves, are subjected to "a kind of 'vicarious introspection' in which one thinks and feels oneself into the inner life of another person."[114] In other words, this is the process of empathy, specifically the empathetic identification with the character on screen described at length in section 1.1. The semi-subjective shot counts on spectators being able to peer within themselves as they see the character's own reaction, so that the former may react in real-time to the emotions of the latter. In Branigan's terms, "what begins as a spectator's inspection of the externalized states of a fictional character or other persona concludes with the spectator's decisive look inward, accompanied by heightened feelings of recognition and revelation."[115] This process adds a layer of subjectivity to the spectator's experience of the sequence in question, therefore making Mitry's semi-subjective shot (and possibly third-person

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[111] Idem.

[112] Schwartz, "Typewriter," 110.

[113] Mitry, *Aesthetics and Psychology*, 215.

[114] Cartwright, *Moral Spectatorship*, 9.

[115] Branigan, *Projecting a Camera*, 81.

images as well) potentially closer to the subjective pole of the narrative spectrum than even the so-called “subjective camera.”

1.3.2 Perception Shot

In previous sections, I presented the notion of a narrative spectrum, which illustrates the degrees of subjectivity that a camera can represent in any given shot. I also argued that images captured by a camera that is positioned *within* a character (what Lightman calls a subjective camera and for which I use the expression first-person image) are not in fact able, in and of themselves, to reach the degree of subjectivity we might initially associate with them. Finally, I suggested that Mitry’s notion of the semi-subjective image (as a hybridization of subjective and objective points of view) might actually be positioned closer to the subjective end of the narrative spectrum, despite the camera being outside of the character itself. In other words, this peculiar point of view appears to be able to convey the subjective experience of a character to a degree unattainable in first-person images. This quality of the semi-subjective image (which third-person images might also possess) seems particularly valuable in the context of narrative films. Indeed, the fact that the semi-subjective image might convey the subjective experience of a character and that it might foster the empathetic identification of spectators would definitely appear to make it a valuable alternative to the limits of first-person images. That being said, I would now like to address a second type of narrative point of view that is also to be found in the grey areas of the narrative spectrum between the subjective and objective poles. Namely, this is an interesting concept offered by Edward Branigan that we can either consider on its own or in relation to the semi-subjective shot. Although this section presents a general definition of Branigan’s proposition, special attention is given to the relation of this new point of view with Mitry’s earlier concept and to third-person images as well.

Branigan calls the point of view in question the *perception shot*.[116] Branigan, like Mitry, starts by establishing the norm against which the perception shot is defined. The author starts by writing that in the standard first-person image, “there is no indication of a character's mental

[116] Branigan, *Point of View*, 79.

condition."[117] Simply put, to merit this appellation, the so-called subjective camera only needs to take the place of the character, showing us the world from her perspective. There is no indication of a particular mental state simply because it is assumed that a normal state of mind is best represented by a "normal" image.[118] On the other hand, we find that "in the perception shot a signifier of mental condition has been *added* to an optical POV."[119] The goal of the perception shot, Branigan suggests, is to represent a certain psychological function of the character through the help of a particular technical device. The semi-subjective image falls under this definition, along with other techniques "in which the psychological or emotional state of a character is suggested while said character is visible in the frame."[120]

Most often, we encounter the perception image when a contextually unusual technique is used to indicate an unusual mental condition. For example: "A common perception structure is the out-of-focus POV shot which indicates that a character is drunk,"[121] or any other altered psychological state one might associate with blurred vision (e.g., drugged, tired, injured, hypnotized). While Branigan specifically refers to the perception shot in the context of a character's optical point of view—to which the signifier of mental condition is added—he also suggests these effects can metaphorically be expanded onto more objective camera angles after the direct connection to the character has been established. In this case: "A series of neutral spaces has been embedded within a subjective structure but is to be understood as a further expansion of character."[122] For example, a semi-subjective image that shows the character within an image that is *altered* (e.g., out of focus, tinted, distorted) can be used to suggest the current mental disposition of that character.

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[117] Ibid., 80.

[118] "Normal," here, refers to an image which is consistent with other images in the context of the film within which it is used. What is considered normal varies greatly from film to film.

[119] Branigan, *Point of View*, 80. Emphasis in original.

[120] Nielsen, "Camera Movement in Narrative Cinema," 112.

[121] Branigan, *Point of View,* 80.

[122] Ibid., 95.

This brings to mind a comment by Jacques Aumont in a recent presentation, where he suggested that a medium is not innocent, and that the "problems" of a medium can cause us to change our interpretation of the narrative it represents.[123] To this we should add that all elements within a given medium similarly shape how a narrative is represented and interpreted by audiences. That being said, the expression perception shot is used throughout this thesis to describe images in which the use of a technical device influences our perception of a character's psychological or emotional state (even if the use of this device was not strictly established as part of an earlier POV structure, as would have been the case within classical cinema). If a connection is drawn between the signifier of a mental condition (i.e., the technical device added to the "normal" image) and the character, the term perception shot will be used even if the point of view is not from a character's purely optical perspective.

For Branigan, "The various devices of the perception shot—camera focus, set lighting, and the zoom—become metaphors for vision."[124] However, the author stresses that: "It is not the technological origin which is decisive, but rather [its employment] in a system of character narration."[125] With this remark, Branigan addresses a concern that resonates throughout this thesis by clarifying that the use of a particular physical or optical device is most significant in its influence on the narrative. This recalls a comment by filmmaker F.W. Murnau who declared: "There should be no such thing as 'an interesting camera angle'. The angle in itself has no significance, and if it does not intensify the dramatic effect of the scene it can even be harmful. […] they only lower, instead of intensifying, the dramatic interest of the story, because they are merely 'interesting' without having any dramatic value."[126] Jean-Pierre Oudart also remarks on the use of unusual techniques, writing, "such tricks are nearly always impoverishing except when

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[123] Jacques Aumont, "Forgetfulness at Work: Film as a Site of Oblivion" (Paper presented at DIS/APPEARING International Conference, Prague, May 28, 2015). Aumont was talking here about the degree to which technical inconsistencies in Shohei Imamura's *In Search of the Unreturned Soldiers in Malaysia* (1970) might affect (negatively) how we interpret what is being said by those on screen. I believe this comment also applies to the idea of perception shots in general, and the degree to which certain elements can affect our reception of a film.

[124] Branigan, *Point of View*, 81.

[125] Ibid., 94.

[126] F.W. Murnau, "Interview," *Cinéa-Ciné* 22 (April 1927). " Quoted in Lotte Eisner, *Murnau* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), 85-86.

used with deliberate terrorist intentions."[127] Unless it is the express desire of the filmmaker to alienate or displease their audience through the use of an interesting technique, the use of unusual technical devices within an otherwise standard sequence should be used for a purpose (i.e., to suggest the altered mental state of a character). In other words, such optical or technical tricks should continue working towards the greater goal of the film: the conveyance of the narrative.

The following chapter delves into the analysis of third-person images, a technique notable for a number of unusual characteristics which will force us to determine why it might have been deemed a useful part of the films in which it is used. Just as with the perception shot, the use of this device surely has a "point" or a purpose, possibly in relation to the way it helps represent a character. Before moving on to this analysis, however, it is imperative to look back at the ideas introduced in this chapter. This brief summary will serve to reiterate the importance of the concepts that the next chapter uses in its discussions of third-person images in narrative film.

The first and most significant notion introduced in this chapter is the idea that points of view in narrative cinema are divided into physical, optical, narrative, and critical elements (section 1.1). While the narrative instance is the most common and obvious type of point of view, the expression can also refer to the position of a camera in physical space, to the relation between the optical point of view of the camera and the elements we perceive on screen, and to the viewpoint of filmmakers and spectators in relation to a filmic text. The two most important notions from section 1.1 to keep in mind as this thesis progresses are the divisions that exists between each type of point of view on the one hand, and the degree to which their interactions might influence the way a narrative is represented, and received by audiences. In the first case, it is crucial to remember that although the physical position of the camera and the resulting image are ontologically linked, a lack or misrepresentation of certain perceptual cues can easily render their separation visible; a camera that was moving during production can appear stationary on screen, and vice versa. In the second case, the influence of various points of view on one another

[127] Jean-Pierre Oudart, "Cinema and Suture," in *Jacques Lacan: Critical Evaluations in Cultural Theory*, ed. Slavoj Žižek (London & New York: Routledge, 2003), 14.

is most obvious in the importance of knowing a camera's physical position when trying to determine the nature of the narrative point of view it represents. For instance, if the camera is positioned where the character is supposed to be, then we can infer that the image it captures is taken from that character's optical perspective. Alternately, the semi-subjective image requires a camera that is placed outside the character, so that we may see her react to narrative events as they occur. By extension, the position of the camera also influences the degree to which the subjective experience of a character is conveyed, which in turn plays a role in the way audiences might identify with that character and engage with the narrative. As a phenomenon that relates equally to the physical, optical and narrative elements, third-person images will benefit from this multi-faceted understanding of the point of view.

Based on the importance of being able to determine a camera's position, section 1.2 introduced two concepts that are essential to the task of situating the camera, a process that the following chapter undertakes. The notions of embodiment and intentionality, adapted from the film-phenomenology of Vivian Sobchack, refer to two qualities found in camera movements that allow viewers to read them not as simple mechanical displacements, but rather as similar to our own way of moving through the world. Here again, it is crucial to remember that embodiment and intentionality are two distinct concepts that possess certain mutually exclusive characteristics (even though they work in tandem in a great number of camera movements). Indeed, the following section uses embodiment to address the "finite and perspectival focus of the camera,"[128] while my use of intentionality departs from Sobchack's original definition and refers instead to the force behind camera movement that drives it towards the object of its gaze. In other words, while embodiment will help us discuss the locus of vision as perceived in the on-screen event, intentionality will deal with the origin, direction and purpose of a camera's movements. Because third-person images are a peculiar and largely unknown technique, this distinction between embodiment and intentionality will ensure that the analyses found in the next chapter will describe as precisely as possible *where* the camera appears to be in relation to the actor to which it is attached, as well as *how* it appears to move within the space that is

[128] Sobchack, "Toward Inhabited Space," 321.

constructed on screen. This will ensure that no characteristic of this technique is taken for granted.

The third and final contribution of this chapter to the analysis of third-person images presented in Chapter Two comes from the discussion of the narrative spectrum in section 1.3. The desire to situate a camera within physical and scenographic space (addressed in section 1.2) carried over to the question of the narrative point of view with the introduction of this idea of the narrative spectrum: a range of narrative voices that extends between the subjective image on one side and the objective image on the other. Significantly, the information we can derive from situating the physical and optical point of view of the camera play an important role in the process of determining where, upon the narrative spectrum, we can situate the narrative point of view represented in a given image. For example, if the camera takes the physical position of a character, it captures that character's optical perspective, which in turn brings writers such as for Herbert Lightman to call this a "subjective camera" (a first-person image in the context of this thesis). On the other hand, if the camera is not within any of the characters, if it remains distant and takes no direct part in the action, then we can situate it closer to the objective extremity of the narrative spectrum.

From this discussion of narrative points of view, the most important ideas to keep in mind are the two types of images discussed in section 1.3 that fall somewhere in the grey areas of this narrative spectrum. Both Mitry's semi-subjective image and Branigan's perception shot were described as being able to infuse a certain subjective quality into otherwise objective images. In other words, these two points of view demonstrate that even though a camera is not positioned within a character (subjective image in optical terms), it can still convey to viewers the personal experience of a character (*subjective* in psychological or emotional terms). More importantly, both images are capable of sharing the character's emotional perspective to a degree that is otherwise unattainable in the so-called subjective camera.

With all of these concepts in mind, the next chapter introduces and examines the concept of third-person images, a peculiar technique that Darren Aronofsky describes as "the ultimate in

subjective filmmaking."[129] Although third-person images keep the camera outside of the actor, they may very well possess certain characteristics (similar to those of the semi-subjective image and the perception shot) that enable them to convey the subjective experience of a character, which would explain Aronofsky's declaration. The next chapter examines the unique characteristics of third-person images (specifically technical and aesthetic) in order to determine exactly why it might, in fact, be more adequate (than first-person images, for instance) for the purposes of the films in which it is used.

[129] Aronofsky, "Production Notes," *Requiem for a Dream*.

CHAPTER TWO: SITUATING THE CAMERA IN THIRD-PERSON IMAGES

Building on Chapter One's introduction of the point of view as a multi-faceted concept (and of the tools that can help us situate a camera within physical and scenographic space, or within the narrative spectrum), this chapter focuses on the conceptual analysis of third-person images. While Chapter One defined the physical, optical, narrative, and critical connotations of the notion of point of view, the following sections put these ideas to work first by examining the technical and aesthetic characteristics of third-person images. The information derived from this techno-aesthetic analysis of third-person images is then used to help determine what particular degree of subjectivity this unusual technique is capable of conveying.

By defining the technical and aesthetic qualities of third-person images, and by looking at the degree to which they can possibly convey the subjective experience of a character, one of the goals of Chapter Two is to determine the *value* of this little-known technique: what qualities do third-person images possess that make them potentially more valuable within a narrative structure than, for example, the so-called subjective camera (called first-person images in this thesis)? For one, the technique required for the creation of third-person images has extremely limited applications, thus making the question of its value in narrative films even more intriguing. This question of the value of using an unusual and limited technique also brings to mind a comment by Branigan mentioned in the previous chapter: "it is often said that an image appears onscreen for some (particular) reason and therefore must have a 'point'."[130] When filmmakers such as F.W. Murnau, Martin Scorsese, and Darren Aronofsky chose to use this technique, then surely they must have had a particular reason to do so. For instance, they might have deemed it particularly interesting for its technical or aesthetic qualities, or possibly thought it better suited than other techniques to convey their narratives. These are some of the issues this chapter is designed to address.

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[130] Branigan, *Projecting a Camera*, 8.

One of the guiding concerns throughout this chapter is to *situate the camera*, a notion introduced in section 1.2 of the previous chapter. The purpose of this process stems from the unusual characteristics of third-person images which, as I will describe in this chapter, typically compel attentive viewers to ask themselves: *from whose point of view am I seeing*? Normally, this question seeks a response that concerns the narrative point of view. Is the point of view found within third-person images meant to stand in for a character (subjective), or the narrator (objective)? Or, is it perhaps the representation of a level of subjectivity that falls somewhere between the two extremes of the narrative spectrum? To identify the camera's position within the narrative spectrum, it is necessary first to determine the place of the camera in terms of its physical and optical points of view. In other words, is the position of the camera within physical and scenographic space meant to represent the subjective perspective of a character, narrator, or another entity altogether? It is necessary to answer these questions in order to describe precisely the nature of the narrative point of view created by third-person images.

This chapter opens with a definition of the expression "third-person image" as it is used throughout this thesis. The following section then introduces the Snorricam, a device that has come to be the most associated with the creation of third-person images in film. Through a comparison with the Steadicam (a fundamentally different, albeit more widely known camera rig), the subsequent section defines the key characteristics of the Snorricam, which in turn help clarify certain essential qualities of the third-person images they create. To illustrate these qualities, section 2.3 then dives into a thorough shot-by-shot description of the perceived on-screen movements of a third-person camera (in contrast to and in spite of the camera's real physical movements). For the sake of being rigorous, this lengthy analysis focuses on a single third-person sequence from *Requiem for a Dream* (Aronofsky, 2000). Nevertheless, the descriptions of the camera movements in this particular example are designed to illustrate the fundamental characteristics of camera movements in third-person images, regardless of the films in which they appear.[131] Having addressed the distinction between physical and optical points of view and their respective types of movements, section 2.4 demonstrates the link between these

[131] A list of films, television shows, and music videos that use third-person images is included in the annex.

divisions and the distinct qualities of embodiment and intentionality. Finally, section 2.5 uses the information derived from having situated the physical and optical points of view of the camera in order to inform our attempt at situating the narrative point of view of third-person images within the narrative spectrum. With the help of the theories of subjectivity discussed in section 1.3, the end of this chapter addresses the particular type of subjectivity that third-person images enable. With all the characteristics—physical, optical and narrative—of third-person images laid out clearly, the conclusion of this chapter suggests why in fact this technique might be considered more adequate than other points of view to convey narrative events and the subjective experience of a character.

2.1 Third-Person Images

There is, as of yet, no single term that can adequately capture the complexity of what the images analyzed in this chapter represent. A detailed description of these images follows in the next few pages, but we must first address this question of terminology. First and foremost, these images are the result of a highly specific physical placement of the camera in relation to an actor's body. However, an account of these images cannot limit itself simply to the camera rig that was used to create them. As a result, terms such as Bodymount or Snorricam (two of the most common rigs used to create these images, which also serve as popular terms to describe the effect) are inadequate for the needs of this thesis, since our goal is to go beyond mere technique. Indeed, the images analyzed in this chapter also relate to an unusual optical perspective and to the narrative point of view it is used to represent. Therefore, the term used to describe this phenomenon needs to represent these three categories with equal importance. Through the descriptions I offer in this chapter, the expression *third-person* is shown to best illustrate these unique characteristics. Indeed, thanks in no small part to its similarities with the multi-faceted notion of point of view introduced in Chapter One, this phrase can and will be understood to relate to the physical, optical, and narrative characteristics of the technique described below.

As used from now on, the expression "third-person" refers to a particular effect, found in film and moving image media in general, wherein the character on screen is fixed in the centre of the frame, typically head-on and in close-up. No matter its movements, the character appears to remain perfectly motionless within the image, as we find, instead, the world moving around it (see figure 3.1). The phrase "third-person *image*" therefore refers to this peculiar *optical* point of view. Incidentally, the expression also points to the technique that was used in order to create this effect. Third-person images, in other words, are created by a third-person *camera* (i.e., the particular rig or device that was used to achieve this effect). The *physical* point of view of a third-person camera is that of being attached in front of the actor's body, looking directly at them.[132]

Fig. 3.1 - Charlie (Keitel) is frozen at the centre of the frame even as the background tilts sharply to the right. Screen capture *Mean Streets* (1973)

A notable example of this technique is featured in *Mean Streets* (Martin Scorsese, 1973), in a scene where Charlie (Harvey Keitel) is shown thoroughly inebriated and stumbling about (see figure 3.1). Because the camera is attached in front of Keitel's body, looking back at him, the movement shown on screen is one that replicates his movements exactly, to the point where his body remains perfectly centred in the frame. In this example, as in many others that are mentioned throughout this chapter, the purpose of this technique is to convey the mental state of

[132] The camera can also be attached behind the actor, in which case it resembles the third-person perspective found in video games. For example, see *Seconds* (John Frankenheimer, 1966). In fewer cases still, the camera can even be made to rotate freely around the body of the actor to which it is attached. The only example I have found of this unusual variant is in *Angst* (Gerald Kargl, 1983).

the character on screen through technical means. Thus, to summarize, the third-person camera creates a third-person image, which in turn results in the creation of a third-person narrative point of view. Section 2.5 deals specifically with the type of narrative subjectivity represented through third-person images. Since this point of view does not fit the traditional definition of subjective or objective images (since the camera is never within the character but also not simply a detached observer), section 2.5 aims to suggest what exactly it might be; in other words, to determine where we might situate it within the narrative spectrum. The key to doing this, as Chapter One suggested on several occasions, is first to situate the physical and optical points of view of the camera. With this in mind, let us look in more detail at certain technical specifications of the third-person image.

For these third-person images to be created, the camera must respect the following two steps with near perfection. In third-person images: 1- the camera must be *attached to* but *away from* the actor's body (typically in front of them), and 2- the camera must be oriented towards the actor's body. While these are the technical requirements for the creation of a proper third-person image, it is also possible to achieve this effect with slight variations on this basic set-up. For instance, early examples such as *Kri Kri e il Tango* (director unknown, 1913) and *Der Letzte Mann* (F.W. Murnau, 1924) feature short segments that do not follow the exact requirement of the third-person camera, while still achieving its effects. In both examples, the characters on screen are shown to be (almost) stationary in the centre of the frame while the environment around them moves uncontrollably. As in *Mean Streets*, this technique aims to convey to us the inner state of the characters on screen (i.e., the "vertiginous whirl"[133] of the tango, and the drunken impression that the room is spinning, respectively).

While both examples create an image similar to third-person images, the camera in these cases was not attached to the actors' body. Instead, the actors were placed on a rotating platform along with the camera (see figure 3.2). As Yuri Tsivian recounts, "in a rather ingenious attempt (for a film of 1913) to mimic the POV of the dancer in *Kri-kri e il tango*, its Cines cameraman used a 'merry-go-round pan' shot with the camera and two actors mounted on a kind of rotating

[133] Yuri Tsivian, "Russia, 1913. Cinema in the Cultural Landscape," *Griffithiana* 52, no. 50 (1994): 141.

platform so that the dancing crowd spins round while the main couple, slightly rocking, is kept permanently in frame."[134] Lotte Eisner, for her part, describes a similar arrangement for the scene in *Der Letzte Mann* by referring to the image in figure 3.2: "Thanks to [Robert] Baberske we have a picture of them all at work: Jannings sitting on a sort of turntable."[135] Despite this variation from the norm—since the camera is not technically attached to the body—the camera nonetheless follows all the other physical requirements of the third-person camera. It is in front of the actors, away from their body, looking back at them and, more importantly, maintains this position throughout the movement. As a result of this physical point of view, the movements of the actors relative to the camera are nullified on screen, giving the impression that the environment is spinning around an immovable subject. In other words, this is a third-person image like any other.

Fig. 3.2 - Third-person image in *Der Letzte Mann* (F.W. Murnau, 1924). Courtesy of Deutsche Kinemathek Berlin.

2.2 The Snorricam Technique

Despite the original techniques that several films developed in order to create this effect, the device most associated with third-person images is a body-worn rig called the Snorricam. Like Steadicam, Cinemascope, Kodak, and so many other genericized trademarks, the name

[134] Idem.

[135] Eisner, *Murnau*, 81.

Snorricam is often used indiscriminately to refer to any camera rig (commercial or home-made) in which "a camera is rigged to the actor's body, facing the actor directly."[136] In other words, this apparatus puts the camera in a third-person arrangement in relation to an actor's body. The legend of the Snorricam explains its genesis in the following manner: "In the mid 90s the Snorri Bros[137] built a camera rig […] that is attached to the actor being filmed, pointing the camera at the actor. It's a visceral and dynamic camera angle that stabilizes the person it's pointing at no matter how they move. It is often used to isolate and focus on an introspective, dangerous or exhilarating moment in a film."[138]

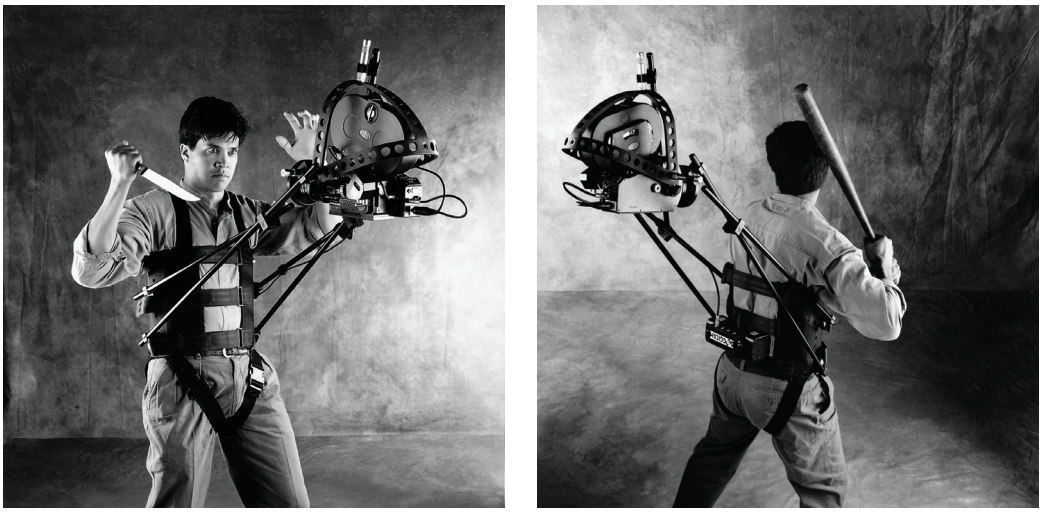

Fig. 3.3 - Photo of the "Bodymount." Courtesy of Doggicam Systems. (©1996 Doggicam, Inc.)

Although, as we have seen, the technique of creating a third-person image had been used long before the 1990s (going as far back as 1913 or 1924), the Snorricam rig constitutes what is perhaps its best known incarnation. This popularity is most likely due to the use of this technique in Darren Aronofsky's *Requiem for a Dream* (2000). As a cult favourite recognized for its innovative visual approach, the use of the Snorricam in this film helped popularize the

[136] Tarja Laine, *Bodies in Pain: Emotion and the Cinema of Darren Aronofsky* (New York & Oxford: Berghahn, 2015), 6.

[137] Einar Snorri and Eiður Snorri are the men credited for the invention of this particular incarnation of the device. They share a name, but are otherwise not related.

[138] "The Snorricam Legacy," http://www.snorricam.com/index.php?page=legacy

technique.[139] Additionally, *Requiem for a Dream* also contributed to the name Snorricam being associated with the third-person image ever since.[140] Interestingly, within the context of the film production industry, the expression "Bodymount shot" is supposedly used instead of Snorricam or third-person shot, even though this appellation seems rather vague.[141] While the few scholars who have written about this technique typically use the term Snorricam, in this thesis I prefer the expression third-person images. Although the term "third-person image" does not fully point to the importance of bodies in and behind the image—an admittedly unfortunate omission—it is less partisan than the other alternatives and it relates more adequately to the protean nature of this phenomenon.

The following section offers a comparison of this device with a tool that most readers should be familiar with: the Steadicam. Throughout the descriptions of these camera rigs, the term Snorricam is used when comparing the device to the Steadicam, both for the sake of brevity and because this is the name used in most sources that compare the two devices.

2.2.1 The Snorricam: Lesser-Known Cousin of the Steadicam

The Snorricam and the Steadicam are two very different devices that share certain key characteristics, and a number of fundamental differences. A short comparison of these two apparatuses will serve to clarify certain essential features of the Snorricam (and the third-person images it creates) through the more familiar example of the Steadicam.

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[139] One might even suggest this film may have inspired young filmmakers to replicate its effect, which in part might also explain why more films have used this effect since *Requiem for a Dream* than before. Of course, the fact that cameras have become much more portable than they were also explains the increasing feasibility of this technique.

[140] In a personal communication with the company behind the "Bodymount" (a competitor to the Snorricam), the inventor of this mount, Gary Thieltges, told me his version of the Snorricam legend: "The cinematographer of both [*Pi* and *Requiem*] had used our Bodymount prior to either film and in fact called us to rent the Bodymount for each film but called back to say the production didn't have the budget and so they jury-rigged something that has since been named the 'snorri cam,' thus was born the urban myth that they invented this shot." Gary Thieltges, email message to the author, April 22, 2015.

[141] Although I have no personal experience of using this technique in a professional film production setting, I am not convinced of this information. First of all, "Bodymount shot" could easily refer to any shot produced by a camera attached to the body, including first-person images. As a result, this term appears too vague to be practical. Second, this information comes to me from the inventor of the device after which this is supposedly called: "The term used in the film industry for this shot is 'a bodymount shot' which describes any shot where the camera is attached to the performer, in front, back or alongside the performer and moves locked to their movements." Idem.

Just as the Steadicam, dolly, crane, tripod, and other devices, the term Snorricam refers to a type of camera rig (see figure 3.4), and not to any particular narrative point of view or camera movement. As a result, any description of this peculiar apparatus falls squarely into the domain of the pro-filmic event. First, at the core of both the Steadicam and the Snorricam, we find a body-worn harness or vest. In the former, it is worn by a specially certified operator, while an untrained actor puts on the latter. Already, we find a distinction between the professionalization required for the Steadicam and the lack of experience necessary for the Snorricam. This enables the Snorricam to be used even by actors unfamiliar with the rules and practices of cinematography.

Fig. 3.4 - Snorricam attached to Jennifer Connelly for *Requiem for a Dream*.

Second, the Steadicam has the lens of the camera oriented away from the operator's body, towards the scene, while the Snorricam has the camera pointed directly at the actor to which it is attached. Indeed, the Steadicam aims to unite "as much as possible the operator's body and the tool with which he is filming."[142] By doing so, it hides the body of its operator behind the image so that the image produced can be attributed to any narrative subject. The Snorricam, on the other hand, does not hide the body of the actor that carries it, preferring instead to make it its primary focus. As a result of this physical arrangement, the Snorricam produces a "hyper-

[142] Serena Ferrara, *Steadicam: Techniques and Aesthetics* (Oxford: Focal Press, 2001), 70.

subjective effect, 'freezing' the character at the centre of the frame while the background is in constant 'movement'."[143]

This effect is the result of the third main point of comparison between the Snorricam and the Steadicam. Indeed, the Snorricam creates this peculiar effect because the connection between the camera and the vest on the actor's body is fixed and rigid. This simple system assures that the camera is perfectly subordinated to the actor's movement, so that it moves in sync with her, with no discrepancy. The outcome, interestingly, is the elimination of any apparent movement of the character or of the camera on screen. That is, the elimination of *relative* movement between the camera and the body means that the latter is motionless in relation to the former, and thus within the image it captures and which is projected as well. The Steadicam, for its part, divorces the camera "from the usual tight embrace of the [operator]"[144] through the use of a complex system that includes the aforementioned harness,[145] a gimbal,[146] and "a weight counteracting, stabilizing, mechanical arm,"[147] "made of a double parallelogram of spring-loaded links"[148] (see figure 3.5).

Fig. 3.5 - Steadicam. Courtesy of John E. Fry (© 2015 John E. Fry - www.fryfilm.com)

[143] Laine, *Bodies in Pain*, 6.

[144] Jean-Pierre Geuens, "Visuality and Power: The Work of the Steadicam," *Film Quarterly* 47, no.2 (Winter 1993-1994): 16.

[145] Ferrara, *Steadicam*, 16.

[146] Ibid., 12.

[147] Geuens, "Visuality and Power," 16.

[148] Ferrara, *Steadicam*, 12.

As a result, the Steadicam creates a "movement which is not perceived through its defects, but rather through its perfection."[149] In other words, the Steadicam exudes "grace and fluidity,"[150] whereas the Snorricam is synonymous with fixity and rigidity. This brings us to the fourth and final distinction between the two devices, a point that derives from the previous example. This final difference is found between the apparent freedom of movement that characterizes the Steadicam, and the Snorricam's lack thereof. While the literature surrounding the Steadicam frequently mentions how it can move freely or fluidly,[151] or how it appears to be transcendental,[152] the Snorricam, on the other hand, is talked about specifically in terms of its fixity.[153] The camera of the Snorricam is one that does not move itself; rather it *is moved*.

The use of a passive voice here is telling; it emphasizes the *passive* role of the camera which, when used in the Snorricam technique, is completely subordinated to the movements of the actor's body. What is more, the Snorricam's third-person image should also be considered passive because of the movements of the camera as perceived within the image. As the following section illustrates, the optical point of view of the camera does not appear to move in relation to the body of the character. It is instead the world that moves around the immobile body and camera.

2.3 Situating the Point-of-View

Having described in detail the technical characteristics that define the third-person camera, we are now more adequately prepared to try situating the physical and optical points of

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[149] Ibid., 73.

[150] Geuens, "Visuality and Power," 12.

[151] Geuens, "Visuality and Power," 9, 16; Ferrara, *Steadicam*, 5-6, 9, 14, 20, 25, 32, 86, 101, 101, 113, 117, 128, 137, 145-147, 149, 151-154; Barker, *The Tactile Eye*, 115; Sobchack, "Toward Inhabited Space," 333; Sobchack, "The Active Eye: A Phenomenology of Cinematic Vision," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 12, no. 3 (1990): 253; Jerry Holway and Laurie Hayball, *The Steadicam Operator's Handbook* (Oxford: Focal Press, 2009), 6, 8, 47, 89, 228, 346, 369, 389, 397; Sean Cubitt, *The Cinema Effect* (MIT Press, 2004), 255, 312.

[152] Barker, *The Tactile Eye*, 115; Geuens, "Visuality and Power," 9, 16.

[153] Laine, *Bodies in Pain*, 6; Geoff King, *American Independent Cinema* (London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 125; Anna Powell, *Deleuze, Altered States and Film* (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 75.

view it presents. Based on the notions discussed in section 1.2, the process of situating the origin of a point of view appears to be a fairly effortless and straightforward affair. Sobchack, for instance, argues: "It is our immediate and prereflective bodily knowledge as viewers that recognizes the finite and perspectival focus of the camera, its situatedness in the world as an implicitly embodied and functional subject."[154] Indeed, the appearance of camera movement on screen displays certain unique qualities that expose the camera's position in the world, and that help us identify the force behind camera movement that drives it forward. Following the discussion of these notions in the previous chapter, this section uses the expressions *embodiment* and *intentionality* to address these two characteristics, respectively.

The act of situating the camera can either be based on an account of the pro-filmic event (situating the physical point of view) or of the perceived screen event (situating the optical point of view). To illustrate the process of situating a point of view, this section focuses on an example of a third-person sequence from *Requiem for a Dream*. Since the perceived on-screen movements of third-person images are more ambiguous than the physical movements of its pro-filmic camera, this analysis deals first and foremost with the former. Despite the unusual nature of this image (it freezes the actor within the frame, while the background seems to move uncontrollably), the information we can derive from the visual field throughout a series of movements will expose the position of the camera, specifically in its relation to the body of the actor and the world surrounding it. Having situated the camera in its pro-filmic environment, as well as in scenographic space, we will be better positioned to situate the camera within the spectrum of narrative subjectivity.

2.3.1 *Requiem for a Dream*

Keeping in mind our description of the physical characteristics of the third-person camera —the camera's peculiar relation to the body to which it is attached—it is now time to describe more precisely the optical point of view contained within third-person images. Specifically, special attention is given in this section to the perceptual appearance of on-screen camera

[154] Sobchack, "Toward Inhabited Space," 321.

movement in relation to, or in contrast with, the physical movements of the camera in pro-filmic space. That being said, consider this sequence from *Requiem for a Dream*.

Starting an hour into the film (60m20s) and lasting just over one minute, this scene shows Marion (Jennifer Connelly) leaving the apartment of her psychiatrist, a man to whom she has just prostituted herself in exchange for drug money at the behest of her junkie boyfriend, Harry. The first frame we see introduces the following scene: Marion is shown head-on in close-up, standing in the hallway in front of the man's apartment. The camera is angled slightly downwards, accentuating the fact that Connelly is keeping her head down.

What happens next, however, is a matter of perspective. To define the movements that take place in the rest of this sequence, one must first point out whether the descriptions refers to the pro-filmic, physical movement of the camera, or its on-screen, perceived movements. A description of the physical movements found in this scene would simply say that the camera moved away from the man's apartment, keeping Connelly within the frame as it progressed in front of her. This description might also acknowledge that the camera was in fact attached to the actress' body, thus maintaining a constant distance between the two. However, this description does no justice at all to the movements we can actually perceive on screen. In fact, this pro-filmic account of the camera movement fails to capture the inherent quality of movements found in the third-person optical point of view. This quality—derived from the very fact that the camera is rigidly attached in front of the actor's body—results in the character on screen appearing to be frozen at the centre of the frame while the world around it now moves uncontrollably.

Following the precedent set by Sobchack in her essay, which is "to describe and account for the phenomenon of camera movement on the screen as it is originally experienced,"[155] the shot-by-shot analysis offered here describes the movements perceived on screen (i.e., those of the environment around the stationary camera and character). In doing so, this account of the movements found within third-person images seeks to situate the optical point of view of the image, specifically in contrast to the physical point of view of the camera. This, in turn, will give

[155] Ibid., 317.

us the information necessary to situate upon the narrative spectrum the level of subjectivity that is conveyed in third-person images.

The first of the three shots contained in this sequence begins when the wall behind Marion starts to move in a counter-clockwise rotation.[156] The vanishing lines created by the wall instantly disappear as it rotates in such a way that it first fills the background, then reveals another vanishing point that comes in from screen right as the wall continues its rotation totalling 180º (see figure 3.6). Once the rotation is completed, the camera faces Marion and the man's apartment head-on; all three are aligned. Already, the vanishing lines traced by the walls of the hallway reveal the camera's monocular perspective.

Fig. 3.6 - Beginning and end of the first 180º rotation. The wall I have marked in yellow in each image is the same wall that has simply moved around Marion. Screen capture, *Requiem for a Dream* (Darren Aronofsky, 2000).

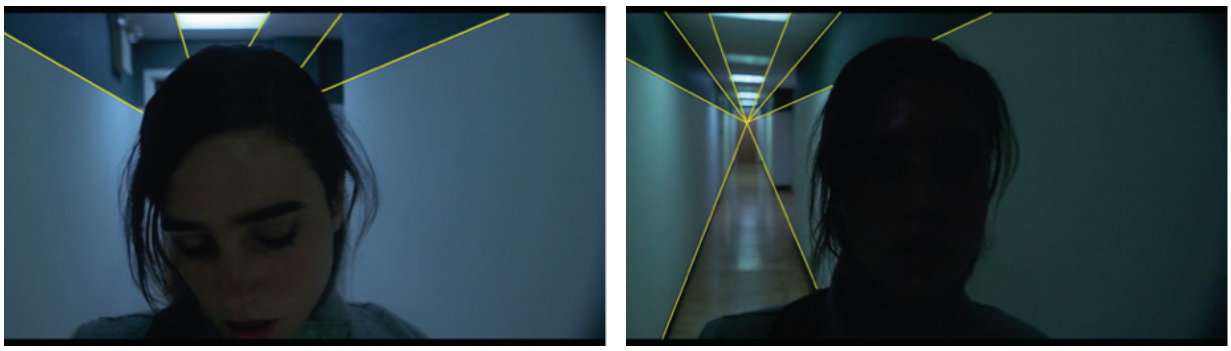

Fig. 3.7 - As the world recedes into the background, the movement of the vanishing point clues us into the ever shifting relation of the camera to its environment. Yellow lines are added to each image to accentuate the monocular perspective of the camera. Screen capture.

[156] These rotations are described from a top-down perspective, with Marion acting as the centre in relation to which the rotation is measured.

This effect is emphasized once the man's apartment recedes into the background as the hallway grows longer (see figure 3.7). While the world slides away from Marion and the camera, the appearance of new objects within the frame—emerging from the edges and receding into the background at the same pace as all other elements—and the diminishing size of the man's apartment door present us with information regarding the depth and volume of space. This, in turn, further cements our knowledge about the camera and Marion's positions relative to their shifting environment. For one, this helps confirm our impression that Marion and the camera remain stationary as the apartment moves backward, away from them while they maintain exactly the same position relative to each other. While the hallway continues to recede, other visual cues allow us to perceive the small, rhythmic tremors of the environment. Observing the edges of the frame, we can see elements disappearing and reappearing at syncopated intervals. During these small movements, Marion often moves her head, though it tends to remain low as she seems to stare at the floor. Despite these small movements of the head, we also see that Marion's upper body remains frozen at the centre of the frame, a fact that becomes quite striking when the world rotates around Marion.

This occurs moments later (60m40s), when the environment that was until now simply sliding away from the camera now turns counter-clockwise 90º as Marion reaches the end of the hallway. This rotation offers new volumetric information that allows us to confirm our previous hypotheses about the camera's position relative to Marion and their environment. Once again, this new hallway recedes from Marion and the camera, and brings them toward the elevator, which the character calls and waits for. At this point (60m47s), the lobby rotates 90º counter-clockwise so that the elevator that was on the right edge of the screen quickly slides behind Marion. As we see the elevator doors rocking slightly from side to side behind the character, portions of the environment enter and leave the frame, thus contributing to our knowledge about the space in which Marion and the camera co-exist.

Indeed, having seen Marion in front of the man's door, through the hallway and now in front of the elevators, our understanding of the environment allows us to estimate how far away from Marion the elevator doors are and how fast they might be moving behind her. Of course,

the information about the space revealed through these movements also expose, from the beginning of the scene, the position of the optical point of view presented on screen. For most viewers, information derived from this sequence can be compared with information gathered through daily experience, which in turns allows one to estimate the position of the camera in relation to Marion and her surroundings.

This first shot, which has now been running for thirty-three seconds since Marion was in front of the apartment, comes to an end as the elevator and the hall rotate counter-clockwise 90º and the actress turns her head to the left of the image (see figure 3.8, frame 1), towards the elevator that is starting to enter her field of vision. Here, the shot cuts on movement as the rotation of the environment reaches 90º, thus ending the first shot with Marion standing next to the elevator, which has now moved to the left edge of the screen (see figure 3.8, frame 1).

Fig. 3.8 - Last frame of shot #1 and first frame of shot #2. The camera moves from the front of Connelly's body to her back. Both are third-person images. Screen capture, *Requiem for a Dream.*

From the last frame of the first shot to the first frame of the second shot the camera is displaced to the back of Connelly's body (see figure 3.8). Interestingly, this 180º repositioning of the camera (from directly in front to directly behind Marion) also reveals to us in great detail the spatial arrangement of the environment which she and the camera inhabit. Indeed, through the combination of rotations in the transition from one shot to another, all but the wall directly opposite the elevator is exposed to the eye of the camera. The survey of the surrounding space that this rotation offers us also serves as yet another proof of the embodied nature of this point of view by confronting us with its physical relation to Marion's body and their shared environment.

After this cut on movement from the first shot, the rotation of the surroundings continues with the second half of the counter-clockwise 180º turn. The world stops turning around Marion once she faces the elevator doors, so that the camera returns to the position it had before this rotation (see figure 3.9). At first glance, this point of view of Marion in front of the elevator doors looks exactly the same as the one in the previous shot, with the obvious exception that the camera was moved to Connelly's back. However, certain characteristics of this second shot (higher angle, oblique verticals, noticeable vignetting, foreshortening) quickly reveal that this is a different point of view, with a new relation to the environment. For one, this second shot appears to be captured through a lens with a shorter focal length,[157] which explains why the elevator now looks further away from Marion than it was in the first shot (see figure 3.9). Similarly, the camera now appears to be attached much closer to Connelly's body, since her size within the frame has not been dramatically affected by the new, wider point of view.

Fig. 3.9 - The same angle of view shows the different appearance of space between shot #1 (left) and shot #2 (right), which uses a wider angled lens. Screen capture, *Requiem for a Dream.*

The second shot continues after the end of this cut-on-movement rotation. Once the elevator is squarely in front of Marion, it starts growing larger as it approaches and engulfs her body. Having absorbed Marion within itself, the elevator and its passengers now shift around our protagonist through a clockwise 180º rotation (see figure 3.10). This movement leaves Marion facing the elevator doors as they begin to close. Interestingly, this point of view also completes

[157] A comment by *Requiem for a Dream* cinematographer Matthew Libatique corroborates this impression, "We generally used the [Snorricam] with a Canon 14mm lens." Stephen Pizzello, "Downward Spiral," *American Cinematographer* 81, no.10 (2000): 60. In the context of 35mm motion-picture film (namely the Eyemo camera used in this scene) a 14mm lens is among the widest available and usable focal lengths.

the mental map that had been traced during the rotation that bridges shots #1 and #2 by offering the camera a glimpse of the wall opposite the elevator.

Fig. 3.10 - Once it has enveloped Marion in the second shot of this sequence, the elevator and its occupants move in a 180º rotation around Marion. The end of this rotation also reveals the wall opposite the elevator, thus completing one's mental map of this space. Screen capture, *Requiem for a Dream.*

At this point, another cut on action has the camera move back to the front of Connelly's chest for the third and last shot of this scene (see figure 3.11, frame 2). This time, however, the camera is noticeably lower and closer than in its previous chest-mounted position. The lens is also titled upwards, which is noticeable through the new distortion found in the vertical lines within the image (see figure 3.11, frame 2). This low angle also reveals more of the actress's face and neck, and accentuates the long shadows created by the direct light of the flickering fluorescent lamps.

Fig. 3.11 - The third shot of this scene introduces yet another placement of the camera which presents yet another relation between the camera, Marion and their environment. The same placement of characters in each shot (shot #2 on the left and shot #3 on the right) illustrates these differences. Screen capture, *Requiem for a Dream.*

These shadows make Marion's eyes look dark and sunken, which in addition to the constant and nauseating movement of her environment, accentuate the visible effects of her

current disposition (sweating, pallid complexion). While the disorientating movements of the elevator do not appear to affect its other occupants, they seem to upset Marion who, visibly uneasy, appears anxious to be freed from the elevator. Finally, as the lift reaches the ground floor, Marion is ejected from its enclosure. A 90º clockwise rotation of the lobby points her towards the exit, then once outside a final counter-clockwise rotation of the hotel is paired with sharp tilting movement which leaves Marion facing the ground, vomiting on the camera (see figure 3.12).

Fig. 3.12 - The end of this sequence. Marion is ejected from the elevator and, as she exists the building, vomits onto the camera. Screen capture, *Requiem for a Dream.*

The literalist and extremely detailed approach I have taken in describing the optical point of view found in the use of third-person images in *Requiem for a Dream* is done for a simple reason. Just as Jacques Aumont notes that the term point of view almost always refers to its narrative instances,[158] so too do descriptions of camera movement refer all but exclusively to the pro-filmic movement of the camera during production,[159] something of which Vivian Sobchack has been critical.[160] The terminology we typically use to discuss camera movement (e.g., tilt, pan, crane up, dolly forward) always brings us back to the technical apparatus and to the event of a film's production. In contrast, and just as Bordwell does in his "Camera Movement and Cinematic Space," the scene analysis I offer here attempts to discuss the perceived screen event, and perhaps, "ask how camera movement asks to be 'read' perceptually."[161] For this reason, the reading of camera movement enabled by Sobchack's phenomenological model of film analysis

[158] Aumont, "Point de Vue," 5.

[159] Bordwell, "Camera Movement," 20.

[160] Sobchack, "Toward Inhabited Space," 317.

[161] Bordwell, "Camera Movement," 20.

has allowed me to discuss the appearance of third-person images to a degree that would not have been possible using the standard vocabulary for describing camera movement.

More specifically, the reason behind this decision to deal with perceived camera movements in contrast to its pro-filmic movements comes from the fact that, while most viewers can surely notice the unusual look of these three shots, they also immediately understand that Marion is moving relative to her environment, as opposed to the other way around. The importance here is to realize that our natural understanding of the way in which objects move in the world might get in the way of understanding what movements are actually shown on screen. Similarly, traditional descriptions of the camera movements in this sequence would simply describe the physical displacements of the pro-filmic camera while potentially disregarding the movements that are actually perceived on screen. While it is true that Jennifer Connelly had a camera strapped to her chest and walked from one point to another at the time of shooting, the optical characteristics of the resulting image tell a fundamentally different story. Therefore, it is necessary, in a truly thorough analysis of this particular sequence, to address the ways in which these images ask to be perceived.[162]

Throughout each of the three shots, the only fixed point within the frame is Connelly's upper-body. From the perspective of the *perceived screen event*, then, Marion remains motionless. According to the visual cues made available in the image and which this shot-by-shot description attempted to outline, we must say that it is the world around Marion which is in movement. Regardless of the pro-filmic movements of the camera—in spite of them even—we must recognize the immobility of Marion and the camera in scenographic space.

In a sense, the third-person camera creates an effect that is not unlike *passive locomotion*. As Bordwell puts it, "passive locomotion, say, riding on a train or bus, enforces a much greater dependence upon purely visual cues. When we sit in an unmoving train, the sight of a passing train can even mislead us into thinking that *we* are moving and the other train is stationary."[163] Just as the passenger gets the impression that the exterior world is moving past

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[162] Idem.

[163] Ibid., 21. Emphasis in original.

while she is stationary, so too do third-person images show us a world that is moving around a body that is seemingly fixed in place. A more appropriate comparison than trains may be found forty-six minutes into the documentary *Leviathan* (Lucien Castaing-Taylor and Verena Paravel, 2012). In this shot, a camera is fixed to the prow of a fishing vessel, regularly going underwater as the ship rocks up and down. Just as with the *Requiem* example, the resulting "third-person" image shows a motionless boat surrounded by rising and falling waves.

In a manner similar to situations of motion sickness, our perception of this form of movement "inevitably results in a conflict between what is currently being [perceived] and what is expected on the basis of prior experience."[164] When faced with such a conflict of information, a viewer seeing these images might assume—based on prior experience[165] or otherwise—that the boat is not an immovable object, even though all of the optical characteristics of the image point to this very possibility. The same effect takes place when viewing third-person images, since a conflict can appear between the perceived immobility of the actor and our natural and prereflective[166] understanding of human movement. Nonetheless, while we may understand what is happening in this camera movement—even if this comprehension is visceral and prereflective—the noticeable incompatibility between the perceived movement and the way it is critically understood is of use later in this thesis.

2.4 Separation of Embodiment and Intentionality in Third-Person images

The tension that exists between how we expect a camera to move through physical space and the movements that are in fact perceptible on screen explains, in part, why camera movements in third-person images can be so hard to comprehend. But how, in turn, can we explain this strange dissonance between the camera's pro-filmic movements on the one hand, and

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[164] James T. Reason, "Motion Sickness Adaptation: A Neural Mismatch Model," *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 71(1978): 820.

[165] Richard Held, "Exposure-History as a Factor in Maintaining Stability of Perception and Coordination," *Journal of Nervous & Mental Disease* 132, no. 1 (1961): 26-32.

[166] Sobchack, "Toward Inhabited Space," 318.

the movements displayed within the image on the other hand? In this section, an analysis of the embodiment and intentionality perceptible in the movements of third-person images offers one way of understanding the unusual relation between the camera, the body of the actor, and the world around them. Since this technique also seems to capture movement in a manner wholly different from other modes of camera movement, this section's account of embodiment and intentionality also aims to define the unique relation between third-person images and these two concepts, which in turn will add to our understanding of this peculiar phenomenon.

In section 2.3, I described in detail the movements that we can perceive in third-person images through the analysis of a scene from *Requiem for a Dream*. This account of the camera's movements in scenographic space—or rather the apparent lack thereof—contrasts with the way in which we would describe the actual, pro-filmic movements of the physical camera. Such a description would address the camera's position on Jennifer Connelly's chest and the fact that the actress carries it throughout the scene. This account would also note that the camera keeps the same distance relative to Marion's body during all of their movements; it remains approximately 30cm away, either in front or behind her. Finally, a pro-filmic description of the camera's movements through physical space might also note that, in a manner similar to a handheld camera, the third-person camera is affected by the natural imperfections of its user's movements. In other words, unlike the Steadicam which can "remove the traces of human movement from the image,"[167] the third-person camera moves in tandem with its human operator, thus giving it the "rapid, jerky style of the hand-held camera."[168]

In reality, these statements are only true in the context of the camera's movement in pro-filmic space. In this case, the third-person camera does indeed appear to move in a manner as "discontinuous and irregular"[169] as a hand-held camera. However, the shot-by-shot analysis presented in the previous section demonstrates the inaccuracy of this pro-filmic account. While the camera attached in third-person does move in a jerky and unpredictable manner, it also

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[167] Barker, *Tactile Eye*, 115.

[168] Ferrara, *Steadicam*, 9.

[169] Ibid., 6

maintains its exact position in relation to the body of the actor carrying it. More importantly, though, unlike the body behind the Steadicam or the handheld camera, the body that carries this third-person camera is seen in the frame. As a result, the image created by a third-person camera prominently features an element that, *relative to the eye of the camera*, does not move at all.

This brings us back to a characteristic, mentioned in section 2.2.1, of the third-person camera in contrast with other camera movements: the camera does not move with the actor, it *is moved*, *by* the actor. This insistence on the passive role of the third-person camera in its own physical displacements serves to accentuate what actually happens in third-person images. That is, the camera loses the ability to move itself towards the object of its interest, which marks its loss of intentionality. Indeed, attentive readers may have noticed that throughout the detailed shot-by-shot analysis of section 2.3, the notion of intentionality was conspicuously absent while embodiment, on the other hand, was mentioned on several occasions. Quite simply, this omission is a result of the approach taken to describing the movements of the camera within this scene. Within the perceived on-screen event—the object of the previous section's analysis—the camera does not move at all; it is the world around it that moves. As a result, it not possible to describe the intentionality of the camera movement—the force that drives the camera towards the object of its gaze—since, within the image, the camera never actually moves.

While it would be impossible for us to think that the camera's point of view originates from anywhere else than that particular position in front of Marion's body where we perceive the camera to be embodied, the same cannot be said of the origin of its movements. On the one hand, the camera is undeniably embodied in this image, and we cannot help but recognize its "finite and perspectival focus."[170] On the other hand, however, we must also acknowledge that the force behind the camera's movement, "its essential status of always being in relation, of being *directed toward* an object *of* consciousness,"[171] is not to be found within the embodied position of the camera. In other words, the point of origin of the third-person camera's displacements is divorced from the locus of vision we perceive in the third-person image. Instead, this power of

[170] Sobchack, "Toward Inhabited Space," 321.

[171] Idem. Emphasis in original.

movement is transferred from the embodied camera to the body of the actor, who now takes on the task of instigating movement. Thus, instead of being *directed toward* the object of its gaze, the camera is now *directed by* this object.

Here is where third-person images break with the understanding of camera movement put forth by Sobchack's film-phenomenology. It is also, by extension, where traditional phenomenological film analysis reaches its limits. Indeed, we can no longer use the notions of embodiment and intentionality to suggest that the appearance of these camera movements on screen allows us to read them as though they were similar in form and structure to human movements. While I believe it is still possible to use these two concepts—as they were defined in this thesis in contrast to Sobchack's original use, let alone their earlier meaning in Husserlian, transcendental phenomenology—they now serve an entirely new purpose. Instead of explaining what qualities of camera movement lend them the appearance of the intentional movements of a human-like consciousness, embodiment and intentionality now serve to illustrate how exactly a camera's movement differs from "the essential motility of our own consciousness as it is embodied in the world."[172]

While I would suggest that this separation of embodiment and intentionality is inherent to the physical characteristics of the third-person camera—as *attached to* but *away from* the actor, looking back at them—we must also allow this insight to inform our understanding of the film itself, asking: how well, if at all, do third-person images convey the subjective experience of the character on screen, and what does this technique bring to the narrative economy of the film in question? After all, the point of choosing this technique over any other is that it might possess certain unique qualities that are useful to the film's purpose (i.e., to relate narrative events and, in a great number of cases, allow spectators to share the subjective experience of one of the characters). With this in mind, the remainder of this chapter uses the information derived from the scene analysis in section 2.3.1 as well as the notions of subjectivity in cinema (section 1.3) in order to situate the third-person image within the narrative spectrum. In doing so, this section's

[172] Ibid., 317.

goal is to determine the particular qualities that might make this technique a valid tool for conveying a narrative.

2.5 Subjectivity in the Third-Person Image.

In the introduction to section 1.3 of this thesis, I argued that the primary reason for situating the camera in pro-filmic and scenographic space is to supply us with the knowledge necessary to help us situate it within the spectrum of narrative voices. I also suggested that the information these physical and optical points of view offer us is important because, as Edward Branigan reminds us, there are often "problems associated with evaluating the degree to which a perceived level of narration is *identifiable* or definite."[173] What this means is, the hypotheses we may put forward concerning the particular level of narration found in any given shot are based, for instance, on a complex amalgamation of narrative conventions, contextual clues, editing structure, and personal experience. By knowing precisely where the camera is in relation to its environment and the characters in it, we are better positioned to determine the specific source of the narration (character, narrator, etc.) in each new shot of a given scene. For example, take the structure (already addressed in section 1.1) which Branigan describes as necessary for introducing a character's subjective point of view (POV for Branigan) in classical cinema:

> Subjectivity in film depends on linking the framing of space at a given moment to a character as origin. The link may be direct or indirect. In the POV structure it is direct, because the character is shown and then the camera occupies his or her (approximate!) position, thus framing a spatial field derived from him or her as origin. […] What is important, therefore, in determining subjectivity is to examine the logic which links the framing of space to a character as origin of that space.[174]

This process of examination and approximation may be used for the purposes of determining subjectivity in a variety of context, not just in the POV structure Branigan describes. For

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[173] Branigan*, Projecting a Camera*, 238. Emphasis in original.

[174] Branigan, *Point of View*, 73. Emphasis in original.

instance, if "the camera maintains the role of a detached observer of the story,"[175] then the point of view can be said to represent the gaze of an objective entity, such as the narrator. That being said, since the analysis of the third-person sequence from *Requiem for a Dream* revealed the position of the camera and the character in relation to each other and their environment, is it possible for us to determine the particular level of narration found in third-person images?

This scene starts with the camera squarely in front of Marion's body; it remains this way for the entire duration of the sequence, moving only to her back during the second of the three shots. Regardless, the camera is always kept at a distance, rigidly attached to, but *away from* the character. At no point in the scene is the camera able to take the position of the character, which would have allowed the narration to be "received by us as if we were in the situation of a character."[176] Therefore, based on a strict understanding in which "the sole purpose of the subjective image […] is to show us what one of the character is seeing,"[177] it would seem inconceivable to call the point of view of the third-person camera a "subjective image" (or first-person image as this thesis calls them). However, consider Herbert Lightman's definition of the objective image, in which "the camera maintains the role of a *detached* observer of the story. It is not, in itself, a part of the action."[178] Based on the example from *Requiem for a Dream* mentioned in section 2.3.1, the point of view of the third-person camera would appear to contradict this statement as well. Throughout the sequence, the camera only has access to Marion's subjective experience of the narrative events and does not observe them from a detached position. Indeed, not only is the camera *physically* attached to the body of the performer, it is also attached to the character *narratively*, staying perfectly alongside her throughout the duration of the scene. In other words, the camera *is* part of the action, *contra* Lightman's definition of the objective image. While it is not an active participant per se, the camera is nonetheless carried into action by the character to which it is attached, physically and narratively.

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[175] Lightman, "Subjective Camera," 46.

[176] Branigan, *Point of View*, 73.

[177] Mitry, *Aesthetics and Psychology*, 214.

[178] Lightman, "Subjective Camera," 46. Emphasis added.

Just as I have previously discussed the dangers of a monosemic understanding of the point of view as a purely narrative concept, and just as I have argued against accounts of camera movement that only consider the pro-filmic camera, so too is it important not to fall prey to rigid definitions of levels of narration. Branigan warns against such inflexible attitudes on narration: "There is a second major problem with the 'error' interpretation. It is an all or nothing interpretation: either the narration is or is not subjective. There may be room for ambiguity but not for the semi-subjective."[179] Among other problems, the author criticizes this reading strategy's reliance "on material divisions in the text so that one speaks literally of a subjective *shot* or subjective *camera*."[180] Instead, Branigan proposes a contrasting approach that he calls the "reading hypothesis"[181] theory. In this second mode of interpretation, the hypotheses we make about the level of narration within a scene can shift when faced with new information, leaving space for what might appear contradictory based on the purely material divisions of the "error" interpretation.

What does this mean for our interpretation of the narrative point of view found in third-person images? The physical placement of the camera as strictly distinct from the position of the character would normally preclude us from saying that this camera is seeing the world from the character's optical perspective, but can we say that this point of view is *subjective* nonetheless? What did Darren Aronofsky mean when he declared that the third-person technique was "the ultimate in subjective filmmaking"?[182] In section 1.3.1 of this thesis, I suggested that the term subjective should not be strictly understood as denoting an image captured *from a subject's optical perspective*, *its position in space* but perhaps instead *from the character's mental, emotional, or psychological perspective*. In this sense, I support Branigan when he writes: "It seems that something more—beyond the merely formal—is required for a film to be 'genuinely'

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[179] Branigan, *Point of View*, 51.

[180] Idem. Emphasis in original.

[181] Ibid., 52.

[182] Aronofsky, "Production Notes," *Requiem for a Dream.*

subjective."[183] I also agree with him that a first-person image, an "optical (perceptual) POV,"[184] does not automatically translate "the experience of being that character (feeling the character's feelings)."[185]

Using the two forms of intermediary narrative points of view introduced in section 1.3, the following pages look at the third-person technique in an attempt to demonstrate that even though the material characteristics of this image do not correspond to the traditional definition of the subjective camera (as representing the optical perspective of a character), it might still succeed in conveying to us the (psychological/emotional) subjectivity of a character.

2.5.1 Third-Person Image as Semi-Subjective Image

Throughout the scene from *Requiem for a Dream* described in section 2.3.1, we are carried by Marion, experiencing this movement and this moment in great proximity. While, *contra* Mitry's semi-subjective image the third-person image does not show "what the character sees"[186] and instead only "the character seeing it,"[187] we notice nonetheless that "spectators become aware of the character's reaction at the same time as the character, so that their empathy is strongly solicited."[188] In other words, the third-person image offers us a glimpse of the subjective experience of the character. As Mitry suggests, "in order to 'experience' the feelings of a given character, all the audience had to do is be with the character, alongside him."[189] Since third-person images are literally carried by the character, alongside them throughout the scene, this point of view would appear to answer one of the central requirements of a subjective narration: to share with us the feelings and emotions of the character. Interestingly, this quality of third-person images also appears to foster the potential for the empathetic identification of

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[183] Branigan, *Point of View*, 7.

[184] Idem.

[185] Idem.

[186] Schwartz, "Typewriter," 110.

[187] Idem.

[188] Idem.

[189] Mitry, *Aesthetics & Psychology*, 215.

spectators to the character. Indeed, according to Katherine Thompson-Jones' definition: "By 'identification' we mean, not 'melding' with a character, but 'living' with her: sharing her cares and coming to understand her in a particularly intimate way."[190] Again, the third-person image follows this definition. Instead of 'melding' with the character (i.e., instead of having the camera *stand in* for the character whose perspective it wants us to share), the third-person camera *stands with* the character, allowing us to see their facial expressions, clueing us in to their emotional state. In fact, the character's emotional reactions are arguably the main focus of this unusual point of view. Indeed, we find in the third-person camera's particular physical arrangement in relation to the actor's body that it easily isolates one of the characters from their environment and from all other characters. The world moves relative to their body in such a way that we are shown their specific relation to the environment, independently from all other characters. What is more, the image typically focuses strictly on this character's face—rarely shown in anything but a close-up—therefore suggesting that the character's expressions are what matter the most. Because of this focus on the character's emotional development throughout the scene—and since we have been seeing this character develop through the film—this third-person image encourages "a kind of 'vicarious introspection' in which one thinks and feels oneself into the inner life of another person."[191] This allows spectators, if they so desire, to peer within themselves as they see the character's own reaction. Of course, it is quite possible that the personal, critical viewpoint of the spectator might create a distance between themselves and the filmic text. Spectators could feel alienated from the character and not feel the need to sympathize with her misfortune. For those who have become attached to this character, however, this particular scene offers the potential for a greater degree of emotional involvement. As Branigan writes, "what begins as a spectator's inspection of the externalized states of a fictional character or other persona concludes with the spectator's decisive look inward, accompanied by heightened feelings of recognition and revelation."[192] This process (if spectators do take part in it) adds a layer of subjectivity to the experience of the narrative events, therefore pushing third-

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[190] Thompson-Jones, *Aesthetics & Film*, 118-119.

[191] Cartwright, *Moral Spectatorship*, 9.

[192] Branigan, *Projecting a Camera*, 81.

person images (namely those of *Requiem for a Dream*) closer to the subjective pole of the narrative spectrum than even first-person images (i.e., the so-called subjective camera). Interestingly, this reasoning contrasts with the interpretation we might have initially derived from an "error" reading, based on the physical and optical characteristics of third-person images. This, of course, is caused by the distinction between what is typically called a "subjective image," and what is an image that conveys the subjective experience of a particular character. While third-person images do not fit the requirements of the former (which only describes first-person images, regardless of their quality), I would suggest that they do, in fact, achieve the goals of the latter.

The conclusion to the scene from *Requiem* analyzed in section 2.3.1 offers an additional level of involvement between the spectator and the character, on which I would like to comment for a moment. As I mentioned in the shot-by-shot breakdown of this segment, the scene finishes as Marion vomits onto the camera. Since an account of primary identification would note the importance of our alignment with the eye of the camera, this incident has the potential to cause a (presumably negative) visceral reaction within the viewer, evoking a feeling of disgust in the spectator similar to that which Marion feels herself. What is more, the end of this scene illustrates one of the unique features of a semi-subjective image over a standard subjective image. Not only does the third-person image allow us to be affected emotionally by the actor's expressive performance, but it can also affect us viscerally. Even if this visceral incident is also most likely a negative one, third-person images present us with an experience that would not have been possible if the camera was made to share the character's point of view, physically, optically, and narratively. In other words, this technique comes closer to the subjective extremity of the narrative spectrum than even what film scholars typically call the subjective camera.

2.5.2 Third-Person Image as Perception Shot

In the introduction to this section, I argued for an understanding of subjectivity in psychological rather than in physical and optical terms. The important factor to consider when trying to judge where we might situate a particular point of view on the narrative spectrum

should not be limited to the camera's position in space (and whether this position was previously established as that of the character), but rather whether the image conveys to viewers the psychological or emotional subjectivity of a character. While section 2.5.1 suggested how third-person images might achieve this by showing us the character's face and relying on our empathetic identification with them, the following section looks at the ways in which the aesthetic characteristics of third-person images themselves may be designed to drive the degree of subjectivity they convey towards the subjective end of the spectrum.

Branigan's description of the perception shot (addressed in section 1.3.2) suggests that in the standard subjective point of view of a character "there is no indication of a character's mental condition,"[193] while "in the perception shot a signifier of mental condition has been added to an optical POV."[194] The author also mentions this "perception structure" can extend to images other than the character's "optical POV." In this case, once a particular mental condition has been established in the context of the scene and that this condition is tied to one or several characters, a particular device can be used to represent this psychological function within the image on screen. The technical device that is added or modified within the image then influences the way the image is seen by viewers, which in turn affects the way they might interpret the narrative events.

In the context of the segment from *Requiem for a Dream* analyzed in section 2.3, one's first instinct would be to assume that Marion is the character whose mental condition will influence the representation of the scene. While the camera never enters into her optical perspective (in order to introduce the perception image structure) Branigan suggests that "when confronted by an anomalous device […], one of the hypotheses we try out is a metaphorical application directed toward the nearest sentient agent, usually a character."[195] Thus, following Branigan's suggestion, even if this sequence does not include a subjective POV shot to introduce the perception structure, we should direct our hypothesis towards the only significant character

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[193] Branigan, *Point of View*, 80.

[194] Idem.

[195] Branigan, *Point of View*, 95.

within the scene: Marion. With this first problem solved, we now encounter a second one, since this scene does not appear to feature any of the standard effects listed by Branigan (e.g., focus, lighting, or colour). Instead, the signifier of mental condition would appear to be the third-person image itself, specifically the manner in which it represents the movements of space around a character.

Indeed, the shot-by-shot description of the third-person sequence done earlier in this chapter acknowledged this by describing the peculiar way the world seems to behave within the perceived screen event. Hallways extend, walls rotate and the elevator engulfs Marion. In this scene, the visual cues tell us, an unknown condition makes the body of the character take the role of an immovable object in the centre of the frame, isolated from the environment that moves uncontrollably around her. More interesting, however, are the implications of this optical effect within the narrative it represents. Marion not only appears to us as the point of focus within the frame (situated at the centre of the camera's physical and optical point of view), but she also becomes the centre of her diegetic world.

While we know from narrative conventions and context clues that an out-of-focus image indicates, for example, intoxication or fatigue, the effect of third-person images is not yet as clearly coded. In my description of third-person images in section 2.1, I indicated that this technique is normally used—like other devices associated with the perception shot—in order to convey the psychological or emotional state of a particular character. In *Kri Kri e il Tango*, the third-person image translates the vertiginous feeling of the tango,[196] while in *Der Letzte Mann*, *Mean Streets*, or *The Hangover* (Todd Phillips, 2009) it projects the character's intoxication. In other films still, the third-person image conveys the character's panic, such as in *See no Evil* (Gregory Dark, 2006), *28 Weeks Later* (Juan Carlos Fresnadillo, 2007), or *It Follows* (David Robert Mitchell, 2014). Similarly, a sequence from *Requiem for a Dream* where Tyrone (Marlon Wayans) is running from a crime scene also uses the peculiar effect of third-person images to accentuate the character's panic, while later in the film, Sara Goldfarb (Ellen Burstyn) is shown in a third-person image that projects her psychosis onto the visual field.

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[196] Tsivian, "Russia, 1913," 141.

What about Marion, then? What can the third-person image represent, since there has been no indication that the character might be drunk or in a state of panic or madness? What *has* been established about this scene, in the larger context of the narrative, is that Marion is now leaving the apartment of a man to whom she has prostituted herself in order to support her and her boyfriend's heroin addiction. Although she was reluctant at first, she was convinced by her boyfriend Harry to do so; a fact that does not sit well with either of them. In the image that indicates Marion is going to let herself be used by her psychiatrist—she is sitting on his bed, while he is laying naked behind her—her face suggests she is displeased and disgusted by what she is about to do. Marion also asks the man to turn off the lights, and only then does she reluctantly take off her shirt, which the man takes as an invitation to start molesting her. It is after the act is done that we finally see the third-person sequence where Marion leaves the man's apartment, only to throw up outside, visibly sickened by the events.

To truly convey to us the particular psychological, visceral, and emotional state of the character (specifically as she experiences it herself), Aronofsky chose the third-person technique for the particular technical and aesthetic qualities it possesses. In other words, the director chose to use third-person images because he believes they create "the ultimate in subjective filmmaking."[197] What allows the director to make this declaration, I argue, is an understanding of subjectivity in *psychological* rather than simply *optical* terms. In this context, subjectivity does not mean being *within* a character (i.e., having the camera see the world through the eyes of a character), but simply being *with* a character (i.e., "be with the character, alongside him."[198]). What is more, third-person images also share the capacity of perception shots to represent through technical or aesthetic means the inner space of a character. While we can imagine based on the context and the expression on Marion's face that the character might be experiencing a combination of unpleasant emotions (e.g., disgust, shame, remorse, humiliation), third-person images translate these into the visual field, so that we may share through the image itself what the character is living, at the same time as her. This is achieved in part through the disorientating

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[197] Aronofsky, "Production Notes," *Requiem for a Dream*.

[198] Mitry, *Aesthetics and Psychology*, 215.

representation of space that results from the conflict—found in third-person images—between the physical movements of the camera in pro-filmic space and the perceived movements of the optical point of view through scenographic space. Because of the way space is represented, Marion appears to be frozen in place, immobile as the world around her shifts constantly. She is detached, alienated from her own environment, disconnected from its uncontrollable movements around her.

This particular effect of third-person images, according to the inventors of the Snorricam, can be "used to isolate and focus on an introspective […] moment in a film."[199] Thus, with the help of certain clues in the progression of events that have led us to this scene, of the emotions we can extrapolate from the expressions on Marion's face, but more importantly through the way in which the image represents this experience, we are led to read this scene as a moment of introspection for the character. More importantly, I propose we can even read the image itself as a suggestion of character's very own introspective gaze. In this context, the term gaze is used specifically in the sense Branigan gives it, as "that familiar form of character vision where a character instead of glancing at an object, glances *inward* and becomes introspective."[200] What is more, this reading hypothesis of the third-person camera in *Requiem* as the signifier of an introspective gaze aligns with the definition of the perception shot, wherein "a signifier of mental condition has been added"[201] to a character's point of view. In this interpretation, the unusual movements perceived in the third-person image are seen as the externalization of the character's inner turmoil. More than a simple close-up, this third-person perception shot translates into the visual field the character's subjective reactions to the narrative events as they unfold in real time. Once more, as Branigan writes, "what begins as a spectator's inspection of the externalized states of a fictional character or other persona concludes with the spectator's decisive look inward, accompanied by heightened feelings of recognition and revelation."[202]

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[199] Snorricam Legacy, http://www.snorricam.com/index.php?page=legacy

[200] Branigan, *Point of View*, 80. Emphasis in original.

[201] Idem.

[202] Branigan, *Projecting a Camera*, 81.

This brings us directly back to the very definition of a spectator's empathetic identification with the character: "a kind of 'vicarious introspection' in which one thinks and feels oneself into the inner life of another person,"[203] or, in other words, "the imaginative adoption of the grounds of another's emotion, or the particular experience and perspective which gives rise to just that emotion."[204] Given that identification with a character "may make the difference between a good and a bad film—or a highly engaging and a not-so-engaging film,"[205] and that it constitutes what Katherine Thompson-Jones calls "the most powerfully intimate, aspect of our felt engagement with film characters,"[206] the fact that third-person images might, in fact, be conducive to this process makes them exceptionally compelling for filmmakers. When used properly—for there is no doubt that it can be used flippantly and to no effect at all—third-person images have the potential to offer us an unprecedented level of emotional engagement with the narrative. This, I have argued through my extended account of points of view in this thesis, is the advantage of third-person images over first-person images; therein lies their value.

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[203] Cartwright, *Moral Spectatorship*, 9.

[204] Thompson-Jones, *Aesthetics*, 120.

[205] Ibid., 113.

[206] Ibid., 114.

CONCLUSION

In the opening pages to this thesis, I suggested that the purpose of this study was to present a comprehensive account of third-person images, a technique that is still largely unknown within academic circles despite being used to great effect in a number of productions. In the process of describing these images, it also became quite clear that a reconceptualization of the notion of point of view was necessary. Even though my central goal was to determine the value of using third-person images within a narrative structure (to find what makes them so unique in comparison to other, more established techniques), it was crucial to address the physical, optical, and even critical aspects of the expression point of view. In the closing pages of this thesis, I wish to address the past, present, and future of this project. That is, I would like to briefly describe how this project came to be and what was necessary to develop it, to summarize what this thesis accomplished, and to suggest where this investigation might go from here.

The original inspiration for this topic came in 2011-12 when I noticed the unusual perspective occasionally seen in videos of extreme sports captured with a type of wearable action-sports camera called the GoPro. In what was at the time a rare occurrence, certain videos showed images captured not from the athlete's perspective (the first-person angle that was typically the norm) but rather from a point away from their body, looking back at them (i.e., what I eventually called a third-person perspective). While this was probably an early example of the "selfie" trend that would soon wash over online media it also proved to be especially interesting in terms of the aesthetic qualities of the images produced. Specifically, while the creators of these videos most likely only thought about capturing themselves in action when they turned the camera towards their face, they also unwittingly created a type of image in which a portion of the body to which the camera is attached remains perfectly still within the frame, as the rest of the body and the world move around it. In early examples, it was the hand holding it that remained perfectly fixed in the image as the arm and body pivoted around its joint. Other athletes (typically in sports such as snowboarding, base jumping, and mountain biking) could not hold

the camera with their hand and instead placed it on some extension attached to their helmet, pointed at their face. This emphasized the peculiar look of the image tenfold, since it was now the head of the athlete that was frozen at the centre of the frame while the world around it moved uncontrollably.

Fascinated by the unusual nature of these images, I was convinced that they displayed a mode of movement and a perception of the world that was unlike anything we had seen before. To my surprise, what I initially thought to be a novel and uniquely contemporary phenomenon turned out to have been used for decades already in film, television and music videos, albeit less ubiquitously than at present.[207] A recent finding from *Home Movie Gadgets and How to Make Them*[208] even shows that a type of third-person mount could have been used in home movies in the United States as far back as 1940. While this unique perspective was not used then to the incredible extent that it is now, any attempt to address the unique circumstances of contemporary uses of third-person images would need to start an entirely new discussion, since very little, if any at all, was written on the topic. Even though my initial—and ongoing—desire was to deal specifically with the third-person perspective of GoPro videos, I determined that it would be more productive to create the foundation for this eventual study by first looking at the specific conditions of this point of view within cinema. Indeed, the body of knowledge afforded by film studies presented me with the necessary framework to discuss the unique point of view and camera movements synonymous with third-person images in much greater detail. In the context of cinema just as in the case of the GoPro, one of the most pressing questions surrounding third-person images remained: "what is the point of turning the eye of the camera onto the body of the actor wearing it?"

In order to find why filmmakers would choose to attach the camera firmly to the body of the actor, it was necessary to determine first and foremost the inherent characteristics of the images created by this new technique. For one, third-person images consist of an amalgamation of technical, aesthetic, and narrative elements. In trying to untangle the complex interactions of

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[207] Here again I refer the reader to the annex for a list these examples.

[208] *Home Movie Gadgets: And How to Make Them* (Hollywood: Van Halen, 1940).

these various components, it became obvious that the narrative point of view needed to be discussed independently of the optical point of view of the *camera perceived on screen*, which in turn demanded a different approach from the physical point of view of the camera during production. Thankfully, Jacques Aumont's etymological breakdown of the expression *point de vue* offered a model for such a multi-faceted approach. While the main focus of Aumont's essay is to discuss the influence of an author's viewpoint on the manner in which they represent a particular narrative, it did demonstrate the effectiveness of considering the influence of various points of view on one another. Thus, based on Aumont's four-part definition of the point of view, this thesis developed an approach that considers the complex interactions of the physical and optical points of view of the camera, a method I term *techno-aesthetic*. Distinct in many ways from Gilbert Simondon's idea of the "techno aesthetic" or aesthetic technique,[209] this techno-aesthetic approach is also inspired by a similar methodology found in Jean-Pierre Geuens and Serena Ferrara's respective work on the Steadicam. In both those examples, as in my own, technical descriptions of a particular camera rig are paired with an aesthetic consideration of the resulting images, which in turn is ultimately linked to the narratives they help represent.

The second important contribution the research behind this thesis brought to the study of third-person images is the work of Vivian Sobchack and David Bordwell concerning camera movement. Both authors, despite their radically different theoretical approaches, deal with the question of *perceived on-screen movement* in its relation and contrast to the physical movements of the camera in studio. Sobchack's phenomenological concepts and Bordwell's account of perceptual cues both give us the tools necessary to describe the peculiar appearance of movements within third-person images. Both also offer a way of describing why exactly the movements of this technique look so unusual to us. Based on Sobchack's concepts, this is the idea that embodiment and intentionality can be divorced from one another and even transferred from the "body" of the camera to that of the actor to which it is attached. From Bordwell, the notion of "passive locomotion" offers a way of explaining the *relative* immobility of the actor within the frame in relation to the camera. In both these cases, finally, the important thing to note

[209] Simondon, "Lettre sur la Techno-Esthétique," 2.

is the value of looking at camera movements as they are initially perceived by us as viewers, over the *ex post facto* descriptions we normally find in film analyses.

The third and final conclusion from this thesis that I would like to address here is the notion of the narrative spectrum, and the idea that it cannot be reduced to its black and white extremities (the subjective and objective image). Instead, I suggested throughout this study that narrative points of view should be discussed in a more nuanced and less compartmentalized manner: in terms of the grey areas that extend between the two poles of the spectrum. Even the visual representation of this abstract notion (see figure 1.2) cannot adequately capture the multilevelled and protean nature of subjectivity in narrative cinema. That being said, the points of view described by Jean Mitry and Edward Branigan very usefully acknowledge the fluidity of subjectivity and of the methods for conveying it on screen. Both of their contributions (Mitry's semi-subjective image and Branigan's perception shot) present a scenario in which images that might have been considered "non-subjective" (based purely on the fact that the camera is not *within* the character) can actually infuse a *subjective* quality into otherwise "objective" images. Because of this realization, it became clear that even though the third-person camera does not fit the traditional definition of a subjective camera, it might still be used to adequately convey the subjective experience of the character to which it is connected. This, in turn, makes this peculiar technique a useful addition to a narrative structure, assuming that filmmakers who use it do so with knowledge and forethought.

Looking ahead, one might ask: "But what of uses of this third-person perspective outside of narrative films, in a context where the use of this technique is not motivated by or geared towards a greater narrative purpose?" While such is the case with GoPro videos that feature third-person images, there is yet another interesting example that I would like to address in these closing pages as a way of pointing towards the potential continuation of this research. This example will also serve to bookend how the third-person perspective was introduced in this thesis, through video games.

In 2014, a group of Polish inventors created the "Real World Third Person Perspective VR / AR Experiment,"[210] as their entry into the Intel "Make it Wearable" competition. This device, as described by its creators, was intended to allow users to see themselves in real-time from a third-person perspective, specifically like that of video games. The relevance of this experiment in the context of this conclusion lies in its articulation of the third-person perspective —as described throughout this thesis—with our own perception of the world. In this prototype (see figure 4), a pair of GoPro cameras is worn in a third-person arrangement, fixed in place behind and above the user (this is the third-person perspective used in video games). The user also wears an Oculus Rift virtual reality (VR) display which shows the user the images being captured by the GoPros in real time. This means users can see themselves moving and interacting with their environment in a real-time third-person perspective. Citing the benefits of a third-person view in video games (that allows players to get a better sense of their avatar's relation to their environment by placing the camera *behind* them instead of *within* them), the man in the video declares: "Welcome to the third-person perspective augmented experience, where you are able to see more than you can actually see in real life."[211] The description of the video goes further by clarifying, "This wearable can enchance (sic) human visual performance for use in real world applications."[212]

Fig. 4 - "Real World Third Person Perspective VR / AR Experiment." The image on the left shows the device in question. The image on the right shows the type of third-person perspective of oneself that can be achieved with this device. Both images are screen captures from the video.

[210] "Real World Third Person Perspective VR / AR Experiment," Youtube video, 3:29, posted by "mepi.pl," June 25, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RgBeRP4dUGo&spfreload=10

[211] Idem.

[212] Idem.

This discourse of enhancement is common in the context of "augmented reality" (AR) technologies, as the name implies. For instance, AR devices such as the Microsoft Hololens[213] or the Meta 1 AR[214] headsets generally include some form of (semi-)translucent display which allows the wearer to see their environment, which is then digitally altered by the device. The augmented reality aspect of these technologies manifests itself in the addition of certain visual elements that are not originally part of the environment, or conversely, in the removal or obstruction of parts of the visual field. AR, in this traditional sense, is a mediation of one's natural mode of perception, a filter which can add or remove information from one's usual perception of the world. In relation to the images described throughout this thesis, this is the real-world equivalent of a first-person image upon which "extra-diegetic" information is simply added. However, the type of enhancement of human visual perception proposed by the "Third-Person Perspective" experiment differs from AR—as described above—in a number of ways. Most significant of these differences, this experiment's third-person perspective presents us not with a simple mediation of vision but rather with a reorganization of the mode of visual perception. In contrast with the standard mode of perception which typically regulates our experience of the world around us—a first-person perspective—the third-person perspective offered in this experiment allows one to see oneself from behind, as if from the perspective of a disembodied observer outside oneself. While this peculiar point of view and the ways in which it reformulates our perception of the world are truly fascinating, any attempt at discussing them seriously would require an amount time and resources that were not at my disposal during this current project. Instead, I will use the remainder of this conclusion to present a few hypotheses and suggest how one could build further research around this topic.

First, an account of real-world uses of the third-person perspective would have to question the purpose of seeking access to this perspective of oneself. In other words, what is the "point" of this particular point of view? To deal with this question, one might address the socio-cultural environment within which the decision to turn the camera onto oneself was made. For instance, this would include dealing with the "selfie" trend of recent years. Indeed, I believe that

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[213] https://www.microsoft.com/microsoft-hololens/en-us

[214] https://www.getameta.com

much could be gained from looking at this phenomenon which has recently popularized the practice of moving the camera away from the eye to capture not what one is seeing or doing, but rather the image of oneself in action.[215] Why, for instance, has it become so common for people to use "selfie sticks" to place their camera *away from* but *pointed and attached to* their body (a physical arrangement used for the creation of third-person images in cinema long before this selfie trend)? A discussion around contemporary practices of self-representation has already been started in academic circles, and Jill Walker Rettberg's recent *Seeing Ourselves Through Technology* offers a useful starting point for considering these practices.[216] I foresee that an understanding of why our society has developed this desire to see and represent ourselves from a third-person perspective could potentially isolate the qualities of this point of view. This, in turn, could allow us to see what a real-world use of third-person images (such as the one featured in the third-person perspective experiment) might bring to our experience of the world.

Second, while this thesis did address the unusual camera movements found in third-person images, a study of this perspective outside of the context of narrative productions could focus more specifically on the reorganization of the visual mode of perception. Specifically, one could discuss the shift that occurs when the subjective mode of perception of the user is replaced by a perspective outside of herself. In a recent conference paper, I suggested we might understand the subjective mode of perception through the metaphor of a centrifugal force, which emanates from a central point within the subject and that is projected outwards. In contrast, the movements of the third-person camera in relation to the body of the user to which it is attached reveal a mode of perception that I characterized as centripetal; they stem from a point outside the subject and are directed inwards. This peculiar centripetal mode of perception is what makes this third-person perspective more than a simply augmented reality; it is an entirely new one.[217]

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[215] Philippe Bédard, "Be a Hero: The Aesthetic of Self-Representation in GoPro Videos" (paper presented at the 2015 NECS Annual Conference, Łódź, Poland, June 18-20, 2015).

[216] Jill Walker Rettberg, *Seeing Ourselves Through Technology: How We Use Selfies, Blogs and Wearable Devices to See and Shape Ourselves* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

[217] Philippe Bédard, "Disembodied Perspectives: Fixed and Rotational Third-Person Images in GoPro Videos" (Paper presented at Deviate! The Second International *Alphaville: Journal of Film and Screen Media* Conference, Cork, Ireland, September 4-6, 2014).

Despite some of the criticism this theory has received—for being too anthropocentric, for instance—this model of centrifugal and centripetal forces offers an initial point of departure for the study of the different modes of perception that characterize first-person and third-person images respectively.

A third direction for the development of further research on third-person images could address the separation of embodiment and intentionality that I observed in my analysis of the camera movements created by this unusual perspective. More specifically, it could be extremely instructive to address the effects of this rupture in contexts such as the "real-world third-person perspective experiment," rather than in a narrative setting. In films, embodiment and intentionality are two distinct qualities of camera movements that—in situations where they work in tandem—can allow us to read them in organic terms; as similar to human movement rather than mechanical displacement. In cases such as third-person images, a stark separation of these two qualities can result, among other possibilities, in the creation of seemingly unnatural movements, nauseating in some cases. As a result, one can plausibly expect that these effects would be exacerbated in situations where one could see oneself from this third-person perspective. In this context, the separation of embodiment and intentionality would result in the user being divorced from her own embodiment, her own "finite and perspectival focus."[218] In both these two potential approaches (through the metaphor of centrifugal and centripetal forces or through the analysis of embodiment and intentionality) I envision that the type of phenomenological reading of camera movement originally presented in the work of Vivian Sobchack will be a useful inspiration. Despite the limitations of this approach (acknowledged in the conclusion of section 2.4), I foresee that the understanding of embodiment and movement afforded by phenomenological approaches to the analysis of moving image media could constitute a helpful theoretical framework.

The fourth and final approach I will suggest in this conclusion is one that would rely on a media studies framework rather than one based in film studies. For instance, while a media studies approach could still deal with the unusual characteristics of this perspective in contrast to

[218] Sobchack, "Toward Inhabited Space," 321.

the user's subjective mode of perception, I would suggest that it could also offer a fascinating interpretation of the ways in which third-person images could influence our own perception of the world. This type of analysis of the influence of new media technologies on our interactions with the world—from Marshall McLuhan's *Understanding Media*[219] to Rettberg's *Seeing Ourselves Through Technology*—could address the potential influence of a third-person perspective on our perception of the world. This approach could look at how third-person images across different media have each played a role in teaching us to see the world from a different perspective, distinct from our standard centrifugal mode of perception. Thus, the purpose of a media studies approach to the analysis of third-person images would not simply be to describe the unusual characteristics of this point of view, but rather to determine if and how this perspective differs from other modes of perception we have known until now, and how the former could influence the latter. In other words, the goal would be to address how this type of perspective displays not a simple mediation of our perception of the world, but rather a complete reorganization thereof.

[219] Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (MIT press, 1994).

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Kri Kri e il Tango [Bloomer and the Tango]. Società Italiana Cines, 1913.

Lady in the Lake. Dir. Robert Montgomery. MGM, 1947.

Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels. Dir. Guy Richie. Summit Entertainment, 1998.

Mean Streets. Dir. Martin Scorsese. Warner Bros., 1973.

Pi. Dir. Darren Aronofsky. Protozoa Pictures, 1998.

Requiem for a Dream. Dir. Darren Aronofsky. Sibling/Protozoa Pictures, 2000.

Seconds. Dir. John Frankenheimer. Joel Productions/John Frankenheimer Productions Inc., 1966.

See no Evil. Dir. Gregory Dark. WWE Studios/Lions Gate Films, 2006.

28 Weeks Later. Dir. Juan Carlos Fresnadillo. Fox Atomic/DNA Films, 2007.

Worm. Dir. Andrew Bowser. Highway 7 Productions/One Small Instrument Pictures, 2013.

ANNEX

The following list includes examples of third-person images in film, television, and music videos. Each entry is accompanied by a link to a clip that illustrate the third-person image in use.

1- Films:

	Title	Director	Year	Link
*	***Kri Kri e il Tango***	n.a	1913	https://youtu.be/BRDlSOcUO6w
*	***Der Letzte Mann***	F.W. Murnau	1924	https://youtu.be/9DBgE6f3M3s
	Seconds	John Frankenheimer	1966	https://youtu.be/0G73JUg2AaE
	Mean Streets	Martin Scorsese	1973	https://youtu.be/_gOhGafdUAQ
	Truck Turner	Jonathan Kaplan	1974	https://youtu.be/N8eD1kchmkg
*	***Angst***	Gerald Kargl	1983	https://youtu.be/CM_UdsH_I4I
	Jacob's Ladder	Adrian Lyne	1990	https://youtu.be/xWlbVqy7Ng4
	Juice	Ernest R. Dickerson	1992	https://youtu.be/aRs48CziQ0s
	Bound	Andy and Lana Wachowski (as The Wachowski Brothers)	1996	https://youtu.be/0eEOOoeS_9g
	Pi	Darren Aronofsky	1998	https://youtu.be/mxpg5tXEJTQ
	Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels	Guy Richie	1998	https://youtu.be/5bEJqjlOSdI
	Requiem for a Dream	Darren Aronofsky	2000	https://youtu.be/JlETkY6ogRg
	Enduring Love	Roger Michel	2004	https://youtu.be/ps5b0_-gn1w
	Stay	Marc Forster	2005	https://youtu.be/ZoqV9AvOgHo
	Bittersweet Life	Kim Jee-woon	2005	https://youtu.be/ZOvtHqY3fgI
	Kicking and Screaming	Jesse Dylan	2005	https://youtu.be/Fzc47Id0B-o
	See no Evil	Gregory Dark	2006	https://youtu.be/qff8jiiCMxY
	Kidulthood	Menhaj Huda	2006	https://youtu.be/CgV0ZfhE-NA
*	***Babel***	Alejandro González Iñárritu	2006	https://youtu.be/-NK8Xw7GQv0
	Heyy Babyy	Sajid Khan	2007	https://youtu.be/sNOYtAcGMSE
	28 Weeks Later	Juan Carlos Fresnadillo	2007	**Unavailable due to copyright**
	Adulthood	Noel Clarke	2008	https://youtu.be/m-JPI4mTsjw
	Max Payne	John Moore	2008	https://youtu.be/_K_M4J5elUI
*	***Slumdog Millionaire***	Danny Boyle, Loveleen Tandan	2008	https://youtu.be/5qyRZ9ozQ5M
	The Hangover	Todd Phillips	2009	https://youtu.be/HDiFW4T2Exg

* Denotes an example which features an imperfect third-person camera or a variation from the norm.

	Title	Director	Year	Link
*	***Terminator Salvation***	McG	2009	https://youtu.be/CMNWg8BFGPY
*	***District 9***	Neill Blomkamp	2009	https://youtu.be/y9CHOmnXuuc
	Muppets	James Bobin	2011	https://youtu.be/O9ZhWKzfy2o
	The Hangover Part II	Todd Phillips	2011	https://youtu.be/22SLfuE-UjQ
*	***Red State***	Kevin Smith	2011	https://youtu.be/G3f7tsheNak
	Zookeeper	Frank Coraci	2011	https://youtu.be/ElsPYoIozY8
	Cowboys and Aliens	Jon Favreau	2011	https://youtu.be/r4USLPNfsT8
	The Amazing Spider-Man	Marc Webb	2012	https://youtu.be/rGGxIjA28yc
*	***Gravity***	Alfonso Cuarón	2013	https://youtu.be/_317ZDzMmxo
	Worm	Andrew Bowser	2013	**External source:** https://youtu.be/OoxQrD94xmY
*	***It Follows***	David R. Mitchell	2014	https://youtu.be/gQ8CFOPS9E4
	Mad Max: Fury Road	George Miller	2015	**Clip unavailable**

2- Television Series:

	Title	Episode	Year	Link
	Scrubs	S.4, Ep. 8, 22 S.5, Ep. 2	2004-06	https://youtu.be/SQ50HOYLqq4
*	***Dexter***	S.1, Ep. 11	2006	https://youtu.be/d_HXLvFd0zU
	That Mitchell and Webb Look	*Sir Digby Chicken-Caesar* sketches	2006-10	**External source:** https://youtu.be/QACSo5xk3dE
	Skins	S.2, Ep. 1	2008	https://youtu.be/XFIi2smODSc
	Torchwood	S.2, Ep. 7	2008	https://youtu.be/QJNi-xDEuZ0
	Misfits	S.1, Ep. 4	2009	https://youtu.be/W3DCYs5RiRE
	Community	S.1, Ep.7	2009	https://youtu.be/XmYK66_vKJ0
	Shameless	S.1, Ep. 12	2011	https://youtu.be/-x2NYVHQUo8

3- Music Videos:

Title	Artist	Year	Link
Hell is Round in the Corner	Tricky	1995	https://youtu.be/E3R_3h6zQEs
1979	The Smashing Pumpkins	1996	https://youtu.be/4aeETEoNfOg
Go Deep	Janet Jackson	1998	https://youtu.be/dL8L1iiwwQA
Home	Sean Lennon	1998	https://youtu.be/awoTylLBF9I
God Gave me Everything	Mick Jagger	2001	https://youtu.be/wUk_Dqiow0A

* Denotes an example which features an imperfect third-person camera or a variation from the norm.

	Title	Artist	Year	Link
	Hell is Round in the Corner	Tricky	1995	https://youtu.be/E3R_3h6zQEs
	1979	The Smashing Pumpkins	1996	https://youtu.be/4aeETEoNfOg
	Go Deep	Janet Jackson	1998	https://youtu.be/dL8L1iiwwQA
	Chop Suey!	System of a Down	2001	https://youtu.be/CSvFpBOe8eY
	Overrated	Siobhán Donaghy	2006	https://youtu.be/wBLMSX09ZME
	Meds	Placebo	2006	https://youtu.be/9eh0rAUwZSQ
	Same Mistake	James Blunt	2007	https://youtu.be/b3c32wBYdU0
*	***Jigsaw Falling into Place***	Radiohead	2007	https://youtu.be/GoLJJRIWCLU
	Jesus of Suburbia	Green Day	2009	https://youtu.be/FNKPYhXmzoE
	Upper Clapton Dance	Professor Green	2009	https://youtu.be/IIuQM_q0IUU
	Imposter	Danielle Duval	2011	https://youtu.be/7dalSmBMYgQ
	Turn the Night up	Enrique Iglesias	2013	https://youtu.be/mHxOltrMfX8
	Habits	Tove Lo	2014	https://youtu.be/SYM-RJwSGQ8
	Smooth Sailing	Queens of the Stone Age	2014	https://youtu.be/QetvK6ldl2s

* Denotes an example which features an imperfect third-person camera or a variation from the norm.