

Introduction: Camera Movement and the Necessity of Criticism

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Abstract

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I.

This special issue on the topic of camera movement emerged from a conference we organized at the University of Chicago in the fall of 2016. In setting out the terms for the conference, we noted that “camera movements have remained surprisingly marginal and elusive in critical work. Often brought up within analyses of films and filmmakers, they are rarely the explicit subject of analysis themselves.” The aim was to use the conference “to change this state of affairs,” and to begin to generate a debate drawing on the “multiple theories or models of explanation” that attend so many of the other topics across cinema and media studies.

At the time of the conference, the most sustained attention given to camera movement was to be found largely in the domain of phenomenological film theory. Phenomenology’s attunement to spatial and temporal aspects of lived experience, especially the experience of moving through the world, privileged the moving camera as the central technique for theoretical modeling. Drawing on an anthropomorphic assumption about the relation between spectator and camera, both Vivian Sobchack and Jennifer Barker described the moving camera as a kind of bodily subject that moves through the virtual world on-screen, enabling the unique kind of spectatorial engagement and immersion that cinema generates.¹ These were vital arguments, not only giving a theoretical significance to camera movement but providing the terms for a model of film theory more broadly.

Yet for all its strength, the phenomenological model that Sobchack, Barker, and others developed represents only one strand of thinking, and the kinds of debates—historical, theoretical—that marked most aspects of film style and technique were absent when it came to the moving camera. Then suddenly that changed, and over the past decade studies of camera movement have emerged as a prominent feature of the main currents of analysis—ranging from histories of style and technology to political reflections.

One prominent line of thinking examines the moving camera as a kind of technological mediation or extension of the human subject, highlighting in particular the different ways that the camera can be connected to the operator’s body. Adam Hart, for example, has noted the way that the hand-held camera in the American avant-garde is often used to call attention to the filmmaker’s own bodily presence. Looking not only at Stan Brakhage, but especially at Maya Deren and Marie Menken, Hart suggests that the sense of personal investment in the act of filmmaking was accomplished by adapting a Hollywood technique—and the discourse around it—to new ends.² Similarly emphasizing the moving body holding the camera, Katie Bird weaves together archival research, formal description, and discourse analysis to show how early Steadicam operators created the norms for its use. As she argues, the particular look of Steadicam shots, in which the camera seems to float through the air—an effect paradoxically grounded in the body despite appearing non-

human in its motion—emerged not only through a stylistic history but through the guild structure that operators formed to create professional expertise.³

Such thinking also extends to broader reflections about the kind of perceptual framework that camera movement creates, period. While early writings on the moving camera often emphasized the way that the camera served as a substitute for the viewer's eyes—"Most commonly, the camera is treated as an extension of the spectator's eye," wrote Irving Pichel in a 1946 article⁴—more recent work has focused on ways that these perspectives diverged. Scott Richmond focuses on sequences of flight, immersive illusions of traveling through the world on screen, as illustrative of the distinctions between ordinary perception and a kind of cinematic perception—what he terms "the cinematic *illusion* of bodily movement."⁵ Daniel Morgan has argued against the dominance of the camera/eye metaphor in thinking about the moving camera,⁶ while Philippe Bédard has argued for a complex form of viewing that negotiates what he calls a "third-person" perspective.⁷ And Ryan Pierson, examining the perceptual qualities of certain forms of animated camera movement, asks whether the very idea of a camera—a singular point from which to view a world—is adequate to the types of movements made possible by the techniques and technologies of animation.⁸

Other writings have explored specific kinds of shots. Jennifer Barker, for example, writes about the "cosmic zoom," shots—often opening a film—in which the camera magically plummets from vast heights, ultimately zeroing in on characters and objects at the ground level. Barker lists, for example, the openings of *Moulin Rouge* (Baz Luhrmann, 2001), *Sweeney Todd* (Tim Burton, 2007), and *Perfume* (Tom Tykwer, 2007), each of which relies on what she calls an "ambivalent ontology." The shot "does not 'travel' the same way a tracking shot travels, but it *does travel*, as the conventional zoom does not."⁹ In a different mode, Jordan Schonig invokes the famous account of F.W. Murnau's "unchained camera" to articulate the logic of the "follow shot," a moving camera that seems tethered or "chained" to the character it follows. Isolating cases in which the camera follows its subjects only from behind, Schonig argues that this technique fundamentally alters our relation to character psychology. It denies a familiar form of psychological knowledge, producing instead a subjectivity that Schonig, drawing on the work of Paul Virilio, labels "trajective."¹⁰ And William Brown has analyzed hyperbolic camera movements that, impossibly, go through solid barriers such as walls or doors, or through impossible spaces like keyholes (as in *Panic Room* [David Fincher, 2002]). Describing digital cinema as a kind of "supercinema," Brown focuses not just on the changing ontology of cinema but also, and perhaps especially, on the different kinds of movement these changes enable.¹¹

The most systemic account of the moving camera is Patrick Keating's book *The Dynamic Frame: Camera Movement in Classical Hollywood*. Keating gives a production history on camera movement in Hollywood cinema, but it is one that includes not only technology and labor but also the work of writers and cinematographers he describes as "practical theorists," who created informal theories designed to validate specific strategies for moving the camera.¹² By articulating an account of "technologies transformed by ideas," Keating is able to elicit the different models for thinking about the camera that were at play in the studio era, ranging from anthropomorphic treatments to claims that the camera is a form of mechanical vision that transcends human perceptual capacities.¹³ In combining production history, visual analysis, and accounts of "practical theorists," Keating situates the moving camera historically while remaining flexible as to the open-ended varieties of its uses.

It is striking that much of this interest in the moving camera emerges in the wake of the thoroughgoing transformation of cinema from celluloid to digital. Beyond changes in ontology, smaller digital cameras have made it easier to move the camera in and around scenes, or to mount a camera on a drone or other machine to move it into new places—and in new ways. But it is also because we are increasingly seeing the end of the physical camera as a means of generating the experience of movement. From the creation of virtual cameras

moving through fully synthetic worlds,¹⁴ to the use of actual cameras melding live-action elements with computer-generated environments (i.e., “virtual production”¹⁵), not to mention the constantly moving camera that dominates video games, moving-image media are increasingly eschewing the physical moving camera as the primary method of creating perspectival movement on screen. No doubt one of the larger theoretical questions that emerges in the coming years to think of how the critical and analytic tools we habitually employ to talk about the moving camera need to change in response to the decreasing presence of the camera itself.

In this context, it is a striking fact that the language of *camera* movement has remained a constant even as the technologies of the moving camera have undergone such a profound transformation.¹⁶ Our wager in this collection is that the technologies and aesthetics of camera movement, and the changes that both have undergone, provide an important conceptual framework not only for the history of film and media but also, and perhaps especially, for its ongoing present.

II.

The surge of scholarship on camera movement has indeed created an important academic discourse, and new essays on the topic are now emerging with regularity. Yet amidst this shift, there is a danger of bypassing an important component of the earlier discourse around the moving camera. In an essay from 1977, David Bordwell famously proclaimed that “camera movement has usually been too elusive to be analyzable,”¹⁷ and others have similarly noted that camera movement escaped the terms of the major strains of contemporary film theory and the various analytical methodologies that were then being developed.¹⁸ Part of the elusiveness that Bordwell invokes surely comes from camera movement’s essential difference from editing, a domain of film form that creates identifiable and discrete units of signification. Because camera movement offers no such semantic units,¹⁹ it complicates any linguistic or quantitative model of cinematic signification, from the rigorous semiotic methods of Christian Metz and Raymond Bellour²⁰ to the ubiquitous “shot segmentation” exercises in film studies classrooms. In such methods, where the shot is the most basic unit of film signification, camera movement is often reduced to the binary of its mere presence or absence—is the camera moving or is it still? Reduced to a remainder of stylistic excess, the moving camera resists comfortable assimilation into the syntagmatic chain of signification.

But in its essential elusiveness, in its resistance to models of concrete signification, camera movement can instead be seen as—and indeed often was taken to be—an ideal object of film *criticism*. If a camera movement cannot be broken down into its component parts, or if it cannot be wholly explained by its narrative function, all the better for the task of criticism, which uses language less to construct generalized concepts than to capture the nuances of aesthetic particulars. To describe a camera movement within a work of film criticism is not to merely identify its basic narrative purpose or to narrate the camera’s changing positions on the Cartesian plane of the screen, but rather to evince the complexity of its character, shape, or feeling.

These dynamics, especially concerning how the moving camera exceeds the logics of narrative function, run across the history of critical writings on camera movement. Here are Eric Rohmer and Claude Chabrol on Hitchcock’s *Notorious* (1946): “When Devlin, come to save Alicia from death, steps from the shadows—in the same way he had appeared after the Miami drinking bout—and the camera, in a movement of extreme tenderness and sensuality, circles around the two lovers, the screen sparkles with an indescribable beauty, the secret of which Hitchcock learned from Murnau.”²¹ Or Jonathan Rosenbaum on Erich von Stroheim’s *The Merry Widow* (1925): “when the camera slowly tracks up to the face of Mae Murray in her wedding dress, and then recedes a bit to frame her entire figure as she proceeds to tear up the dress, we are being asked to

concentrate on her primarily as an object; the ‘process’ at work is chiefly the camera movement itself.”²²

In such examples, the moving camera often stands out not only as a marker of virtuosity and cinematic specificity but also of meaning, worthy of description, discussion, and explanation. So-called “unmotivated” camera movements in particular—those that depart from the self-effacing tasks of following characters and re-framing actions—readily announce themselves as moments ripe for critical contemplation. These movements can make a film’s manner of disclosing itself the object of spectatorial attention; shifting attention to how the world appears to us rather than what appears. It’s for this reason, Keating explains, that “films that foreground camera movement make the act of selection uniquely salient, using the mobile frame to provide a visibly shifting viewpoint on the events of the storyworld.”²³ As an object of criticism, then, camera movement can articulate a film’s “attitudes, its values, its sense of irony, and its tone.”²⁴

Yet in the descriptions above, and in so many others that could be included as well, we also see the stress that language undergoes as it aims to account for the work of the moving camera, the frequent recourse to metaphor and evocation. Indeed, if Bordwell says that “camera movement has usually been too elusive to be analyzable,” he may be referring not only to the difficulty of applying semiotic analysis to camera movement, but also to the sheer difficulty of describing the moving camera in criticism more generally. Part of this difficulty comes from the basic fact that camera movements *move*, and rarely in straightforward ways.²⁵ Descriptions of camera movement thus face the challenge of evincing the complexity of continuous movement and time through the static units of language. Indeed, perhaps it is partly because of this fact that phenomenology was the framework for the first serious academic studies of camera movement, a field in which the role of language in articulating or accounting for the temporality of experience has long been a central methodological concern.

In a sense, the task of describing and analyzing camera movements distills a broader issue about film’s relation to criticism. For Stanley Cavell, it is the very ephemerality and elusiveness of film as a medium that produces an “immediate and tremendous burden on one’s capacity for critical description of cinematic events.”²⁶ Because moving images move, Cavell suggests, because their contents cannot be quoted, translated, or pointed to on a page or in a picture,²⁷ they invite description rather than dissection. As emblems of cinema’s essential mobility, camera movements intensify this demand to evoke the temporal experience of their unfolding. “Description,” Cavell continues, “must allow the medium of film as such and the events of a given film at each moment to be understood in terms of one another.”²⁸ Cavell’s account of describing films—that is, of criticism—as an ontological imperative provides us not with a solution to the problem of camera movement’s elusiveness, but with a philosophical acknowledgment of that elusiveness, something which semio-linguistic and quantitative models of analysis often suppress.²⁹

Each of the articles in this special issue of *Film Criticism* acknowledges camera movement’s demand for an attention to aesthetic particularity and for an adoption of language that rises to the challenge of describing not only the temporal flow of movement on screen, but also the imagined abstractions and concepts that a moving camera can bring to mind. Though the different articles make various sorts of theoretical claims, in each case those claims grow out of aesthetic encounters with individual films and the particular camera movements within them. This, we think, is an important and necessary model for thinking about the relation between criticism and theory more generally, where theory emerges from critical encounters rather than vice versa, where ideas about what a medium can do come from examining particular instances of that medium. If there has been, across the history of film theory, a persistent desire to understand film through abstract reflection on its simplest components—its photographic base, the shot as a unit of meaning—one of the attractions of thinking about camera movements is that they thwart such a way of thinking. As elements of film style in which complexity is primary, camera movements demand our fullest critical attention.

When we organized our conference in 2016, we asked the speakers to engage with the idea that criticism was central to any theoretical account of camera movement. The provocation was for them to base their talks on single camera movements, while giving them the freedom to explore these movements in any way they chose: staying close to the text for formal analysis; talking about stylistic patterns; developing theoretical or philosophical reflections; and so on. While not all of the essays in this special issue focus on a single camera movement, they nonetheless retain the centrality of criticism—and all the complexity it brings with it—for their thinking about the moving camera. The broader arguments that do emerge are thus grounded in, and based on, detailed considerations of specific camera movements. It is our contention that, to avoid theoretical stagnation, the tradition of criticism that has long attended camera movements must be central to their study as they become firmly entrenched within the familiar domain of academic discussion. The essays included here do just that.

III.

One of the hallmarks of the essays in this special issue is the sheer range of modes and genres, historical periods, and technological media they explore. The first three essays consider camera movements within the world of experimental and avant-garde film, an arena of filmmaking that has long pushed the boundaries of what the moving camera can do and the kinds of effects it can create. From Maya Deren's disorienting rotations in *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943) to Michael Snow's disembodied, machinic abstractions in *La region centrale* (1971) and *Back and Forth* (1969), experimental cinema has often served as the privileged domain for subjecting the moving camera—and cinematic movement itself—to intellectual scrutiny.

In his essay, Adam Hart considers the theoretical implications of the frantic handheld camera movements of experimental filmmaker Marie Menken. While Menken's camerawork has long been understood as a kind of bodily expressionism, where the shaky movements of the camera express her artistic subjectivity, Hart contends that they are better understood as generating abstract images than as simply indexing her bodily presence. The importance of this distinction, Hart argues, is not just a matter of giving Menken her due—extricating her work from its association with her most celebrated peer and advocate, Stan Brakhage—but also of seeing camera movement differently: not as a generator of illusionistic movement through space but as a kind of *animation* of lines and colors on the surface of the screen.

While Hart invokes animation as a metaphor to describe live-action camera movement, Ryan Pierson explicitly examines animation in his essay on Adam Beckett. Beckett, Pierson argues, explores the tension between animated movement and live-action camera movement in *Dear Janice* (1972), a seventeen-minute film that ends by staging a relation between two incommensurate spaces: a two-dimensional array of morphing animated figures—hearts, circles, and letters of the alphabet—and an immersive sequence of live-action, z-axis camera movement. It's in the way that these two spaces interact, Pierson contends, that Beckett illustrates a conflict between two ways of conceiving the camera: as a window upon a three-dimensional space and, far more strangely, as a kind of *printer*, assembling flat layers of color into an image. In essentially printing its two incommensurate worlds into an impossible contiguous existence, Beckett models a kind of radical politics in aesthetic form—showing us not a recognizable world to move through but one of our own making, marked by unforeseen possibilities.

The relationship between political change and the experience of space is likewise central to Ariel Rogers' essay on camera movement in Virtual Reality. Rogers looks closely at Angel Manuel Soto's *Dinner Party* (2018), a 360-degree VR video depicting a dinner party hosted by Barney and Betty Hill, the couple who famously claimed to be abducted by a UFO in 1961. VR video is generally understood to liberate the spectator-user, who freely explores the virtual environment with their head movements, from the stylistic dictates of framing and camera movement; simply put, in VR, *you* are the camera. But *Dinner Party*, as Rogers demonstrates, emphatically moves us, too, exploring the tensions between user-generated movement and filmmaker-generated movement. In doing so, Rogers argues, the artwork not only challenges notions of

VR's transparency and freedom, but also extends cinema's capacity to manipulate point of view in a way that forces us to reflect upon our own subject positions in relation to the characters we observe. Ultimately, Rogers argues, such manipulations of point of view enact the work's thematic exploration of race and otherness, visually punctuating the ways that the "story of alien abduction serves to refract the characters' experiences of racial difference."

The next two essays move into the domain of what is often described as "art cinema." From the magisterial tracking shots of Andrei Tarkovsky and Miklós Jancsó, to the slow gestures of Béla Tarr, art cinema often emphasizes "unmotivated" camera movement to express a mood, comment on action, or move through space and time in new ways. What each of the two essays in this section do, however, is not only describe camera movements that are highlighted in the films but think about how the technological apparatus of the camera shapes that movement.

As with Rogers, Scott C. Richmond's essay focuses on the way camera movement articulates difference, discussing the way a handheld video camera is used to articulate what he describes as a queer "sexual technics" in Jacques Martineau and Olivier Ducastel's *Ma vraie vie* (2002). In the film, the protagonist, Étienne, receives a digital video camera for his sixteenth birthday and proceeds to record the world around him. Richmond carefully shows how the dynamics of the handheld camera shapes his perception of the world, and the articulation of self—and queer desire—within it. Focusing heavily on how point-of-view is not so much anthropomorphized but mediated through technology, Richmond shows how *Ma vraie vie* uses the moving camera to explore the way that technology is integrated within intimate sexual encounters and experiences.

Patrick Keating is similarly interested in the way that the technology of the moving camera is made part of a sense of intimate discovery, though with a very different kind of film. Taking up Bi Gan's *Long Day's Journey into the Night* (2018), he shows how the film's two halves operate on different kinds of aesthetic registers. Where the first half of the film creates an elliptical play around montage, the second half is built around an extraordinary, hour-long unbroken tracking shot. Creating a densely constructed yet elegant video essay, Keating traces the film's use of double-plotting as a structuring device, as in Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958) for example, which is used to excavate the dynamics of memory and desire. Focusing largely on the camera movement that structures the film's second half, Keating shows how Bi uses the camera's freedom from action, and even gravity, to create a confusing spatial arrangement. Despite the continuity of the shot, we are unable to accurately position ourselves, creating a disorientation that mirrors the confusion felt by the characters within the film's world.

The final two essays move into the domain of Hollywood cinema, and the way that norms—aesthetic, philosophical, political—shape the domain of style. Each essay picks up on camera movements that stand out, alternately through spectacle or through understatement, and show how they articulate a broader reflection that runs against dominant norms that structure mainstream filmmaking. Kristen Whissel looks to the extraordinary shot in Ang Lee's *Life of Pi* (2012) in which the titular character asks the tiger to "Tell me what you see" and the camera responds through CGI technology, moving downwards through the ocean to reveal a shimmering display of ocean life mingling and metamorphosizing with Pi's memories. Rather than focus simply on the digital technology of image production, Whissel sees the "race to the bottom" dramatized by the downward-moving shot not only as an allegory of economic precarity but also as a specific reflection on the state of the digital effects industry—in a condition of precarity even as it makes possible the extraordinary effects that define contemporary cinema. Moving between industry studies, economic history, and formal analysis, Whissel provides a mode for reading a camera movement allegorically yet without sacrificing the details of the movement itself.

The final essay, by Eugenie Brinkema, goes back into one of the filmmakers most celebrated for their use of the moving camera, Alfred Hitchcock, yet chooses a film in which camera movement is dramatically under-employed—and, as she argues, thematically understated. *The Trouble with Harry* (1955), she argues, works

by undoing one of the fundamental conventions of Western society, namely the burial of the corpse. Rather than organizing the body as a site of finality, however, Hitchcock builds the film around a prolongation of burial, an inability to deal with the corpse—and a series of jokes around its ontological status. In this drama of humor and pathos, Brinkema traces a series of understated camera movements that are organized around the shaping presence of the dead body. The result, Brinkema argues, is not a cinema of stasis but rather “an anti-corporeocentric project [that] aims to think movement apart from the sensing, feeling, living human body.” A refusal to process death in recognizably human terms, Hitchcock’s film undoes the norms of an anthropocentric cinema in favor of something distinctly more disturbing.

Brinkema’s solution to the conceptual problem she sees in *The Trouble with Harry* is to call for a new methodological process, what she calls there—and elsewhere—a kind of “radical formalism.” Not all the essays in this collection are so explicit in their theoretical ambitions, or in their belief in the need for a new approach. Yet they all see camera movements, and the way we pay attention to them, as not only unsettling longstanding structures in the analysis of moving-image media but also challenging the current terms we use to think about those media. Whether it’s the tension between figuration and abstraction, anthropomorphism and disembodiment, aesthetics and technics, or constraint and freedom, the essays collected here show how camera movements continue to unsettle, challenge, and expand the critical and conceptual categories that structure our thinking about film and other media.

Notes

1. See Vivian Sobchack, “Toward Inhabited Space: The Semiotic Structure of Camera Movement in the Cinema,” *Semiotica* 41, no. 1–4 (1982): 317–335; Vivian Sobchack, *The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992); and Jennifer Barker, *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009). [↑](#)
2. See Adam Hart, “Extensions of Our Body Moving, Dancing: The American Avant-Garde’s Theories of Handheld Subjectivity,” *Discourse* 41, no. 1 (Winter 2019): 37–67. Hart has provided a more extensive history of the handheld camera in *The Living Camera: The History, Theory, and Politics of Handheld Cinematography* (Oxford, forthcoming). [↑](#)
3. See Katie Bird, “‘Dancing, Flying Camera Jockeys’: Invisible Labor, Craft Discourse, and Embodied Steadicam and Panaglide Technique from 1972 to 1985,” *The Velvet Light Trap* 80 (Fall 2017): 48–65. Also see Bird, “*Quiet on Set!*”: *Craft Discourse and Below-the-Line Labor in Hollywood, 1919–1985*. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh (2018), Chapter 5. [↑](#)
4. Irving Pichel, “Seeing with the Camera,” *Hollywood Quarterly* 1.2 (1946): 138–45; 140. [↑](#)
5. Scott C. Richmond, *Cinema’s Bodily Illusions: Flying, Floating, and Hallucinating* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), 74. [↑](#)
6. See Daniel Morgan, *The Lure of the Image: Epistemic Fantasies of the Moving Camera*. Univ of California Press, 2021. [↑](#)
7. Philippe Bédard, “Disembodied perspective: third-person images in GoPro videos.” *Alphaville: Journal of Film and Screen Media* 9 (2015): 1–15. [↑](#)
8. Ryan Pierson, “Whole-Screen Metamorphosis and the Imagined Camera (Notes on Perspectival Movement in Animation),” *animation: an interdisciplinary journal* 10. 1 (2015): 6–21. [↑](#)
9. Jennifer Barker, “Neither Here nor There: Synaesthesia and the Cosmic Zoom,” *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 7.3 (September 2009): 311–324; 312. See also Zachary Horton, *The Cosmic Zoom: Scale, Knowledge, and Mediation*. University of Chicago Press, 2021. [↑](#)
10. Jordan Schonig, “The chained camera: on the ethics and politics of the follow-shot aesthetic,” *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 16.3 (2018): 164–94. [↑](#)
11. William Brown, *Supercinema: Film-Philosophy for the Digital Age* (New York: Berghahn Books,

- 2013), 21–50. [↑](#)
12. Patrick Keating, *The Dynamic Frame: Camera Movement in Classical Hollywood* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 79. [↑](#)
 13. *Ibid.*, 56. [↑](#)
 14. See Mike Jones, “Vanishing Point: Spatial Composition and the Virtual Camera.” *Animation* 2, no. 3 (2007): 225–243. [↑](#)
 15. See Philippe Bédard, “Virtual Production and the Transformation of Cameras Mechanical, Virtual, and Actual.” *Animation* 17, no. 2 (2022): 226–243. [↑](#)
 16. On the status of the word “camera” as an aid to description in film criticism, see Edward Branigan, *Projecting a Camera: Language- Games in Film Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 153. [↑](#)
 17. David Bordwell, “Camera Movement and Cinematic Space,” *Ciné-Tracts* 1, no. 2 (1977): 19. [↑](#)
 18. See, for example, Anne Friedberg, *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 147. [↑](#)
 19. Most of the formal vocabulary used to describe camera movements—the language of pans and tilts, handheld or Steadicam, tracking shots and zooms—refers not to units of cinematic signification but rather hypothesizes the facts of production. [↑](#)
 20. Christian Metz, *Film language: A semiotics of the cinema* (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1991), and Raymond Bellour, *The Analysis of Film*, Ed. and trans. Constance Penley (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000) [↑](#)
 21. Éric Rohmer and Claude Chabrol, *Hitchcock: The First Forty-Four Films*, trans. Stanley Hochman (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1979), 84. [↑](#)
 22. Jonathan Rosenbaum, “Second Thoughts on Stroheim,” in *Goodbye Cinema, Hello Cinephilia: Film Culture in Transition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 107. [↑](#)
 23. Keating, *The Dynamic Frame*, 3. [↑](#)
 24. *Ibid.*, 3. [↑](#)
 25. Here is Dave Kehr on Raoul Walsh: “[Walsh] pans with the movement of the hero, giving the actor the apparent power to determine the composition and point of view—again, the sense of freedom—but by panning rather than tracking, he keeps the setting still, static, separate from the actor. In a tracking shot, the décor “moves” with the actor; the space is fluid, changing in response to the actor’s movement. In a panning shot, the space retains its integrity: our perspective on it remains constant at the pivot point. Walsh’s characters move with freedom through the world, but the world doesn’t yield to them: it remains a constant challenge, solid and slightly apart” (Dave Kehr, *When Movies Mattered: Reviews from a Transformative Decade* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019), 226–7). [↑](#)
 26. Stanley Cavell, *The World Viewed: Reflections on the Ontology of Film, Enlarged Edition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), x. [↑](#)
 27. For the most influential account of the unquotability of the cinematic image, see Raymond Bellour, “The Unattainable Text” in *The Analysis of Film*, 21–25. [↑](#)
 28. Cavell, *The World Viewed*, xiv. [↑](#)
 29. For a similar line of thinking about the role of description in film criticism, see Timothy Corrigan, “In Other Words: Film and the Spider Web of Description,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Film Theory*, ed. Kyle Stevens (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022). [↑](#)