Film, not Sliced up into Pieces, or:
How Film Made Me Feel Thinking

Review: Daniel Frampton (2006)
Filmosophy
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Daniel Frampton's *Filmosophy* offers an interesting account of conceptualizing film as an 'organic' entity whose philosophical potential lies in its performative character and its possibilities to transcend traditional ways of thinking. Frampton wants to establish a terminology which redirects scholarly attention to the experience rather than analysis of film, and in the course of doing so he also objects against approaches which too heavily rely on analytic distinctions of elements of a film. For developing his approach, he gathers and modifies ideas from writers such as Eisenstein, George Wilson, Deleuze, Sobchack, and Gilbert-Lecomte. However, his attempt to reform writing about film, away from what he conceives of as 'technicist' rhetoric to a more poetic way of writing, ultimately does not

live up to its promises. In particular, his film examples do not live up to the promises of the more theoretical parts of his book.

Parts 1 and 2 of this review give a descriptive account of Frampton's book, followed by a critical evaluation in part 3.

1. Frampton's Agenda

Daniel Frampton's book *Filmosophy* is announced on the book cover as 'a manifesto for a radically new way of understanding cinema'. He claims that his work is 'a study of film as thinking, and contains a theory of both film-being and film form' (6). In Frampton's view, the events in a film and the way they are presented are best understood as acts of thinking performed by the film itself. Film is a conceptualised as a 'filmind' (9) whose kind of thinking is not to be confused with 'human' thinking. Frampton explicitly rejects an anthropomorphic understanding of this 'filmind' (see 73 f., 46 ff.) and claims that his analogy between film and mind is a functional one (see 7). It is supposed to allow Frampton to describe film (any film) as an organic whole which should also be talked and written about as such. Consequently, he rejects rigid analytic distinctions between, for example, film style and narration, as long as they break up this organicity of the film. In other words: his book is also another attack on approaches to film writing and analysis inspired by the formalist tradition.[1]

Frampton's terminology is not supposed to give empirical descriptions of films, of their nature or genesis, but rather provides 'a *conceptual* understanding of the origins of film's actions and events. […] Filmosophy conceptualizes film as an organic intelligence: a 'film being' thinking about the characters and subjects in the film' (7). Filmosophy is directed against theories of narration which allegedly attempt to identify an "external' force' such as an (invisible) narrator as the originator of the film's discourse (ibid.). Rather, 'it is *the film* that is steering its own (dis)course. The filmind is 'the film itself'' (7).[2]

Filmosophical terminology is supposed to put a film spectator into the right frame of mind for the film experience:

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[1] See Bordwell (1985).
[2] All italics in the quotes are by Frampton.

> Film does not technically need a filmind […] it is a decision by filmgoers whether to use this concept when experiencing a film. The film is just light and sound. I am simply arguing that filmgoers *should* use the concept of the filmind, in order to experience film as a *fully expressive* medium. (99)

Frampton's 'filmind' proposes a philosophical thesis as well as it gives a criticism of the current state of film studies. The philosophical thesis is that films can follow lines of intellectual inquiry that traditional forms of thinking, which work predominantly *qua* language, are unable to follow. *Filmosophy* thus claims that films can philosophize, and can do so with their own means of expression which extend beyond philosophy as a linguistic activity. The criticism of the status quo in film studies that Frampton puts forward is that approaches which separate a given film into different parts (such as form and style, editing and camera movement) which are subsequently analysed, distort an accurate understanding of a film and of the reproduction of the actual experience of (seeing and hearing a) film. Instead, film should be understood as an organic whole in which all parts interrelate with each other, and which also causes such an organic impression on a film spectator. For Frampton, operational distinctions between film form and film style distort an understanding of how film works (on us as filmgoers). Frampton argues that his conception of film facilitates such an 'organic' film experience, 'because style is tied to meaning with natural, thoughtful, human terms of intention (by the filmind)' (149). This is because the 'concept of film-thinking [which is performed by the filmind] bonds form to content by making style part of the action' (8).

Frampton also criticizes an undue focus on narrational aspects of film in film-philosophical studies in disadvantage of specifically cinematic means of expression: 'So much writing within the area of 'film and philosophy' simply ignores cinematics and concentrates on stories and character motivations' (9).[3] For Frampton, film is a kind of non-conceptual thinking, and herein also lies the philosophical potential of film: 'Film possibly contains a whole new system of thought, a new episteme' (11).

Filmosophy is not primarily concerned with the analysis of a given film, but rather with the 'personal affects of film – how film affects us directly, emotionally' (2). The influence of (Sobchack's and Merleau-Ponty's) phenomenological approaches redirects Frampton's attention to questions of spectatorship (or, in his terms, of the 'filmgoing

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[3] Compare also Fn 6 on p. 233, where he criticises the often exclusive focus of film analyses on narrative issues.

experience', see chapter 3): The immediate film experience becomes the cornerstone for any subsequent analysis or other written account of film. This assumption also causes his polemic objections against

> [t]echnical terms – such as panning, tracking, zoom-in, close-up, off-camera, shot/reverse shot, long take, hand-held, medium shot, filter, deep focus, asynchronous sound – [which] litter the texts of much writing. *This lumpen technological terminology obscures the possible poetic experience of film.* Speaking of books full of filmmaking terms Parker Tyle compares them to 'anatomy lectures over human corpses that explain how a living man, in general, 'works', how this or that of his organs functions' (172).

'Technical terms' for Frampton seem to transform the 'living' film into a corpse, and what one could term the 'living experience of a living film' into a dry academic exercise which is unrelated to what we feel when we watch a film. In short: Film for Frampton is not something to be analysed like a dead butterfly on the laboratory table, but something that is experienced and causes 'affective meanings' (164) that have to be accounted for as such.[4] Frampton argues that

> [t]he movement of Filmosophy is away from seeing film form as abstractly relating to meaning, to seeing film form *as* the drama of the film: the film does not carry or mean confusion, it *becomes* confusion, it inhabits the affects and emotions and concepts we receive in the filmgoing experience. […] The organicism of the filmind reveals cuts, edits – shifts in images – as the active thought of the whole film. (131)

As a consequence of such an 'organic' understanding, each film has to be understood as a whole, it is not possible to just concentrate on a particular scene.

To sum up, if I understand correctly, Frampton wants to make plausible the following theses: film is 1) not just a sum of its structural parts, but should be understood as a quasi-organic, autonomous entity which 2) performs its own kind of thinking, a film-thinking, which transcends anthropomorphic conceptions of thoughts and also cannot be compared to them. This opens up 3) the possibility that film contains a new 'episteme'. Because film is conceived of as an organic whole, all elements of a film become of importance and have to

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[4] In this movement towards spectatorship Frampton would probably sympathise with second-generation cognitivists such as Greg Smith, Carl Plantinga, and Murray Smith, although he does not mention them. See for example Smith/ Plantinga (1999). Anyway, his implicit criticism of cognitivist approaches (which are the blueprint for the 'technicist' accounts he criticises) mostly seems directed at earlier approaches in a cognitivist fashion such as Bordwell's.

112

be understood as interacting with one another. An organic understanding of film, Frampton argues, 4) also makes for a much more accurate viewing experience which pays due attention to the emotions and feelings a film causes in a filmgoer. In the following section I examine the course of Frampton's argument in more detail.

2. The Book Structure

Filmosophy is divided into two parts: the first part traces the history of film theoretical writings on the link between cinema and the mind. Herewith Frampton situates himself within this intellectual landscape, but also prepares for the systematic second part of the book, where he explicitly advances his own philosophical conception of film – the approach he calls 'filmosophy'. Among the writers he considers are Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Sobchack, Cavell, Balász, Deleuze, Parker Tyler, V. F. Perkins, Bordwell, George Wilson, Münsterberg and a number of early French film theorists: Epstein, Dulac, Artaud, Yhcam, Gilbert-Lecomte.

In the first chapter on 'film minds' Frampton outlines various attempts, particularly in early film theory, to compare or link film to the human mind or to thought. By working through examples for such accounts, Frampton argues for an understanding of film as a 'filmind', which is not supposed to be just another way of objectifying human mental operations. Mere analogies to human thought are understood as limiting for a proper understanding of film's working mechanisms as well as expressive possibilities. Frampton dismisses several earlier conceptions, such as attempts to understand film as working like the human brain, as being an 'embodiment of the way the mind works' (17), as close to memory, our subconscious life, or similar to a (character) subjectivity. Frampton claims that 'film is not analogous to the [human] mind' (22), and that filmic thinking thus is not an analogical, but a poetic concept.

In chapter 2, Frampton moves from theorists that link films to the mind to accounts which posit film as a special kind of entity, a being he throughout calls 'film-being'. This is first only to be understood as a 'general term for what we understand to be the origin(ator) of the images and sounds we experience' (27). Frampton explores and ultimately dismisses several traditional ways of understanding film as a being, e.g. as expressive of a filmmaker's though, 'as camera 'I' or virtual creator, as ghostly or absent author, or as some kind of narratological or post-narratological being.' (11). Instead of trying to find a sort of unifying

external enabler of the film world which would allow to comprehensively talk about film, Frampton wants to 'bring the conceptualisation of film-being back 'into' the film' (38). I. e., the film itself gives us all we need to form a proper philosophical understanding of it. Conceptually, film is, according to Frampton, is its own creator, 'not from a 'point' of view, but from a realm, a no-place, that still gives us some things and not others' (38).

In chapter 3, 'film phenomenology', Frampton argues that film, not only spectators, in ways to be specified has its own perception of its film world, too. He asks in what ways a film being (be its exact nature as it may) could possibly 'experience' its film world. He examines and criticises Vivian Sobchack's film phenomenology for its alleged anthropomorphism: 'It is limiting to talk about film form in terms of our perceptual capabilities – film can do more than us, differently to us. […] Film is not a human-like mind, it is, uniquely, a filmind.' (47). Sobchack's account is also criticised as limiting for our understanding of (the philosophical possibilities) of film (46).

For Frampton, 'filmosophy's filmind *is* the film-world [and not just 'present' to the film like an external observer], though from a transsubjective no-place' (47). For this reason, the clues delivered by the film and the experiences of the filmgoer are everything one needs to understand film. Although Frampton acknowledges that filmmakers are, empirically speaking, the creators of a film and create the film with certain intentions in mind, he pleads for the autonomy of the film (art-)work, which transcends a filmmaker's intentions (see 46). In other words: Film is an entity unbound by the cognitive and corporeal limits of human beings.

In chapter 4, 'Film neominds', Frampton concludes his historical survey and considers a couple of other theories of film as form of thinking: Artaud, Epstein, Gilbert-Lecomte, Eisenstein, Schefer, and Deleuze. The latter provides the blueprint for Frampton's subsequent systematic outline of his filmosophical approach. Deleuze provides Frampton with the ideas that '*images have their own logic of non-linguistic communication'* (65), and that film becomes 'the exploration of a thought *outside* itself' (66). For example, '[f]ilm bypasses our deadened [rationalised] interaction with the world by feeling it, relating to it intuitively' (68). Framptonic film-thinking becomes not simply a matter of thinking rationally, logically, but of thinking qua feelings, emotions, outside of the boundaries of imposed by our higher cognitive processes.

Part 2 of the book develops the idea of filmosophy more systematically through a discussion of various disciplines within film studies. Frampton attempts to show the superiority of filmosophy over the 'technicist' (173) rhetoric he finds in other approaches to film. Chapter 5 on 'filmind' outlines his approach, while chapter 6, 'film narration', considers 'how traditional theories of narration relate to filmosophy' (103).

In chapter 5, Frampton argues that film should be conceived as a performative entity: 'Film *does* thinking, rather than just *provoking* thinking. Film-thinking is immanent to the film' (95). He distinguishes three kinds of film-thinking: basic film-thinking, formal film-thinking, and fluid film-thinking: basic film-thinking is the 'basic design of the film-world (black and white or colour, frame ratio)', formal film-thinking is 'the addition of traditional formal elements (framing, movement, shifts)', and fluid film-thinking is 'the re-creation of the film-world itself (special effects, image morphings, and so forth)' (all on 83). The first kind of film-thinking thus somehow sets out the framework of the whole film, while formal film-thinking seems to concern everything that can be done with the camera within the boundaries of the established framework (for an example of Frampton's visualist rhetoric of film-thinking, see 90). Fluid film-thinking, then, is directly borrowed from the post-production process: It is expressed through the manipulation of the images we see, for instance through morphing, but fluid film-thinking also seems to be the explicit break-up of linear story patterns (see 88 ff.).

Chapter 7 on 'film-thinking' elaborates on certain of these specifically filmic ways of thinking, which are, for example, constituted by 'the loosely defined basic fields of film composition (image, colour, sound, frame, movement and edit-shifts)' (116). Frampton argues that 'the move of filmosophy is in crafting an integral understanding of how these image forms work *inseparably* with (as) the drama of film' (117). Again, the reader is unmistakably made aware that the hidden enemy is the Bordwell-camp. However, in chapter 8 on the 'filmgoer' Frampton applies Filmosophy to spectatorship and elaborates how his approach might 'reconfigure our understanding of the encounter between film and filmgoer' (148). A filmosophically informed filmgoer 'will have a more suitable *mode of attention*, and thus *experience more*, and thus have *more meaning possibilities* to steer their interpretations' (149). His advice is: first '*[e]xperience the film. Then interpret the meanings you felt*' (150). Film analysis thus should always be directly related to one's experience of film.

In chapter 9 on 'film writing' Frampton harks at 'technicist rhetoric' (99) again:

> [W]e should not be taught to see 'zooms' and 'tracking shots', but led to understand intensities and movements of feeling and thinking. [...] [T]he route to interpretation should always be via the whole film, not biasing form or content. (169)

Frampton also tries to impose a filmosophical understanding on the proceedings of writing about film and the filmgoing-experience: 'Filmosophy attempts to organically unite 'form and content' in the filmgoer's thought, and the argument concerning film writing is parallel: the form of your writing is also its content' (179). The book concludes with a chapter on 'Filmosophy', where its assumptions are related to movements in the history of philosophy, particularly from Nietzsche over Heidegger to Derrida, and with a 'conclusion' which also explicitly relates Filmosophy to current developments of digital and experimental cinema.

3. Criticism

Frampton offers an interesting account of conceiving of the philosophical potential of cinema. His Filmosophy proceeds in the right direction in that it tries to put accounts of spectatorial experience of film first and analysis second. He also sees clearly that an analysis always has to bear in mind the whole film and not just aspects or parts of it.

His attempts to locate the philosophical potential of film in its performative character (in this he is close to Mulhall's conception of film as 'philosophy in action'), and in its possibilities to transcend hitherto known ways of thinking, are also right on the mark.[5] I also think that Frampton is right in emphasising cinema's potential to transform reality and thereby offer new perspectives on it. There is a venerable tradition which elaborates on this point – thinkers such as Rudolf Arnheim (for whom film's transformative and not merely reproductive character is the reason for its status as an art form) and Stanley Cavell, who describes film as 'a succession of automatic world projections' (Cavell 1979: 72), might suffice as examples. When Frampton writes that 'film *uses* the real; but it takes it and immediately moulds it and then refigures it [...]. Film recording automatically changes reality, and the filmmaker artistically refigures reality' (4), he is close to Arnheim, and by

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[5] For Mulhall's account of a 'philosophy in action', see Mulhall (2006, 2007, 2008).

claiming that '[c]inema is the projection, screening, showing, of *thoughts of the real*' (4/5), he expands Cavell's definition of film. These thoughts of the real are, on the one hand, the thought of the filmgoer, in whom is induced, in the best case, an expanded conception of (the possibilities of) reality. But Frampton also conceives of these thought of reality as the thoughts the *film* itself has on the (film) reality it produces. This idea is interesting, but, however, I do not clearly see how Frampton can clearly distinguish such an approach from the 'anthropomorphic' conceptions of film he so eagerly criticises. It seems to me that his attempt to identify a single conceptual source for understanding film (the filmind as a kind of film being) leads him on those trodden paths left by attempts to build first philosophies and unifying theories.

His intention to redirect the attention of film-philosophy scholars towards the study of specifically cinematic rather than only narrational philosophic aspects of film is also on the right track. In fact, there do not seem to be many studies out there which specifically focus on the philosophical potential of cinematic means of expression which bypass narratological aspects. I agree with Frampton that what makes cinema philosophically interesting in the first place is its ability to 'think' in non-conceptual ways. Studies that primarily focus on philosophical aspects of the stories that narration films rely on thus ignore the really interesting philosophical aspects of film.

However, I think that in his bold criticism of so-called 'technicist approaches' Frampton conflates post-viewing film analyses with accounts of a film viewing experience. Of course the immediate experience of watching a film does not necessarily need to be sustained by background knowledge about how exactly this and that scene came to be. But, looking at the examples of 'filmosophical reviews' to be found in Frampton's book, it strikes me that such reviews do not in any way reveal deeper insights into the film than, say, 'technicist' reviews: Both are sadly one-sided (the question whether there really are purely technicist reviews put aside). Frampton wishes to eliminate technicist terms in favour of a poetic vocabulary. But, then again, sometimes he seems unable to do without them, for example when he discusses Dziga Vertov's *The Man With a Movie Camera* (*Chelovek s kino-apparatom,* 1929), which 'contains speeding images (from trains or airplanes), x-rays, time-lapse photography, and so on' (206). What is talk of x-rays and time-lapse photography, if not a slight involvement of technical terminology?

He also tries to do away with excessive occupation with the technical gadgets of digital cinema:

> [T]he interest lies not in the particular technical method, nor in exactly how a particular film mixes recorded and digital for example, *but in what kind of film-thinking these forms usher in*. Thus, in describing these films, the explication of effects and digital moments should be avoided – writing should simply refer to the thinking: the feelings and questions and motives of the forms. For example, for the writer of filmosophical reviews, *The Matrix* is on one plane of film-reality: there are no 'recorded' and 'digitally animated' parts, just one level of film-world. (205)

But, thus my objection goes, does our particular film experience not also depend on the extent to which our eyes and ears are trained by the technical cinematic possibilities available? How to account for the peculiar outdated look of older special-effects films in relation to present-day state-of-the-SFX-art? Even if this aspect does not make for the whole account of a film, it is nevertheless an important element. I do not see how one could accurately compare the first *King Kong* (Ernest Schoedsack/ Merian Cooper, 1933) with Peter Jackson's version (2005) without mentioning the specific expressive limits imposed on the filmmakers while they made their film. And such background knowledge depends on an understanding of technical terms. In addition, technical terms help identify precisely by which means a certain 'film-thought' has been achieved. For example, the following description Frampton gives of *The Limey* (Stephen Soderbergh, 1999) could be achieved by a vast array of different cinematic means of expression: '*The Limey* shifts with loosened memory, feeling associations and glimpses, a transcendent position beyond pat and present' (207). Apart from the fact that I do not really understand what exactly Frampton means here, I see no precise indication of what exactly the film does.

The puzzling aspect of Frampton's book is that his theoretical remarks are often very clear and understandable, his summaries sometimes brilliantly concise (such as the parts on Deleuze, see 61 ff.), while his film examples strike me as rather fuzzy and vague. There is rarely more than one paragraph on each film, even in chapter 7, which provides many short examples but only few detailed discussions of single films. Perceptive accounts of a film intermingle with statements which read like loose associations rather than precise accounts (be it of the film itself or the film experience). He might convey a general idea about a given film, but he is either unable or unwilling to give us specifics. It is probably the latter, because he writes:

118

> For the concepts to grow in the reader they must remain loose in meaning, context-dependent and pragmatic (each film has differing thoughts). […] The concepts and attentions of Filmosophy are not intended to provide complete interpretations, but can be used as a first step, a route to larger interpretations. (180)

My point (or my inability to get Frampton's point in his film examples) probably becomes clear if one considers the following passage in which he argues that

> [c]ontemporary cinema has also provided some new thinking. *Gangster No.1* feels the schizophrenia of the central character, *shattering the image itself* (where the classic metaphor is usually an actual broken mirror). *Magnolia* starts as it means to go on: with an inquisitive thinking, pushing into its characters, rushing up to them, introducing them as parts of a whole. *Bringing out the Dead* feels the boredom of the ambulance crew, for whom time flits by with no action except… the passing of time, revealing images of speeded-up movements through the streets. *The Limey* shifts with loosened memory, feeling associations and glimpses, a transcendent position beyond pat and present (a transcendent position that the father is looking for, to discover what happened to his daughter). A similarly radical, yet different rethinking or re-inhabiting of memory can be found in *Memento*. (207 f.)

What exactly does this 'new thinking' these films supposedly provide consist in? Frampton lacks an answer. If Filmosophy means to talk about five films in 138 words, this strikes me as a severe challenge to film criticism and film writing in general. At least Frampton does not succeed in giving 'a better language *of* those moving sound-images' (175). Frampton assumes that 'we are already well suited to understand film' (175) and thus does not see the need for a language which would provide a better understanding. Instead of using the language of those who produce the film, it seems, he wants us to speak the language of the film itself – and because of this, following his conception of film as a thinking entity,

> the rhetoric of [film's] various forms can be sliced from the languages of thinking (questioning, comparing, belief, passion, reasoning, love, empathy, imagining). A descriptive term should not wound the film, should not cut the film's surface to reveal its technological workings, but should open-up the image to reveal its thinking, *its belief about the people and objects it has gained*. (175)

It is interesting to think of film as a thinking entity (instead of a medium used by others to do thinking), but again I do not see how Frampton escapes his own objection of anthropomorphism.

Frampton criticises that 'much film writing not only uses technicist terminology but also stumbles through crude metaphors when it attempts to link form to meaning' (174).

Reading through Frampton's book, however, I stumble across anthropomorphic, metaphorical sentences like the following:

> Realising film as thinking we can now understand moments more rhetorically: the film (through its affective forms) might be said to be crying in empathy, sweating [sic] out loud, feeling pain for the character. (The concept of the filmind should provoke these kinds of interpretations). (174)

Again, I am puzzled how Frampton earlier on argues against anthropomorphic approaches and then himself attributes to film some of the most basic human emotions. Just claiming that his analogy is to be understood functionally does not convince me. And what does 'sweating out loud' mean, anyway? Is this simply a typo, and should read 'swearing', or is this an example of an application of '[t]he more 'human' concept of *thinking* [which] allows our whole self to attend to the film – we then might think *with* it, instead of via stuttering terminology and against it' (175)?

Unlike me, Frampton seems to think that it is possible to give an adequate written account of the 'innocent' film experience. As he observes, the language we use (and our cognitive make-up, including our emotional dispositions) informs our experience and perception of the world. But, in my opinion, any talk *about* our experiences already transforms these experiences (if merely for the fact that talking about an experience always comes later than the experience itself). Talk about film experiences is always talk *post facto*. Writing in film studies is an attempt to make sense of the things we experience while watching a film, in some ways also an attempt to communicate what we have experienced, what film is doing with us. But it is *not* an attempt to *replace* the experience of film (by providing a 1-to-1- account of it), I would argue. But Frampton seems to conceive of writing about film as a form of (1-to-1) recording of a filmgoer's experience: 'The post-film writing is a recording, a relaying of that encounter, that adaptation, that alliance [between film and filmgoer]' (178). This, in my view, narrows down the possibilities of writing *about* film needlessly. It is also the reason for Frampton's blatant refusal of rather analytic approaches to film. He seems to criticise film studies à la Bordwell on the presumption that it is trying to replace our immediate, innocent experience of film with a seemingly cold, analytic cross-examination of film.

I think here he fails to see, or refuses to see, a distinction between film experience and film analysis. I see no problem in switching between the mode of a film-goer and the

mode of a film analyst: sitting in the cinema, seeing a film for the first time, I simply enjoy the film. Film-analytic language is, of course, a critical language. It is a language that is employed *post facto*, not during film experience. But, of course, and in this I agree with Frampton, it also becomes a sort of background framework which influences our film experience.[6] But, contrary to him, I do not see that it hampers my experience of film. On the contrary, knowing more about the (technical) possibilities of making films, about all the myriad ways of using the (existent) camera, of working with sound, of staging mise-en-scène, and so on, it allows me to discover and name the richness of filmic expressions.

How would Frampton describe the differences between any given film by Méliès, De Sica's *Umberto D* (1952)*,* Rossellini's *Roma, Città Aperta* (1945), Spielberg's *Jurassic Park* (1993)*,* and Resnais' *L'Année Dernière à Marienbad* (1961)? I do not see how for such an enterprise one could completely avoid talk about 'technical' aspects concerning the craft of cinema, e.g. 'handheld camera', tracking shot, professional vs. amateur actors; on-location shooting vs. studio shooting, different ways of lighting the scene, etc (all these are part of a 'technicist' rhetoric).

It seems that Frampton approach is inspired by an imaginary conflict between advocates of a scientied field of the humanities on the one side and the inheritors of German romanticism, on the other. It is the same futile battle between Snow's two cultures again, this time repeated within the humanities itself. For one thing, I do not think that the stark dichotomy between the two camps has any empirical justification. *Of course*, a completely technicist rhetoric is unable to tell us anything about the specific performativity of film or film experience, just as an anatomy book will never tell us anything about love. But, if I ever happened to end up in surgery in the wake of a bad car accident, I believe I will greatly appreciate the anatomic knowledge and other technical possibilities available to present-day medicine.

The enterprise of an academic film philosophy needs both aspects which Frampton contrasts: the 'technicist' approach which is able to describe the actual instruments by which a film is constructed and the more or less general cognitive predispositions in a filmgoer on the one hand, and a 'poetic rhetoric' which is possibly more suited to describe

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[6] Branigan (2006) brilliantly explores how the theoretical concepts used in film theories influence the perspective on the very films whose understanding these theories and concepts are supposed to enhance.

the moods, emotions and other responses a filmgoer experiences when going to a film on the other hand. Both science cultures have to join forces, because each side alone will not manage to gain a better overall comprehension of film. To risk an analogy: I do not necessarily need to know how the car I drive is constructed, but if I know it, I have a much deeper (and by no means demystified) understanding and appreciation of how it works. I'd rather go to the next fine movie around the corner than to witness the next round of this intellectual war.

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Filmography

Jurassic Park (Steven Spielberg, 1993)

King Kong (Ernest Schoedsack/ Merian Cooper, 1933)

L'Année Dernière à Marienbad (Alain Resnais, 1961)

Peter Jackson's King Kong (Jackson, 2005)

Roma, Città Aperta (Roberto Rossellini, 1945)

Umberto D. (Vittorio de Sica, 1952)