

Towards a Theory of Film Worlds

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Film critics and theorists often refer to the 'worlds' that films create, present, or embody, e.g. the world of *Eraserhead* (David Lynch, 1977) or the world in *Fanny and Alexander* (Ingmar Bergman, 1982). Like the world of a novel or painting, the world of a film in this prevalent use of the term denotes its represented content or setting, or whatever formal and thematic aspects distinguish it from other films in a pronounced and often immediately recognisable way. Yet there is much more to be said in philosophical terms about films as, or as containing, worlds. This paper will argue that pursuing this subject entails a needed re-evaluation of multi-faceted issues that are of concern to both contemporary film theorists and philosophers of film, including the relation between cinematic representation and expression, reflexivity, the nature of film style and authorship, and cinema's relation to, and direct interaction with, other art forms.

Film worlds, I suggest, are complex object-experiences with both symbolic/cognitive and affective dimensions. A theory which fully accounts for what is most compelling and singular about them must address both their creation and objective existence and their subjective experience by viewers. The following will attempt to outline the broad contours of such a theory and identify some of its key elements.¹ My

¹ I intend to further explore and elaborate on the film world concept outlined here, particularly in relation to film style and authorship, reflexivity, and the presence and use of painting in narrative cinema, in a monograph to result from a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship research project (held at the University of Edinburgh, 2007-2010).

discussion of film worlds is aided by concepts borrowed from two philosophers: Nelson Goodman and Mikel Dufrenne.² Whereas Goodman predominantly focuses on their creation, and Dufrenne, their experience, both emphasise the radically singular and self-enclosed nature of the worlds of art works. Narrative film worlds also possess these qualities and this justifies the description of worlds for what cinematic works create and present, as opposed to 'merely' fictional narratives or representations of *the* world.³

Two Senses of Film Worlds

Since the 1970's, when many film theorists largely turned away from explorations of cinema's general nature or essence and its concrete experience, in order to focus on narrative discourse in cinema and related topics, a fictional film's world has largely been theorised in diegetic terms. That is, it has been conceived as 'the fictional world of a story' (Bordwell 1985, 16) that a film narrates, as distinct from acts or processes of narration conceived as external to it (which comprise the non-diegetic). This view equates the world quality of films solely with fictional content, with the *what* of representation as opposed to the *how* of representation or, indeed, that which may fall outside of representation. Yet it is clear that non-diegetic elements of a film, ones with no discernable source in its fictional reality, belong as inseparably to the world it creates and that is experienced by the viewer, as do its settings or characters. These elements may include pieces of music, e.g. Richard Strauss's *Also sprach Zarathustra* and Johann Strauss's *The Blue Danube* in Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), first-generation non-cinematic visual material, e.g. images of impressionist and cubist paintings in Jean-Luc Godard's *Pierrot le fou* (1965), or pre-existing film and video footage, e.g. the World War II newsreels in Andrei Tarkovsky's *Mirror* (1975). Thus a concept of film worlds that corresponds to their creation and

² To my knowledge Dudley Andrew is the only theorist (at least in an English-language context) to cite both Goodman and Dufrenne in relation to film worlds. In *Concepts in Film Theory* Andrew briefly discusses Goodman's theory of worldmaking, and his wider views of artistic representation, in relation to theories of cinematic representation, and in passing refers to Dufrenne's *Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience* as presenting an alternative view of art and film worlds (Andrew 1984, 40-47).

³ The differences between Stanley Cavell's ontology of film, as articulated in *The World Viewed, Reflections on the Ontology of Film*, and the film world concept forwarded here is reflected in Cavell's premise that by virtue of their photographic basis, films, unlike other types of art works, display *the world*. In support of this view he re-asserts, for example, the classical realist notion held by André Bazin and others that whereas 'a painting *is* a world,' a photograph 'is *of* the world' (Cavell 1971, 24). For reasons that will become clear this basic distinction is at odds with my conception of film worlds, which none-the-less recognises fundamental differences between the static worlds of paintings and the temporal/durational worlds of films.

experience without unduly abstracting from either, cannot be confined to the fictional versus the real, what is narrated *as opposed to* how it is narrated, just as it cannot be limited to content or representation as distinct from form or expression.

Daniel Frampton has recently attempted to provide a less reductive account of film worlds (as experienced by viewers) within his broader 'filmosophy'. Drawing on phenomenology, as well as the writing of early formalist film theorists, Frampton argues for the existence of a 'filmworld' that is created and 'designed' by what he terms the 'filmind' (the equivalent of the film itself), as a consequence of its 'film-thought' (or 're-thinking') about its characters and their situations (Frampton 2006, 7). Frampton rightly recognises the need for a concept of the worlds of films that does not neglect 'cinematics,' in favour of represented content (Frampton 2006, 9). Significantly, he also stresses the 'transfigurative' nature of film worlds as that which separates them from the 'real' and thus accounts for their self-enclosed and self-defining quality (Frampton 2006, 5). However, Frampton's notion of a 'basic film world' of representation (Frampton 2006, 7) that is transfigured/designed by the filmind is problematic with respect to its suggestion that the lives or perceptions of characters determine the nature of a film's presented world in the majority of cases (rather than they being largely determined by *it*), its 'anti-reflexive' stance (Frampton 2006, 110), and its replacement of the presence and intentions of the filmmaker by the impersonal intentional agency of the filmind.⁴ Even in relation to the cinematic work as it is concretely experienced, the exclusion of the film world's maker from his or her creation may ultimately undermine the singularity and alterity with which Frampton rightly attempts to invest it.

The strengths and potential weaknesses of Frampton's welcome concept of the 'filmworld' bring to light some of the fundamental theoretical issues with which a potential theory of film worlds must grapple, including the relation between representation and expression, the transformative nature of film worlds (as rooted in both the transformative capacities of the film medium *and* its use in the hands of creative

⁴ See Frampton 2006, 75. Although I certainly agree with Frampton's assertion that the significance of a film world always exhausts the intentions and foresight of the filmmaker, there is no contradiction in holding that the filmmaker (rather than a filmind) is causally responsible for a film's world and that this world is not (thereby) reducible to the life and/or intentions of the filmmaker.

filmmakers), and a film's (self-)reflexive dimension.⁵ Additionally, there is the matter of accounting for the relationship *between* individual film worlds.

I suggest that there are two ways in which film worlds in this expanded sense may be theorised and these issues addressed. Firstly, film worlds may be seen from an external viewpoint as perceptual and symbolic objects, analysable as such, with stress laid on the *transformational* nature of their *representation*. Secondly, they may be seen 'from the inside' as durational and affective experiences that are fundamentally irreducible, with a focus on the *immersive* (and intuited) nature of their *expression*. Goodman's cognitivist theory of artistic 'worldmaking', centred on the creation, perception, and analysis of the art work's world as a symbolic object can help provide an attractive model for film worlds viewed in the first way, that is, in terms of their generative and ontological aspects, whereas Dufrenne's phenomenology of aesthetic experience, centred on the subjective experience of the world of the art work *as an aesthetic object*, can aid in conceptualising film worlds viewed in the second sense, as pertaining to their first-person or phenomenological dimension. As this description indicates, the resulting models of the creation and the experience of film worlds need not be regarded as individual or exclusive, but complementary.

Films as Created World-Objects

The late American analytic philosopher Nelson Goodman maintains in his *Ways of Worldmaking* (1978) that the sciences, languages, and arts are constituted by different conceptual/symbolic systems that construct worlds (or world versions) according to the functioning of the categories and frames of reference particular to them.⁶ Worlds, then, are made of symbols that function together within larger systems, each of which presents a different, and potentially true or 'right,' version of 'reality,' or 'the way things are'

⁵ As a number of Godard's films from the 1960's illustrate, for example, a film's world's (self-) reflexive aspects and its own acknowledgment (whether direct or indirect) of the filmmaker (e.g. Godard) as its creator, are often conjoined and simultaneously present within a film. Clearly a viewer's experience of such (self-)reflexive acknowledgments are, or can be, an important part of the *concrete experience of a film's world* and their full appreciation necessitates some prior knowledge of, and belief in, the director as the film world's creator, this in contrast to Frampton's view that such knowledge/belief can or should be bracketed off from the film experience in order to remain true to that experience and 'to begin to purely understand film thinking' (Frampton 2006, 75).

⁶ Goodman refers to his approach as an 'analytic study of types and functions of symbols and symbol systems' (Goodman 1978, 5) and he is concerned with 'multiple actual worlds' rather than the 'possible' or 'alternative' worlds that analytic philosophers often discuss (Goodman 1978, 2).

(Goodman 1978, 3). Worlds are in principle incommensurable.⁷ With respect to art, specifically, there can clearly be no 'translation' of one art world into another - van Gogh's world, as typically represented by his paintings, into Raphael's, for example - except at the expense of discarding what is unique about each (Goodman 1978, 3). In any world or worldmaking system, *what* is described or represented is necessarily related to *how* it is described or represented.

Crucially, Goodman stresses that worlds are made from 'other older worlds', and, with respect to art, his theory is one of transformations and relationships between worlds, rather than what may pertain to individual ones described in isolation (Goodman 1978, 7). Thus worldmaking in the arts is above all a process of 're-making' (Goodman 1978, 6) whereby the worlds of existing art works (and other relevant symbolic worlds or world systems), and the conventions that they have established, are transformed via a particular style into a new artistic world, one which a work 'exemplifies' in the sense of being a 'sample' of that world (Goodman 1978, 11-12).⁸ Goodman proposes that five basic symbolic processes (often operating in combination) are involved in effecting the creation of worlds out of others: 'composition/decomposition', 'weighting', 'ordering', 'deletion/supplementation' and 'deformation' (Goodman 1978, 7-17).

On the evidence of this brief summary alone, it is surprising that Goodman refers to cinema only once in *Ways of Worldmaking*, when in considering the nature of artistic style he makes a passing reference to a recognisable (Alain) 'Resnais' style or 'signature' and, by implication, a way of worldmaking (Goodman 1978, 34). Of course most narrative cinema differs from the traditional arts of painting and drawing that Goodman largely focuses on owing to the indexical nature of cinematic representation. Whatever ontological and aesthetic significance one wishes to attach to it, it is clear that the causal link between the filmed object and its captured and projected image is something beyond 'mere' resemblance or conventional association.⁹ For Goodman, the pre-existing building materials for the creation of art worlds are all the symbolic world-versions of reality, both

⁷ For there is no means of reducing a group of 'right' (that is, interesting and self-coherent) world versions to a single set of symbols or concepts, a set which would have no more relation to a 'pre-conceptualised' reality than the versions in question (Goodman 1978, 5, 11).

⁸ Thus, for example, 'when Degas painted a woman seated near the edge of the picture and looking out of it, he defied traditional standards of composition and offered by example a new way of seeing, of organising experience' (Goodman 1978, 137).

⁹ Of course digital image making technology is now challenging this indexical relation and a narrative film (broadly defined) need not be live-action or even camera based.

artistic and non-artistic, available to the artist at a given time and place. However, with respect to filmmaking, in particular, it is not only these given symbolic interpretations of the real that provide material for artistic transformation, but dynamic people, places, and objects with an independent existence, one that often resists the filmmaker's control. (Painters may also make use of the appearance or qualities of real objects and people, and in this sense be dependent upon them, but, in most cases, in a far less direct and active way than the filmmaker.) As is wittily dramatised in François Truffaut's affectionate portrait of filmmaking *Day for Night* (*La nuit américaine*), whose French title refers to one profilmic state of affairs in *the* world being used to represent its opposite on screen¹⁰ (in *a* world), a filmmaker must struggle to create an artistically interesting, two-dimensional cinematic world from the three-dimensional things and beings appearing before the camera: in the completed film these things and beings may be recognisable as themselves (i.e. as they exist outside of the film), and yet they are also profoundly transformed into something other within it.

By the same token, other films and art works, be they paintings, poems, sculptures, etc., and to a degree their worlds, may also constitute part of the profilmic reality of a cinematic work (and the work in question may draw more or less attention to this fact). Of course films are not unique among the arts in this capacity to incorporate other art works in whole or in part. Yet given cinema's photographic aspect, its temporal dimension, the powers of editing and of the soundtrack, the medium is particularly suited to such borrowing or, we might say, quotation. Filmmakers like Godard, Tarkovsky, Peter Greenaway, and Raul Ruiz have consistently shown how the formal and thematic dialectics resulting from conjunctions and collisions between pre-existing film and art worlds, with and within the larger film world that contains them, can in-itself be a core principle of cinematic creation.

Given these particularities, what, then, is the general and special relevance of Goodman's theory of worldmaking to filmmaking? And, how might his five processes of symbolic transformation govern the creation of film worlds? In order to have an explanatory value in relation to cinema, Goodman's five processes would need to account for the transformative capacity of film-making in its formal, representational, and reflexive

¹⁰ The title of Truffaut's film refers to the practice of shooting night scenes during the day with special filters.

aspects. That is to say, (a) how a film uses established aesthetic and technical conventions to *new ends*, thereby expanding the vocabulary of cinematic form or 'language', (b) how a film transforms the nature or perception of the profilmic reality the camera and sound recording provides (which may include other films and art works), and what it may signify, this falling under the heading of representation, and (c) how a film world is situated, or *situates itself*, in relation to others, as well as to film history and practice, this corresponding to (self)reflexivity and what I will call the 'inter-cinematic'¹¹ elements of films. This last category, the inter-cinematic, may pertain to one film's direct referencing of another, its use and re-working of familiar genre elements, or to the phenomenon of re-makes: be they direct, e.g. the world of Gus Van Sant's *Psycho* (1998) as deriving from Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960), or more abstract, e.g. Chris Marker's or Ye Lou's imaginative re-workings of Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958) in *La Jetée* (1962) and *Suzhou River* (2000), respectively.

Although I do not want to suggest exact equivalencies between each of Goodman's symbolic processes and particular cinematic techniques or sets of techniques - which would be excessively Procrustian, given that the same basic techniques as deployed by filmmakers with unique styles, and in the context of the larger world that they establish, may have very different effects or meanings - it is quite plausible to align them with some characteristic properties and uses of the film medium that are available to directors as world creators.

For instance, Goodman's first and broadest process, composition/decomposition, is clearly relevant to a film's *mise-en-scène*, meant in the widest sense and roughly corresponding (for example) to cinematic framing and de-framing in Gilles Deleuze's broad use of the terms. Goodman's definitions of composition (a means by which self-enclosed wholes are composed 'out of parts and members and subclasses' by 'combining features into complexes') and decomposition (a division of component parts through an analysis that breaks down 'kinds' into 'subspecies' and 'component features') (Goodman 1978, 7) are akin to Deleuze's definition of cinematic framing/de-framing as a 'closed system' whose 'parts belong to various sets, which constantly subdivide into sub-sets or are

¹¹ In this context, rather than referring to the 'inter-textual' aspect of films (a term deriving from structuralist and semiotic film and literary theory) I prefer to use the more neutral and less conceptually loaded term, 'inter-cinematic.'

themselves the sub-set of a larger set' (Deleuze 1986, 16).¹² Goodman's second category, weighting, is a matter of accentuation: how particular features found in one art or everyday world are given more or less relative emphasis in another. On a basic level of film technique weighting may be related to how what is in the frame (the composed) is foregrounded or 'back-grounded' (in both literal and figurative senses) through framing, movement, shot scale, lens and focus choices, as well as editing.

Carl Theodore Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (*La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc*, 1928) and Robert Bresson's *The Trial of Joan of Arc* (*Procès de Jeanne d'Arc*, 1962) illustrate cinematic weighting through differences in composition and decomposition, among other ways. As analysed by Deleuze and others, Dreyer's *Passion*, portraying Joan as an ecstatic martyr, utilises long-take close-ups in which the presence of expressive faces dominate and represented space is unified. Bresson's *Procès*, in contrast, casting Joan as a rebellious prisoner, is largely presented in medium shot, with reverse shots and 'deframings' creating a fragmented space (Deleuze 1986, 108). Each director's presentation of Joan of Arc's trial and execution, which, for Deleuze, results in a different total 'spiritual affect' (Deleuze 1986, 108), are creative interpretations of the same historical character and events by virtue of their different formal and thematic emphases (with the two, form and theme, fundamentally linked). In this case, Bresson's Joan of Arc world is as consciously, and perhaps unconsciously, informed by Dreyer's, from which it substantially deviates in a creative way, as much as any other historical or artistic source. Likewise, Jacques Rivette's *Joan the Maid* (*Jeanne la pucelle*, 1994) takes both Dreyer's and Bresson's films as primary points of departure. All three films with the same historical subject matter represent cinematic worlds organised into different kinds, no less than do a Rembrandt and a Piero della Francesca version of the same scene from the life of Christ in Goodman's analysis (Goodman 1978, 11).

Film worlds can thus be grouped together in constellations or galaxies (in this case, a 'Joan of Arc' one) in the ever-expanding universe of cinematic history, with other 'satellite' worlds clustered around them.¹³ The worlds in each grouping share common materials (in

¹² The relation between the concept of film worlds introduced here and Deleuze's philosophy of film is a complex subject that I hope to address in future research.

¹³ Godard's *Vivre sa Vie* (*My Life to Live*, 1962) which incorporates a sequence from *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc*, along with suggesting a number of figurative parallels between Joan's life and its central character, is one such satellite world of this particular Joan of Arc cluster.

this case predominantly thematic ones) used to construct different and singular symbolic forms. Yet from this broadly nominalist perspective, emphasis is laid on the oppositional or differential relation between individual film worlds, as a result of their symbolic transformations, instead of the similarities which may pre-exist and survive these transformations (i.e. in the form of the shared signs, codes, or discourses, stressed in semiotic and structuralist theories of literary and cinematic inter-textuality). In other words, in accordance with a stress on productive acts of cinematic worldmaking, it is the new *use* to which existing or shared materials are put to in individual film worlds, as self-contained and self-defining wholes, which is the main focus of their comparative analysis, rather than the nature of the materials themselves.

Returning to Goodman's five processes, the remaining three - ordering, deletion/supplementation, and deformation - may be interestingly transposed to cinema in a similar way with respect to particular formal features of films. Some of these features may be unique to cinema, but when looked at from the macroscopic vantage point of symbolic worldmaking, they share a similar transformational function as those found in paintings, drawings, or sculptures. In comparison with the general inter-textual approaches common in film theory, a study of the creation and objective existence of film worlds informed by attention to Goodman's five processes, as well as his broader symbolic category of exemplification, may allow for a deeper understanding of how film worlds are constructed from others, and how and what films may transform, more generally. At the same time, in opposition to notions of pure cinema, as non-medium essentialist categories with a sufficient degree of abstraction and flexibility, these processes forcefully support illuminating comparisons between particular film worlds and other types of art worlds, such as the one Jacques Rancière makes between Bresson's films and Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* with reference to a type of 'imageness' which, in opposition to other films and literary works, they share (Rancière 2007, 2-6).¹⁴

This view of films as created world-objects is not merely an abstract theoretical construct, however. Like *Day for Night*, a significant number of films take the creation of their own cinematic world (in whole or in part), and by extension, that of every film, as a cinematic subject. Such films self-reflexively dramatise processes of cinematic

¹⁴ See Rancière's critique of essentialist notions of 'pure' cinema and his discussion of Bresson's films as a counter to them in *The Future of the Image* (Rancière 2007, 2-6).

worldmaking as symbolic transformation (in Goodman's sense) and may also be seen to exemplify the wider constructivist view of artistic creation as re-making that Goodman's five processes entail.

To take a fairly recent example, Lars von Trier's *The Five Obstructions* (2003) is an exploration of worldmaking in narrative cinema (broadly defined) that innovatively occurs within the structuring confines of a documentary. In the film, von Trier enters into a contest with Danish experimental and documentary filmmaker Jørgen Leth (a formative influence on von Trier), whereby Leth must remake his playful mock-anthropological short *The Perfect Human* (1967) five times, in each case according to rules which von Trier lays down – pertaining to location, permissible techniques, and even format (live action versus animation, etc.). The film comprises each of these versions, interspersed with clips from the original *Perfect Human* film, the given cinematic world to be re-made, within the larger editorialising master-world of the film itself, within which Leth and von Trier view and discuss the versions and von Trier sets the next challenge. If one were to examine *The Five Obstructions* in detail many of the creative decisions and transformations at work in the ingenious creation of each new *Perfect Human* world from, or in direct response to, the filmic material of the original (and to the previous *Perfect Human* versions) could be analysed according to Goodman's five processes. More generally, the film provocatively illustrates the dynamics of cinematic creation as re-creation, in the context of a filmmaker's creativity being spurred and channelled by pre-existing constraints. Whereas in von Trier's case this dynamic is fully in keeping with his customary working methods involving a programme of self-imposed restrictions, it is also emblematic of the constrained nature of all filmmaking, and, for Goodman, of all artistic creation, in so far as it is restricted to a creative re-shaping of the worldmaking material at hand (as provided by the relevant existing symbolic worlds or world versions and that which they organise).

As the meta-cinematic example of films like *The Five Obstructions* shows, there are multiple senses in which film worlds (as symbolic objects) may be considered transformational to a degree that *distinguishes them from their (potentially shared) sources or constituent parts*: whether these be more specifically defined as other art and film worlds, a range of possible cinematic techniques, or the appearance of people, places, and objects populating our everyday worlds of experience. Yet the nature of film worlds is

by no means exhausted by their transformational dimension or their objective symbolic character.

Films as Immersive World-Experiences

Unlike paintings, films as aesthetic objects have an actual temporal dimension and an event character. This allows films to be, and to provide, immersive and affective experiences beyond the symbolic and the perceptual (as narrowly defined) to an extent which paintings and sculptures, for instance, generally do not (no matter how perceptually and imaginatively engrossed one may become in or with them). Films are worlds in more or different ways than both non-cinematic and non-temporal works, and in expressive and affective ways, in particular, for which Goodman's worldmaking especially, confined as it is to the symbolic and the cognitive (as that which can be formalised and systematised in an objective fashion) cannot convincingly account.¹⁵ French philosopher Mikel Dufrenne's existential phenomenology of art worlds, centred on expression and the aesthetic object, can provide, I will now suggest, the expressive and experiential component that is missing from Goodman's theory of art worlds.

In *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience* Dufrenne makes two fundamental distinctions.¹⁶ The first is between the work of art and the aesthetic object. Whereas the work of art is a physical object, an 'empirical reality in the cultural world', the aesthetic object is the art work as it is concretely experienced, its 'sensuous' potential actualised (Dufrenne 1973, 16). This is the first and most primary of a (potential) series of removals from empirical reality and the quotidian that the aesthetic object effectuates in and through the beholder's attitude towards it, one which endows its experience with a quality of self-enclosure and immersion.

¹⁵ Although Goodman does attempt to provide for artistic expression within his theory of worldmaking, positing it as a symbolic process similar to exemplification (Goodman 1978, 27-32), an often noted criticism of his philosophy of art as a whole rests in its perceived lack of adequate attention to less cognitive aspects of art works and their worlds: particularly those aspects (clearly relevant to the durational form of cinema) that pertain to feeling, mood, or other less tangible qualities, whose apprehension or recognition may have as much (or more) to do with 'intuiting' or 'feeling' as the 'seeing' and 'knowing' which results from close stylistic analysis of works.

¹⁶ *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience* was first published in French as *Phenomenologie de l'experience esthetique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1953) and translated into English in 1973. As Monroe Beardsley, Eugene Kaelin and others have recognised, this work is a major contribution to both existential phenomenology and aesthetics, despite the fact that it is frequently overshadowed by Merleau-Ponty's and Sartre's theories of art, which it both draws on and provides an alternative to (see Beardsley, 1966, 371-372, and Kaelin, 1966, 359-385).

Dufrenne's second key distinction is between the 'represented' and 'expressed' worlds of the aesthetic object. The represented world makes or involves reference to what is outside of it, or, in other words, that which 'signifies' in a conventional sense. This pertains not only to the representation of people, places, and objects in a film, for instance, but to the representation of an objective space and time within which these things and beings are situated.¹⁷ This 'bare representation' provides the world of the aesthetic object with a 'norm of objectivity' and a world that, in the case of a novel, for example, is 'common to the characters and readers' (Dufrenne 1973, 175).¹⁸

However, although it provides a necessary setting or background in and against which characters, for example, may act, and also provides an objective spatio-temporal order, Dufrenne maintains that the represented world of the aesthetic object – the cinematic equivalent of which, as we have seen, is often taken to be the *only* world of a film by critics and theorists – is, at best, a pseudo-world. The represented world may be characterised by 'all the distance which separates the real from the represented,' that symbolic distance which Goodman's worldmaking stresses, but, in-itself, it lacks the degree of completeness and self-sufficiency, originality and singularity, necessary to speak of it as a true (aesthetic) world (Dufrenne 1973, 176).¹⁹ It is expression that provides the aesthetic object with the 'felt unity' which, Dufrenne argues, characterises the experienced worlds of art works, as it characterises the concrete experience of our everyday life-world(s) (Dufrenne 1973, 177).

Although it may well add to it, expression on this view is not confined to a particular feeling or emotion that a given object, event, or character in a film, for instance, may convey and that the viewer recognises and/or feels, but a synthetic or *Gestalt* property of the work as a whole, one that pervades objects and beings but which 'does not belong to them in their own right' given that they alone do not cause it (Dufrenne 1973, 168). Dufrenne describes this expression or 'world-feeling,' as a 'supervening or impersonal principle in accordance with which we say that there is an electric atmosphere' or 'joy in

¹⁷ This is similar to what Frampton refers to as the 'basic film world' prior to its formal design.

¹⁸ And it is the reader or viewer, for Dufrenne, who grants this 'objectivity' to the aesthetic object: this being, on his view, the only respect in which the viewer or reader passes judgement upon the art work while experiencing it (see Dufrenne 1973, 169-176).

¹⁹ More specifically, representation alone cannot provide, or be equated with, the true world of the aesthetic object because (1) it is not an 'alternative' to the 'real' objective world, but is dependent upon it (and does nothing to 'disown it') (Dufrenne 1973, 176), (2) it is necessarily incomplete, that is, it is schematic, and (3) abstract works may be meaningfully said to possess worlds in these respects.

the air' (Dufrenne 1973, 168). Thus the represented and the expressed, held together by the style that fuses them into an experiential whole, constitute the complete world of the aesthetic object (Dufrenne 1973, 185).²⁰

Although Dufrenne draws mainly on painting, music, and literature, unlike Goodman he does discuss the represented aspect of the cinematic work, likely because what are often viewed as the realist properties of the film medium, including its indexical aspect and movement in time dimension, may appear to *a priori* privilege representation over expression, with the former dictating the latter. But rather than seeing film as an exception to his theories of the aesthetic object and its world, he writes that 'the vocation of the cinema that corresponds to its technical possibilities is one that uses all the resources of the image *in order to extend the field of representation to the dimensions of the world*' (Dufrenne 1973, 175, my emphasis). Films, he continues, need not rely on their photo-cinematic illusion to do so, and their creators should be mindful that 'art must not be ashamed of its medium and of its limits. Film can enlarge our vision without having to deceive us' (Dufrenne 1973, 175).

We are right in following Dufrenne's advice not to wholly equate the 'illusionistic' capacity of films (as worlds) with their predominant aesthetic function (even if it may contribute to it). Moreover, the notion of medium-awareness he raises, an acceptance on the part of the film work (or its creator) of both the inherent aesthetic limitations and the inherent possibilities of the medium, allows for the existence of a (self-) reflexive dimension of a film's world as experienced. That is to say, a cinematic work may choose to self-consciously draw attention to the processes by which it creates a world not only in relation to its formal world structure but in relation to *how this world structure is subjectively experienced*. The latter may compliment, or overlap with, those self-reflexive features that a film as an objective symbolic object may exemplify (as previously noted).

The space and time of the aesthetic object, and their relation, is central to the expressive/affective and immersive nature of its world. Dufrenne maintains that all representational aesthetic objects have spatial and temporal properties in three primary ways. With respect to temporality, it may be helpful to imagine the time of the aesthetic

²⁰ Dufrenne defines the relation between representation and expression in a variety of ways, including the expressed as the *a priori* of the represented and the represented as the full 'reality' of the expressed (see Dufrenne 1973, 185).

object as three concentric circles.²¹ The outermost, containing the other two, represents the wholly external and objective time of the aesthetic object as determined by the material nature of the art work as a physical object. The innermost is the aesthetic object's own unique time, both internal and subjective, while the middle circle is the represented time of the aesthetic object. All three forms of time, *actual*, *represented*, and *expressed*, are crucial to film worlds as experienced and a brief consideration of each, as extrapolated and adapted from Dufrenne's argument, is worth pursuing.²²

The Temporality of Film Worlds as Experienced

The *actual* time of a film world is the measurable clock time of its unfolding as determined by the length of the reels comprising the projected film (or their information storage equivalent, in the case of films created or projected digitally) amounting, in the case of most narrative films, to a few hours. As in a novel or play, the *represented* time of a film world is that directly or indirectly indicated by its fictional action. This may be considered a 'quasi-objective' time, since its objectivity is a normative one, granted to it by the viewer, as Dufrenne suggests is the case with respect to the represented world of the aesthetic object as a function of its making reference to what is external to it. The quasi-objective, represented time of the world of a film may closely correspond to the objective time of its experience, as in films, such as Hitchcock's *Rope* (1948), Agnès Varda's *Cléo from 5 to 7* (*Cléo de 5 à 7*, 1962), and Mike Figgis's *Timecode* (2000), or sequences within films, presented in so-called 'real time'. Or, it may radically deviate from it, as in *2001*, in which millions of years are compressed into seconds through the famous match-cut from prehistoric bone to spaceship. These and other more complex expansions and compressions of time (including slow and fast motion) are predicated on the fact that as a temporal event the world of a film is always co-substantial with a viewer's perception of it in a way which is usually not the case in a novel, for instance (assuming it is not read in one continuous sitting). But beyond the unity or divergence of the actual (objective) time and the represented (quasi-objective) time of a film world as it is directly apprehended, there is a

²¹ While this model is based on Dufrenne's distinctions he does not propose it.

²² What I term '*actual* time' is equivalent to what David Bordwell calls 'screen duration,' whereas '*represented* time' is compatible, in some respects, with his categories of both 'story duration' and 'plot duration' (Bordwell 1997, 97-99). However, Bordwell's schema has no equivalent for 'lived' or '*expressed*' time as here described

subjective duration which transcends, and from this perspective, determines, each. This is the internal, expressed time of a film, e.g. the *felt* time of *Citizen Kane* versus its 120 minutes running time or the many years its story spans, which, together with its expressed space (with which it is especially closely conjoined), constitutes the expressed world of a film as an aesthetic object.

In a cinematic context this expressed time and its affects are undoubtedly occasioned by the direct perception of a film's visual and auditory properties, as well as the people, places, and objects 'given' by its representation, but it is also felt and intuited. Moreover, the tension particular to the cinematic work, between the immutable and inexorable *actual* time of its world as a created and physically bounded object – in which past, present, and future are pre-determined from the start – and its duration as experienced, in the perpetual present tense of its unfolding, can be crucial to the aesthetic experience of that world (potentially just as important to it as the relation between represented and expressed time that Dufrenne emphasises with respect to the aesthetic object *per se*).

All art works as aesthetic objects have a rhythmic character and rhythm is a defining property of the aesthetic. For Dufrenne it is through rhythm - musical, visual, or linguistic - that time is 'spatialised' and space is 'temporalised' in the aesthetic object, giving it an 'interiority' of spatial and temporal relations which is akin to that which occurs in an individual's consciousness (both in general and as the spectator experiences and literally 'internalises' the duration of the aesthetic object). It is this interiority of the aesthetic object, from which its expressive/affective dimension proceeds, that justifies conceiving it as a 'quasi-subject' (Dufrenne 1973, 248).

The expressive qualities of films are also often ascribed to their rhythms. Describing filmmaking as 'sculpting in time,' Tarkovsky posits rhythm, and what he calls 'time pressures' within shots or sequences, as the source of an expressive depth in films residing beneath the perceptual surface of the image (Tarkovsky 1994, 117). He also suggests that rhythm in this sense differentiates both film worlds and filmmakers in an essential way. Tarkovsky sought to confine this essential cinematic rhythm of a film to that which is internal to the image, stemming from the 'natural' movement and duration of the objects filmed, supported by the movement of the camera, rather than editing, thereby shaping

his theory of film to his own particular cinematic style.²³ From a more critical and objective perspective, however, it is clear that as a general rule this is far too limiting, and that many factors contribute to the total expressed temporality of a film world as experienced, including the durational and affective consequences of in-frame and camera movement *and* that imposed or created by editing, as well as the purely 'graphic' rhythm generated by shot choice and composition – all in addition, of course, to the rhythmic properties of the soundtrack (not only music, but sound effects and the speech patterns of actors).²⁴

The objective/subjective duality marking the viewer's experience of a film's world, with respect to the apprehension of its *actual*, *represented*, and *expressed* time, in some cases mirrors the duality between objective and subjective time *within* its represented or fictional world, that is, time as it is experienced by its characters. And this affective link may serve as one of the main routes of immersion into its unique, expressed world. Yet although the expressed time, as well as space, of a film world intuited by the viewer is not a purely formal property of a work, but is partly articulated through and by its represented characters and situations, the affective relation between them and the viewer is something deeper and broader than a specific identification (emotional or otherwise) with a character's thoughts, feelings, or actions. It is instead a consequence of a shared world-feeling that the film world expresses and which, with respect to representation, may be seen to provide the intuited 'existential' context within which the characters think, feel, and act. In sum, as the result of an affective connection between the viewer and its expressed spatial-temporal structure (including the sense of duration attendant upon its total rhythm) a film conveys a unique world-feeling, recognised by the viewer as such.

If von Trier's *The Five Obstructions* self-consciously addresses cinematic worldmaking from the standpoint of the director as film world creator, than David Lynch's *Inland Empire* (2006) reflexively explores cinematic world experience from the phenomenological perspective of the viewer. It does so largely through privileging subjective time and affect – which, through both its 'film(s)-within-the-film' structure and

²³ Tarkovsky's association of cinematic rhythm with the organic and durational movement within the frame is generally viewed as a repudiation of early Soviet film theory as dominated by mechanistic principles of montage construction, in general, and Sergei Eisenstein's theory and (early) practice of montage, in particular, which Tarkovsky singles out for criticism (see Johnson and Petrie, 1994, 37).

²⁴ Deleuze also associates cinematic duration with an expressed movement deriving from physical movement in his complex articulation (indebted to Bergson) of the relation between time and space in the cinematic image (see Deleuze, 1976, 1-11).

its other cinematically reflective aspects, are directly aligned with cinema – over objective time and perception, as well as conventional narrative logic. *Inland Empire* dramatises, and itself exemplifies, film experience as first liminal and then transportative, as a passing out of our everyday worlds and the comfort and familiarity they entail, into the perceptually and emotionally challenging ones that a film creates and within which we, as viewers, are perceptually and affectively immersed.

By way of its cinematic meta-fiction *Inland Empire* globalises and projects cinematic experience, the experience of film worlds, as a way of being-in-the-world for its 'split' central character, Nikki/Susan (Laura Dern).²⁵ As a consequence, many of her perceptions, and the nature of the situations she finds herself in, mirror aspects of the viewer's apprehension and experience of *Inland Empire*. Nikki passes from the Hollywood studio where the American film-within-the-film 'On High in Blue Tomorrows' is being shot, into the world of the 'Smithee's house' set and beyond, into a number of alternative, parallel, or imagined realities, including that of a Polish story '47' (the cursed and aborted cinematic adaptation of which the American film is based on), and a mysterious empty cinema in which she sees herself projected on the screen in what is actually an earlier scene of *Inland Empire*. Moreover, within this series of shifting represented world-spaces or scenes that Nikki moves through, a number of architectural spaces literally or metaphorically double as cinematic spaces, wherein the temporal experience of film viewing in general, and the viewing of *Inland Empire* itself, is externally projected.²⁶ (This is accompanied by a general loosening of clear cause and effect relationships that translates into a loss of clear perceptual bearings for both character and viewer, corresponding to what Deleuze sees at work, in different forms, in all modern and contemporary *time-image* cinema, of which *Inland Empire* is a pronounced example.)

Via the film's narrative structure, Lynch's mastery of affective atmosphere, and his characteristic formal abstraction (in this case aided by the de-materialising, painterly effects of non-HD digital video), *internal* or *expressed* time (as duration), associated with

²⁵ As in *Mullholland Drive* (2001) in *Inland Empire* this happens to be a particularly unpleasant way of being, wherein both the experience of making and viewing films is associated with psychic trauma.

²⁶ This conjunction of cinema, affective time, and immersive duration, is re-emphasised in the film by means of material tokens of this immersive dynamic that signal the movement in and out of these meta-cinematic world-spaces, specifically the mysterious watch and cigarette burned green cloth that together act as a kind of inter-dimensional camera obscura, one associated with subjective time-travel.

films as 'lived,' supersedes *represented* time, just as an expressed or felt space dissolves represented space - this reflecting the primacy of expression that Dufrenne views as central to the *quasi-subjective interiority* of the aesthetic object. And it is within this affective interiority that Nikki/Susan and the viewer are trapped, causing *Inland Empire's* events to be experienced from the 'inside looking out,' as it were.²⁷ *Inland Empire* is an example *in extremis* of a film's represented world(s) (multiple ones in this case) being unified by a supervening affective synthesis which, following Dufrenne, we may call its expressed world as something emphatically more than the sum of its representational parts. And on the level of expression itself, the irreducible world-feeling unique to a film is, like that of all temporal aesthetic objects for Dufrenne, an 'integration' of expressive qualities (feelings, moods, tones) forming a 'unity in multiplicity' (Dufrenne 1973, 187).

Style, Subjectivity, and Film World Creators

This irreducible world-feeling or expression, which could also be described as an atmosphere which permeates and animates represented characters, objects, and situations, is not only unique to a film, but also unique to its creator. Although the world-feeling of *Inland Empire* is singular, something similar to it may be found in Lynch's *Lost Highway* (1997) or *Mulholland Drive* (2001), possibly to the extent of these world-feelings being a different variation of the same basic expression. This might seem to be taking the concept of the expressed world of a film in a very strong *auteurist* direction, one that would negate the singularity and the *affective* uniqueness that we frequently attribute to *affecting* film worlds. Yet although the expressed world or world-feeling of a given Lynch film is singular, surely it would not be surprising that it is *closer to* that of another Lynch film, than to one by von Trier or Kubrick. And in experiencing more films by the same director we may hope to become more attuned to such a general, director-specific feeling or affect, which may in turn also allow us to be more receptive to the *differences* between a director's films in this expressive respect. Reference to 'Bresson's world' or the 'world of Tarkovsky', that is, to a world which is shared by a group of films by the same director, may thus be conceptualised in relation to this defiantly *irreducible*, expressed aspect of film

²⁷ The 'inside looking out' perspective of most of the film is reinforced by Lynch's use of windows and transparencies providing a mediated visual access to an outer space, but at the same time acting as a barrier to it, as reflected in the film's *mise-en-scène* in which Nikki is frequently pressed against these surfaces, the camera often adopting her point of view.

worlds as experienced, just as, from a different perspective, it may be defined with respect to Goodman's worldmaking, as rooted in fundamentally *reducible* and objective symbolic properties of film worlds. The issue of style is central here.

For Goodman the stylistic features of an art work are all the symbolic properties which exemplify it (versus those properties that may not) and which are always (potentially) discernible upon close analysis of it. When art worlds are perceived and contemplated from an objective and comparative perspective (rather than what I have referred to as experienced in-themselves), style is a 'complex characteristic' that 'serves as an individual or group signature' (Goodman 1978, 34). Recognising and appreciating artistic styles necessarily involves comparing and contrasting art works and their worlds, which Goodman refers to in rather pragmatic terms as 'sorting' them (Goodman 1978, 34). Style is therefore viewed as a kind of impersonal machine for making art worlds as symbolic objects. We classify these world objects by attaching an artist's name to them – thus a 'Lynch' world, a 'von Trier' world, etc. – without necessarily making reference to any intentions or expressions on the part of David Lynch or Lars von Trier. To the extent that cinematic authorship is problematised, in some cases, by the collaborative nature of filmmaking and by the significance of films clearly exceeding any direct intentionality (or intentionality as narrowly defined) at work, such an impersonal notion of style may seem warranted in relation to film worlds. However, it is clearly insufficient with respect to accounting for their expressive and affective features.

For Dufrenne, from a perspective that is 'internal' to the aesthetic object and its experience (emphasising the felt singularity of its expressed world) an artist or filmmaker's style is that intangible glue which fuses representation and expression together into the full unity of a felt world, i.e. as an object-experience with a particular internal coherence that is intuited by the viewer. This world unity is ultimately an expression of the artist or filmmaker's subjectivity, one which meets the viewer's subjectivity in and through the work. True, the interiority of the aesthetic object's expressed space and time, as a corollary of the lived space and time of the viewer who experiences it, gives it the status of a 'quasi-subject'. But, as Dufrenne argues, and as, I suspect, many philosophers would agree, ultimately 'there can be expression only of subjectivity' (Dufrenne 1973, 177). Behind the aesthetic object and its expression there must be a genuine subject, and therefore the

world of the aesthetic object may be ultimately 'identified' with the 'world of the creator' (Dufrenne 1973, 177).²⁸

However, just as the world of the aesthetic object is a singular, non-empirical, and irreducible one, the world of the artist or filmmaker which it expresses cannot be wholly equated with his or her biography, social and cultural environment, nor a set of conscious (or unconscious) intentions and ideas that the work executes (even if all these are by no means irrelevant to the creation, experience, and interpretation of the film world). It is better conceived in a more holistic sense as the artist's or filmmaker's being-in-the-world, one which, like the expressed world of the aesthetic object of which it is both a result and an extension, is an irreducible 'unity of subjectivity'.²⁹ The extent to which this unity may be synonymous with the world view of a film director as described in some *auteurist* theories, or with what, as an alternative, Andrew Sarris calls that 'intangible difference' between one creative 'personality' and another that is felt when viewing a film, is a question which here must be left open (Sarris 2004, 562-563).

As viewers, we temporarily co-exist with the worlds that films create and present for a few hours, but they may dwell within us for long after owing to the nature and truth of the experience that they have provided. A substantial part of this experience (in the case of good films) is the nature and truth of feeling that, despite its pronounced *alterity*, we *belong to* a unique and compelling world, as Dufrenne maintains with respect to all 'truthful' aesthetic objects (Dufrenne 1973, 555). The world-feeling of a film adds to our store of affective experience, and in so doing enriches our being-in-the-world through revealing something new about ourselves in its other worldly mirror. For Goodman, from a more exclusively cognitive perspective, the ultimate test of the 'rightness' of a film's symbolic world is a matter of how its perception and cognition may subsequently foster perceiving and organising experience in new and interesting ways. Whereas for Goodman art worlds ultimately provide new ways of seeing and ordering experience, for Dufrenne

²⁸ This runs counter to Vivian Sobchack's anti-*auteurist* 'semiotic phenomenology' as expressed in *The Address of the Eye, A Phenomenology of Film Experience*, which views the subjectivity in question entirely as a consequence of the 'direct experience and existential presence' which characterizes the exchange between viewer and film, with the filmmaker's presence being 'indirect and only re-presented' (Sobchack 1992, 9).

²⁹ In the last section of *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, Dufrenne addresses the difficult question of how it is actually possible for any aesthetic object to express a singular world, one that is recognised by the beholder as such, by speculatively positing the existence of an 'affective a priori', which, like a Kantian mental category, innately predisposes the beholder to recognize, or be attuned to, 'world-feelings' (see Dufrenne 1973, 441-501).

they provide new ways of feeling/being. But could these benefits be exclusive? Is it possible for one not to entail the other? For the reasons that have been noted (and others) we can recognise without contradiction that film worlds – and, most likely, all art worlds – in fact provide both perceptual/cognitive and affective/existential truths.

Some General Implications

All films as symbolic and aesthetic objects create and present worlds. Some are more complete and coherent, interesting and affecting, both on their own terms and by external standards, than others. But, notions of pure cinema notwithstanding, there is no one way in which they are (or *should* be) created, or, for that matter experienced, save, that is, for experiencing them as any aesthetic object, and in the ways in which the film world itself may prescribe. In the space remaining, I will briefly note some of the larger theoretical implications of the concept, or embryonic theory, of film worlds outlined here, and some of the significant theoretical issues it may illuminate.

One significant difference between the proposed concept of film worlds and existing ones is that (self-)reflexivity or self-referentiality is seen to be a potentially central feature of both their objective being *and* their subjective experience. This runs counter to the assumption that a focus on a film world as an immersive reality precludes the reflexive. The expanded theory of film worlds suggested here views a film's reflexive function as a potential aspect of the total being and experience of a film's world. It draws on a new theoretical paradigm whereby a film work foregrounds itself as a *sample* of a world with a lesser or greater degree of self-consciousness (as conveyed to the viewer), in accordance with Goodman's exemplification. And, in turn, the viewer, in experiencing a film world, is (ideally) responsive to the differing attitudes towards it, or perspectives on it, which that world itself may encourage or dictate as it unfolds. These may include (self-)reflexive ones, which, through the very distancing from *some* aspects of the film world they effectuate (in most cases represented aspects) actually provides for a greater immersion and 'indentification' *with that world as an aesthetic whole*, as in the case of *Inland Empire*.³⁰

³⁰ Thus the pronounced reflexivity that may characterise film worlds is not reduced to formal devices or techniques viewed as *inherently* reflexive. Rather, the (self-)reflexive status of particular stylistic devices is always context-dependent in relation to the wider nature of the film world of which they are a part. This is in line with Robert Stam's, Robert Burgoyne's, and Shelia Flitterman-Lewis's notion of a film's variable 'co-efficient of reflexivity' (see Stam et al. 1992, 201).

A given film's (self-) reflexivity is an extension or intensification of what may be seen as the general reflexive aspect of film art. This is a function not only of a reflexivity that may be built into the unique features of the cinematic medium *per se*, an appeal to which is often used in realist and phenomenological theories of film to both differentiate cinema from the other arts and to align it more closely with non-aesthetic experience (as well, in extreme cases, to support an argument for cinema not being art). It is also the result of non-medium dependent artistic/aesthetic properties that film worlds may share with the worlds of paintings, novels, or musical compositions. In short, when it is not conceived in reductive and/or purely ideological terms (e.g. Brechtian ones) reflexivity in a narrative film context is neither opposed to fictional representation, nor to expression, immersion, and affectivity – at least not when fictional representation and expression are considered fundamentally inter-dependent features of a film's created and experienced world.

Additionally, on this holistic view of film worlds, what I have referred to as the 'inter-cinematic' dimension of a film, that is, its reference to, and incorporation of, other film worlds, is not confined to its *extra-diegetic* margins, as an adjunct or annex to its *fictional world*, as is often assumed. Rather, where occurring, it is conceived as part of the very substance of a film's combined representation and expression from which its fictional story world can best be seen as following rather than preceding. The same holds true with respect to the cinematic use of other art forms: a focus on the world of film as a representational and expressive totality provides a wider context within which to situate film's engagement with painting, for instance, and offers the possibility of synthesising existing theories of this interaction.³¹ It may address, for example, how particular paintings appearing within films, e.g. Gustav Klimt's *The Kiss* in Nicholas Roeg's *Bad Timing* (1980) or Peter Brueghel's *Hunters in the Snow* in Tarkovsky's *Solaris* (1972) help to establish its represented world and also trace the affective/expressive consequences of their presence at both a local level, in relation to the immediate narrative context in which these works appear, and a global one, with respect to the film world as a whole. More generally, on this view a narrative film's formal interaction with other art forms, styles, and works is not seen as a marginal phenomenon, in contrast to experimental cinema wherein, it is commonly

³¹ I am here thinking, for example, of Bazin's canonical essay on the subject, "Film and Painting" (in *What is Cinema? Vol.1.*), and Bonitzer's "Deframings" (in *Cahiers du Cinéma Volume Four: 1973-8: History, Ideology, Cultural Struggle*).

held, such interaction is more central and more interestingly explored. Rather, it is regarded as one instance of a more general dynamic of transformation, adaptation, and symbolic and artistic dialogue in which all films, narrative or non-narrative, participate, whether they are built primarily upon the foundations of other film worlds, art worlds, or everyday worlds. Far from threatening the specificity, singularity, or originality of film worlds (or of cinema itself) this dynamic, when at the service of a forceful artistic vision, can be seen as their source.

In conclusion, and by way of summary, I have noted certain limitations of some existing notions of film worlds, as well as the merits of two differently oriented, but at points converging, more general theories of art worlds. I have shown the benefits of synthesising Goodman's and Dufrenne's insights, rooted in wider currents of analytic and continental aesthetics and the philosophy of art, with those of film theory, in order to help account for the *immersive* and *transformational* nature of film worlds. As I have suggested, the 'symbolic' and constructed nature of films and their worlds, from one perspective, and the immersive immediacy that characterises their presence and experience, from another, are not opposed. Rather, they represent a fundamental duality of film worlds as object-experiences which may be described in terms of the polarities of external/internal, objective/subjective, representational/expressive, ontological/phenomenological. As the examples of some meta-cinematic films have shown, while analytically distinct, what is signified by these descriptions may overlap in the course of a film world's experience, just as that world's creation entails awareness and anticipation on the part of its maker of the possible ways in which it may be concretely apprehended. Finally, I have identified some important areas in film theory and the philosophy of film that call out for new forms of theorisation, showed the relevance of the film world concept to them, and discussed some of the ways in which a more in-depth exploration of it may address these problematics in a new and valuable fashion.

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