

CINEMA WITHIN THE AESTHETIC RELATION: FILM STUDIES AND GÉRARD GENETTE'S ART THEORY

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Abstract

Throughout their histories, film theory and analytical aesthetics have rarely shown points of contact. This paper attempts to overcome this impasse by showing the suitability of Genette's aesthetics to film studies while tracing a broader reconnaissance of these misconceptions. This essay is divided into two parts. First, it identifies the reasons that have hindered the interactions between analytic aesthetics and film studies. Second, it addresses the compatibility of some of the concepts Genette presents in his magnum opus *The Aesthetic Relation* to contemporary film studies.

The reasons for a misconnection

Few scholars have embarked on the study of both film theory and aesthetics, for example Noël Carroll, among the analytical philosophers, and Dominique Chateau, as a representative of continental philosophy. Despite a few efforts, today film studies and analytical aesthetics hardly display structural points of contact.

In this essay I would like to show how such a shortcoming can be overcome by looking at Gérard Genette's aesthetics, a theory in which film studies have traditionally shown little interest. Such detachment is, however, part of a larger historical phenomenon, and as a way of introduction, I intend to address the three main reasons behind the traditionally weak links of film studies and analytical aesthetics.

First, analytical aesthetics usually addresses the issue of the definition of art, presenting it through limit cases, such as the couples of materially indiscernible objects.¹ In this instance, even if art objects *x* and *y* present the same properties, they are not necessarily the same thing. Such a patent violation of a key ontological principle – the so-called Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles – implies that there are things that the eye cannot grasp. It also assumes that art is not necessarily a matter of perception and as a result that aesthetic properties do not prompt its definition. This reasoning is largely unappealing to film scholars, who are well aware of the expressivity of the materials involved in the filmic experience and thus instinctually distrustful of the anti-phenomenological approach that underpins analytical aesthetics.

Second, analytical philosophers work on a general definition of art, as it is not oriented to the

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specificities of the medium. In Italy the idea of a comprehensive aesthetics, unbound to the issue of empirical differences between the arts (both in medium and language), dates back to Benedetto Croce's idealism. Yet, this tradition is rejected by Italian film scholars, trained according to a structuralist and post-structuralist curriculum. In an international context the contemporary debates on the post-medium condition of cinema and visual arts have instead produced stances that emphasize the discrete specificities of each medium. Rosalind Krauss, for instance, talks of physical properties, supporting structures, expressive possibilities and conventions. These specificities also define the aesthetic field pertaining to each medium,² which explains why film aesthetics focuses on the study of cinema's own devices (whether technological, expressive or pertaining to the apparatus) as well as those borrowed from the other arts, but readapted to cinema's specificities. Film aesthetics does hardly revolve around the role that cinema occupies in a general system of the arts.

Third, analytical aesthetics is not text-oriented. Rather, it deliberately defies textual analyses to produce meta-interpretations circa the status of certain texts as artworks. On the contrary, to film theorists, especially those writing in the 1960s and 1970s, a

*concept like intertextuality is understood only as an "aesthetic" figure, rather than the acknowledgment by criticism and theory that meaning is not a function of textual interiority, but is constituted in a complex web of different practices and institutions. [...] The "theory" presupposed by the discourse of political modernism is precisely an immanent one.*³

In 1984, Dudley Andrew went against an approach to film theory that he saw as excessively influenced by the "cultural philosophy" of Foucault and Derrida. He motivated his opposition by invoking the necessity to develop a closer "interplay between theory and criticism." "This interplay [...] has at least the form of a dialogue in which the films have the first word and, frequently, the last."⁴ This paradigm, which has dominated most of the traditional discourses on film aesthetics, is far from the investigations of analytical aesthetics which usually focus on artistic identity, leaving aside discussions on the creative aspects of art making or critical interpretations. The sole interpretations analytical aesthetics has put forward are those concerning the transformation of material objects into works of art.⁵

The reasons for a possible encounter

Such an impasse can be avoided if we look at Genette's theory of the aesthetic relation, in which I identify four aspects of particular relevance to contemporary film theory.

1) *The relation.* Genette does not believe in an objectifying aesthetics. He, for instance, distances himself from Nelson Goodman, for whom the question to ask is not "*What* is art?" but "*When* is art?" As it is well known, Goodman answers the latter by stating that art occurs whenever we face symptoms of the aesthetic (that is syntactic density, semantic density, relative repleteness, exemplification, multiple and complex reference).⁶ For Genette, however, only a particular type of attention can produce an aesthetic object. For him, the relevant question is "When is an object *received* as an artwork?"⁷ Consequently, Goodman's list of symptoms needs to be

conceived as a list of symptoms of the aesthetic relation. Yet, in accordance to such a relabeling, Genette finds Goodman's list lacking in one item: appreciation. "Appreciation," for Genette, is a process of objectification of judgment, or in other words: "The natural tendency to ascribe to an object, as one of its objective properties, the 'value' that derives from the way one feels about it."⁸ Still, the aesthetic relation is a necessary, yet not sufficient condition to define a work of art. To speak of art, we then need a certain type of attention as well as the conviction that the work was intentionally created as such. To articulate his ideas about intentionality, Genette draws from George Dickie's definition of art as a concept necessarily implying intentionality. This intentionality should not have been present only in the act of creation, but also in the moment of reception,

*whether an object attains the status of a work basically depends, then, on whether its receiver considers the possibility that aesthetic intention is present within it. [...] Just as, for me, an object is an aesthetic object when I enter into a relation of an aesthetic type with it, so it is a work of art for me when, rightly or wrongly, I decide that this relation can be traced to an authorial intention.*⁹

After activating the aesthetic relation, the receiver "fulfills" it when s/he recognizes that the object of the relation is a human manufacture intentionally meant to be received as a work of art. Only in this way do we experience an artistic relation that is "the ascription of the status of artwork to an aesthetic object."¹⁰

In order to improve our understanding of the implications of this curious form of aesthetic subjectivism, we need to understand what it is not. We live in an epoch full of impulses to end post-modern rhetoric. It is also an era where facts are taking reprisals for the attention previously dedicated to interpretations and, even in Europe, an increased energy is allocated to analytical philosophy.¹¹ In this context, it is important not to mistake Genette's aesthetics for a form of post-modern relativism. For example, it is crucial to stress that Genette describes the attribution of an authorial intention as a decision that can be taken *rightly or wrongly* ("à tort ou à raison").¹² A few sentences later he explains "a belief does not have to be articulated to be active,"¹³ a sentence in which "articulated" should be read as "justified". In short, Genette here states that what determines the intensity and the form of the aesthetic experience of a work of art depends on the degree of our belief. Any subjective belief does not require any justification. It needs to be neither justified nor true to exist and to function (and this is valid for any of the meanings of both "justified" and "true"), as no subjective belief has any implications as to the truth of its content. Genette's theory is then epistemologically neutral. It is not relativistic, as epistemological relativism does not simply defend the idea that there are several criteria to judge the truth of something. Rather, it claims that "there are no, and there cannot be, *meta-criteria* when judging criteria of truth, that is, there are no meta-criteria to evaluate whether some criteria of truth are better than others."¹⁴ Genette never steps towards this direction even if he does not exclude that some criteria and symptoms on which we base our belief that something is a work of art can be better than others. Indeed, he spends much of his writing to produce a rigorous evaluation of many of these cases.

2) *Aesthetics and the end of art.* Contrary to Goodman, who believes that a description of the aesthetic always depends on the presence of art, Genette does not imply that every aesthetic object is also *ipso facto* a work of art. His differentiation between the aesthetic relation and the artistic

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relation (itself a product of the ascription of intentionality) is susceptible to many attacks, most importantly perhaps to those ensuing from Monroe Beardsley's well-known concept of "intentional fallacy." Genette is aware of the vulnerability of his argument, but he does not deal with it. Rather, his preoccupations seem to be directed to presenting an operative criterion that reasonably distinguishes not between what art is and what art is not, but between an experience of works of art and the ways in which we "aestheticize" every-day objects. This can also be taken as a variation on the theme of "the end of art." Genette does not explicitly refer to it, yet the theme has received much commentary by the philosophers with whom Genette directly engages, especially by Danto.¹⁵

To state that art occurs only insofar as someone intended to make it and somebody else is ready to recognize this intention can be accepted only if we assume that the word "art" does not connote qualitatively different practices and entities. But then, what remains of art? If we subscribe to Genette's definition, art is not an autonomous entity with the power of defining Beauty and/or "an immanent production of truths."¹⁶ Rather, it becomes the prosaic effect of a specific form of attention and categorization. One circumstance that is worth remarking at this point is that those who lament the death of art, as well as the end of its production of truths, are usually the same people that fear that art may dissolve "in a competitive relation with the instruments of mass communication, information and fashion."¹⁷

I think that film scholars can share this concern in ideal terms, but I do not believe that it deeply affects their case. Indeed, throughout the 20th century, cinema has been the very device that blurred the distinctions between art, cultural industry and mass communication. By doing so, it has forced the expansion of the aesthetic beyond its original boundaries. In this lies its identity as popular art. Cinema has undermined the categories of taste and aesthetic judgment or in Genette's words, we could say that it has led to the transformation of aesthetics from a system based on "internal criteria," to a system defined by "external," "institutional" and "socio-cultural" ones.¹⁸

Film scholars can find themselves in a privileged position to appreciate Genette's description of the functioning of the aesthetic relation in every-day life, as well as the advantages of the aesthetic/artistic divide. Cinema was quickly recognized as an art form, but this status has ever since remained intermittent. Cinema, Genette would argue, does not belong to "constitutive artistries,"¹⁹ it belongs to "occasional, or 'conditional,' [...] *attentional*"²⁰ artistries. The filmic canon is, for instance, different from the literary one: it is more open and always negotiable. Many films confirm this point as they have dramatically changed their status, quickly passing from forms of popular entertainment to publicly recognized artworks. Many of the films that in the 1940s Adorno and Horkheimer considered at the same level of Chrysler and General Motors mass products are today studied as part of the university curriculum.²¹ Such shifts in status have usually occurred because of a transformation in the type of aesthetic attention activated by different "reading communities" (and which, we should also note, often include the so-called "artists in the audience").²² At the same time, reception theory has demonstrated how aestheticizing processes (the symptoms of aesthetic attention) play a major role in many phenomena of cinema's cultural history and today's landscape of new media (i.e. fandom and cult criticism).

3) *Artistic intention and the author's "Long Shadow."* We said that the way in which Genette reintroduces the concept of intentionality into the theoretical debate is exposed to the attacks of intentional fallacy. Further, it also opposes a key notion of political modernism, namely the notion

of the “death of the author.” Literary theorist Carla Benedetti has noticed that Michel Foucault’s essay *What Is an Author?* has often been misunderstood.²³ By revealing the function of the author as a historical product bound to the artistic system of modernity, Foucault only aimed at presenting the author as a contingent figure. According to this stance, the art world has then passed over the author theories put forward by both the political modernism and the postmodern period:

*In the same context in which the aestheticization of the living world has dissolved the traditional confines of the aesthetic, the survival of art as a specific institution is more than ever guaranteed by the author-function. Thus we have on the one side authored merchandise [merci d’auteur], such as a leather jacket, a purse, or even a coffee-maker bearing the signature of world-renowned designers like Ralph Lauren, Calvin Klein, Giorgio Armani and therefore valued, while on the other we have fetishized authors and their fetishized works [feticci d’auteur], like the latest book to hit the bestseller list due to the name-recognition of the author rather than the intrinsic value of the work itself.*²⁴

The author of whom both Genette and Benedetti speak of is not the author evoked by the semi-otic theory of textual cooperation.²⁵ It also differs from the author for whose death Roland Barthes hoped.²⁶ “Author” here should neither be understood as a function of the text, nor as the intentional subject that guarantees meaning. Rather, this author is the trigger that guarantees the artistic processes: “The processes through which a modern work of art is ‘constructed’ require processes of attribution to an author: attribution of an *artistic intention*, of a *choice*, of a project, conscious or unconscious, of a *poetics*.”²⁷ This is valid for both literary and filmic authors. It is after all well known that the notion of authorship had an important role in producing a perception of cinema as art. It would be useful, in this case, to then trace its artistic functions through the history of cinema considering Genette’s aesthetics: to expose the “aestheticizing thresholds” that authorship has contributed to generate. This research has already, if partially, been exposed by scholars who presented the authorship of past directors such as Kurosawa, Sirk, Chaplin and Hitchcock as a “reputation building effect.”²⁸ This approach could also be applied to present film making, in which we are witnessing an evolution of authorship towards both a “signature effect,”²⁹ as evidenced by the works of directors such as Quentin Tarantino and Pedro Almodovar, to phenomena of “distributed authorship,” typical of new media.

4) *An integrative theory.* Since Genette’s art theory is epistemologically neutral, it does not oppose studies that investigate the presence of the aesthetic and the artistic on a textual level. Rather, it is an addition to them. For this reason I sketch a model for an integrated study of the artistic profile of cinema by articulating it on three levels:

a) First is the level in which the specific textual and formal features of a film work triggers both the aesthetic and artistic statuses of the film. This is also the level in which aesthetics corresponds to the analysis of the expressive potentialities of the medium and of the artistic canons. Most of traditional film aesthetics belongs here, as do most of comparative studies between cinema and other arts.

b) At this second stage interpretation oscillates between the text and the context. The textual features of a film are here studied as triggers of aesthetic attention or, as Danto would say, as extra-textual and *trans-figurative* markers.³⁰ On this level we can include all studies aiming at capturing the aesthetic value of inter-textual practices, such as quotations, plagiarism, remakes

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and stylistic retro-dating. (This is the case, for instance, of Gus van Sant's *Psycho* [1998], a film that forces us to reflect on aesthetics rather than film criticism).

c) The third level deals with the artistic function. The history of cinema as art is also the history of a series of attributions of the art status. These attributions, however, largely depend on interpretations that have shaped the art world, thus we need to ask ourselves what are the great transformations that led interpreters to think of films as rich in meaning and operating according to the symbolic mode of exemplification, the "exemplificational mode"³¹ (the aesthetic symptom par excellence). We also need to identify the relationships between an author's intention (here seen as attribution of the aesthetic intention) and the construction of the discursive status of the "cinéma d'auteur." At this stage we should also include the study of the connections between the aesthetic relation and derivative phenomena, such as the authentication and canonization of cultural objects.³² Some studies have already undertaken these streams of investigations. To conclude I would like to recall three of them.

In Roger Odin's well-known semio-pragmatic approach to fiction film, films are always seen within a social space.³³ Such a space gives shape to the film spectator's cognitive activity as well as his/her competence. In other words, it gives a *role* to the film spectator. Odin does not employ Genette's terminology, but his description of the spectator's role comes close to Genette's conceptualization of "modes of attention." Odin describes eight different operational modes in the space of filmic communication. Among these, two are worth mentioning. According to the first (the artistic mode), a film is connected to an author, a connection that is usually made by a cinephile. According to the second (the aesthetic mode), the spectator focuses "on the technical work that has gone into the creation of the images and sounds,"³⁴ Genette's and Odin's definitions of the artistic and the aesthetic are not the same. Still, in order to speak of "aesthetic mode" both of them imply the presence of an aesthetic symptom or in Goodman's words of "*relative syntactic repletensess*, that is, the fact that relatively many syntactical features are semantically relevant."³⁵ To this we must add that we need someone – in our case an actant-spectator – who decides which properties a film "does or does not single out for attention."³⁶ (This is part of the "exemplificational mode").

François Jost, too, would agree with Genette on an important point, namely that a double precariousness affects cinema as art. Such a precarious state concerns films as uncertain objects, since they "do not have a manifest, determinate generic affiliation."³⁷ It also depends on the space in which films are seen. A film after all does not claim the same type of reception as a painting in a museum. Still, the film's precariousness can be avoided by making gestures that identify the film as an artwork. To do so, however, it is necessary that the film be interpreted as the effect of an artistic intention. In other words, we must understand in what way we can confidently say that an artist stands at its origin. For Jost, understanding how a film functions as an art work means to operate on the plane of enunciation or, better, on the multiple and complex planes encompassed by filmic enunciation. The study of the functioning of a film as an artwork must figure the tasks of a polyphonic theory of enunciation, as well as of a narratology that deals with the concept of artistic intention.

The identity of a film as art depends on something that deals with the text and its thresholds. However, for Janet Staiger, it depends on the complexity of historically determined reading strate-

gies. In Genette and Danto's terms, Staiger's materialistic history of filmic interpretation contributes to our understanding of the relationship between "simple" interpretations and transfigurative interpretations, a theoretical key point of analytical aesthetics. At the same time, the notion of transfigurative interpretation can conversely serve to clarify many aspects of Staiger's theory. For instance, in her analysis of the American reviews of *Open City* (*Roma città aperta*, Roberto Rossellini, 1945) – which premiered in New York in the Spring of 1946 –, Staiger demonstrates that what she calls the "Rossellini signature" depended on specific strategies of reading and evaluation. In sum, for the American critics of the time "the film was frank; it was serious; it had a message. It was different from Hollywood. [...] Messages [...] imply senders. And for educated Americans, that means authorship."³⁸

Staiger is here proposing a thesis that deals with the history of film criticism: "Authorship as a reading strategy was common prior the introduction of auteurism by the scholarly community."³⁹ In return, such a historical consideration produces a theoretical effect. Carla Benedetti and Genette are right in separating the author as guarantor of artistic intention from the author as the intentional subject who guarantees meaning (and authorship, here intended as the one thing that "unifies the text").⁴⁰ Still, their separation is valid only theoretically, since historically the two roles have frayed borders and cannot be defined so clearly. This can be observed already in the 1920s, when "a common interpretative strategy among the cultural elite and 'better educated' audiences was attributing the origin of filmic meaning to the director."⁴¹ Such attribution of meaning has an important role in the historical definition of cinema as art. For this reason I think that, alongside Genette's theory of artistic intention, a study of Staiger's materialistic history of filmic interpretation may greatly improve our understanding of the relationships between the theory of authorship, aesthetics and the history of "film as art."⁴²

- 1 See Arthur C. Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace. A Philosophy of Art*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge-London 1981.
- 2 Rosalind Krauss, *A Voyage on the North Sea: Art in the Age of the Post-medium Condition*, Thames and Huston, London 2000; Ji-Hoon Kim, "The Post-medium Condition and the Explosion of Cinema," in *Screen*, vol. 50, no. 1, Spring 2009, pp. 114-123.
- 3 David Rodowick, *The Crisis of Political Modernism. Criticism and Ideology in Contemporary Film Theory*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana-Chicago 1988, pp. 277, 280.
- 4 Dudley Andrew, *Film in the Aura of Art*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1984, p. XI.
- 5 Arthur C. Danto, *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art*, Columbia University Press, New York 1986, p. 39. A few pages earlier (at p. 23) Danto makes a distinction worth quoting, as it is relevant to this point: "My view, historically, is that interpretations are discovered and that interpretations constitute works of art and that interpretative statements are true or false. My view, philosophically, is that interpretations constitute works of art, so that you do not, as it were, have the artwork on one side and interpretations on the other."
- 6 Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking*, Hackett, Indianapolis 1978, pp. 67-68.
- 7 Gérard Genette, *L'Œuvre de l'art. La relation esthétique*, Seuil, Paris 1997 (eng. ed. *The Aesthetic Relation*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca-London 1999, p. 214).
- 8 *Idem*, p. 68.
- 9 *Idem*, p. 139.
- 10 *Idem*, p. 203.

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- 11 Cfr., Maurizio Ferraris, "Perseverare è diabolico", in *Alfabeta2, Tramonto del postmoderno*, no. 14, November 2011. See also *On the Ashes of Post-Modernism: A New Realism* (Conference, New York, November 2011).
- 12 Gérard Genette, *L'Œuvre de l'art. La relation esthétique*, cit., p. 172.
- 13 Gérard Genette, *The Aesthetic Relation*, cit., p. 217.
- 14 Diego Marconi, *Per la verità. Relativismo e filosofia*, Einaudi, Torino 2011, p. 52 (my translation).
- 15 Arthur C. Danto, *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art*, cit.; Id., *After the End of Art. Contemporary Art and the Pale of History*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1997.
- 16 Alain Badiou, *Petit manuel d'inesthétique*, Seuil, Paris 1998 (eng. ed. *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 2005, p. 10).
- 17 Mario Perniola, *L'arte e la sua ombra*, Einaudi, Torino 2000 (eng. ed., *Art and Its Shadow*, Continuum, New York-London 2004, p. XV). The same criticism was directed towards Genette in Riccardo Campi, "L'opera dell'estetica fra soggetto e storia. Riconsezioni intorno a Gérard Genette," in *Studi di estetica*, no. 20, 1999, pp. 55-83.
- 18 Gérard Genette, *The Aesthetic Relation*, cit., p. 170.
- 19 *Idem*, p. 215.
- 20 *Idem*, p. 216.
- 21 See Theodor W. Adorno, Max Horkheimer. *Dialektik der Aufklärung: Philosophische Fragmente*, Querido, Amsterdam 1947 (eng. ed. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 2002).
- 22 Greg Taylor, *Artists in the Audience. Cults, Camp, and American Film Criticism*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1999. According to Noël Carroll, interpreters have resorted to critical interpretations, historical and identifying narratives (not to definitions) in order to decide whether a film is artistic or not. See Noël Carroll, *Philosophy of Art. A Contemporary Introduction*, Routledge, London-New York 1999, p. 260.
- 23 Michel Foucault, "Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?," in *Bulletin de la Société française de philosophie*, no. 3, 1969 (eng. ed. *What Is an Author?*, in M. Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY 1977).
- 24 Carla Benedetti, *L'ombra lunga dell'autore: indagine su una figura cancellata*, Feltrinelli, Milano 1999 (eng. ed. *The Empty Cage. Inquiry into the Mysterious Disappearance of the Author*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca-London 2005, p. 25).
- 25 Umberto Eco, *Lector in fabula. La cooperazione interpretativa nei testi narrativi*, Bompiani, Milano 1979. The studies by Iser and Jauss, conceptually aligned with Eco's interpretation theory, were also important in shaping reception studies in film and television. See Hans Robert Jaus, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 1987; Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader. Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 1974. For Iser, the literary work emerges in the confluence of writing and an experience of reading. Jauss has also famously insisted on the historical dimension of the aesthetic experience: "The successive interpretations through which a text has been perceived becomes a 'horizon' or background that sets up assumptions about a text's meaning and thus influences its current interpretations;" Janet Staiger, *Interpreting Films. Studies in the Historical Reception of American Cinema*, Princeton University press, Princeton 1992, p. 46. Nevertheless, the type of author-reader/spectator relationship of which Genette and Benedetti speak is different from that put forward by Iser and Jauss. Genette and Benedetti think such a relationship does not concern the understanding of the textual meaning of a work, but its meta-textual identity (that is, its status as work of art).
- 26 Roland Barthes, *La Mort de l'Auteur*, in Id., *Le Bruissement de la langue*, Seuil, Paris 1984 (eng. ed. *The Death of the Author*, in Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, Fontana, London 1977).
- 27 Carla Benedetti, *The Empty Cage*, cit., p. 14. Interestingly, Carla Benedetti is among the few Italian literary theorists that openly quote André Bazin, *Cahiers du cinéma* and the "politique des auteurs." According to her, the "politique des auteurs" is among the first moments of the second half of the 20th century in which we witness to a difficulty in separating between the artistic value of an object and the

presumption that the same object is an author's product. In other words, the author has taken on him/herself the artistic function. This way, we then return to the distinction between artistic intention and poetics, on which we have already commented. Actually, theoretically speaking, it is possible to introduce two interconnected distinctions. The first one separates artistic intention (i.e. the will to candidate an object to be experienced as an art work) from poetics (that is, author's intention, stylistics, textual poetics, etc.). The second instead distinguishes between artistic identity (the logic according to which a work is socially identified as an artwork) and critical interpretation (the way in which the work and its poetic are interpreted). For an analysis of this second distinction, see Luciano Nanni, *Tesi di estetica*, Book Editore, Bologna-Ferrara-Milano 1991.

- 28 Charles J. Maland, *Chaplin and American Culture: The Evolution of a Star Image*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1989; Robert E. Kapsis, *Hitchcock: The Making of a Reputation*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1992; Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, *Kurosawa: Film Studies and Japanese Cinema*, Duke University Press, Durham 2000; Barbara Klinger, *Melodrama & Meaning, History, Culture, and the Films of Douglas Sirk*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington-Indianapolis 1994.
- 29 Guglielmo Pescatore, *L'ombra dell'autore. Teoria e storia dell'autore cinematografico*, Carocci, Roma 2006, p. 155 (my translation).
- 30 "Transfigurative" is applied by Danto to "interpretation," not directly to markers. See *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art*, cit., p. 44.
- 31 Gérard Genette, *The Aesthetic Relation*, cit., p. 41.
- 32 On authentication and cultural hierarchies see Sarah Thornton, *Club Culture: Music, Media, and Subcultural Capital*, Policy Press, Cambridge 1996. On canonization and film see Pietro Bianchi, Giulio Bursi, Simone Venturini (eds.), *Il canone cinematografico/The Film Canon*, Proceedings of the 17th International Film Studies Conference (Udine, 16-18 March 2010), Forum, Udine 2011.
- 33 Roger Odin, *De la fiction*, De Boeck Université, Bruxelles 2000.
- 34 Warren Buckland, *The Cognitive Semiotics of Film*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2000, p. 89.
- 35 Gérard Genette, *The Aesthetic Relation*, cit., p. 33.
- 36 *Idem*, p. 43.
- 37 *Idem*, p. 216. See François Jost, *Un monde à notre image. Enonciation, cinéma, télévision*, Klincksieck, Paris 1992.
- 38 Janet Staiger, *Interpreting Films*, cit., p. 187.
- 39 *Idem*, p. 181.
- 40 *Idem*, p. 180.
- 41 *Idem*, p. 188.
- 42 Besides the works by Odin, Staiger and Jost, besides the works on "reputation building strategies" which I have already mentioned, I would also like to mention Janet Harbord's publication on the spaces of the cinematographic experience and the studies on the relocation of the filmic experience. Janet Harbord, *Film Cultures*, Sage, London 2002; Francesco Casetti, "Relocation," in *Cinéma & Cie*, no. 11, Fall 2008. Indeed, studies on the new spaces of filmic experience may reveal as important as those concerning the symbolic and material spaces for defining film's aesthetic experience. I think that Genette's aesthetic can turn out to be extremely helpful in this stream of research.