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The Missing Link: Meunier on Imagination and Emotional Engagement

Robert Sinnerbrink

Abstract

In this chapter, I consider the originality and applicability of Jean-Pierre Meunier's phenomenological account of cinematic identification. I focus in particular on the key role assigned to imagination in his account of spectator identification, and describe some suggestive parallels with contemporary theorists' accounts of imagination (as perceptual engagement, mental simulation, or make-believe, and Murray Smith's threefold "structure of sympathy"). Finally, I consider some difficulties in Meunier's model – his overly clustered concept of 'identification'; a tension between formal-phenomenological analysis and background cultural-historical pre-understanding; and his focus on character identification at the expense of background 'world' apprehension – that could be modified in order to enhance his original contribution to philosophical film theory.

Keywords: Emotion; film-philosophy; identification; phenomenology; Jean-Paul Sartre

The film experience is a perceptual experience that underpins the imaginary attitude of consciousness.

– Jean-Pierre Meunier, *The Structures of the Film Experience* (p. 152)

Anyone approaching the topic of imagination in film could be forgiven for thinking of Augustine's famous quip concerning time: "What then is time? If no one asks me, I know what it is. If I wish to explain it to him who asks, I do not know." Many theorists have said as much of the imagination. As Tamar Gendler observes, attempts at taxonomizing imagination have not fared very

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well, mainly because there are so many distinct forms of imagining that are often bundled together and so many diverse research fields and subjective processes in which imagination comes into play.¹ Kendall Walton, whose work on mimesis as make-believe has had a profound impact in aesthetics, confesses that, despite writing a book on the topic, he simply cannot spell out what the various conceptions of imagining have in common.² Leslie Stevenson explores no less than “Twelve Conceptions of Imagination,” ranging from “the ability to think of something not presently perceived, but spatio-temporally real” to “the ability to create works of art that express something deep about the meaning of life.”³ With such a bewildering array of meanings, functions, and purposes, the concept of imagination risks becoming theoretically intractable. Many theorists have therefore been at pains to distinguish psychological or cognitive aspects of imagination from the creative sense of imagination, even though these are clearly linked (in our experience of art, for example, or in practices of artistic creativity).

A glance at the history of aesthetics confirms this view. In the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (*Kritik der Urteilkraft*), Kant famously identifies the faculty of imagination as the power of presenting an object in intuition that is not present to our senses. Kant further divided this capacity into the *productive* imagination (presenting an object that is independent of or ‘precedes’ experience) and the *reproductive* imagination (presenting an object through intuitions that have been experienced previously).⁴ Following Kant, the imagination (the ‘poetic imagination’) played a key role in the aesthetic philosophy of Schelling and the German Romantics, for whom art and poetry, as expressions of the poetic imagination, were central to the romantic critique of Enlightenment rationalism. In *The Imaginary* (*L’Imaginaire*), Jean-Paul Sartre argues on phenomenological grounds that imagination is distinct from perception; we can either perceive things or imagine them but not both at once. Images, moreover, are forms of intentional consciousness directed at the world, albeit as objects that have been “de-realized” and thereby posited as “present-absent” (the presentation of something absent).⁵ Indeed, for Sartre, the material aspect of an image (the *analogon* or analogical representation of something) serves as a visual prop for an intended object posited by the imagination. Looking at an image construed as an *analogon* (a painting, drawing, or photographic/film image, for example) enables us to freely posit the intended object as “irreal” – absent, non-existent, yet singular and definite – and thus as a noematic expression of the imaginary. One of Sartre’s key concerns was to articulate the role of imagination in relation to visual images, a problem that remains of great

interest to Anglophone aestheticians drawing on cognitivism rather than phenomenology.⁶

Given Sartre's suggestive phenomenological account of the imagination, one might have expected that film theorists, certainly those within the so-called 'Continental' philosophical tradition, might have been eager to explore Sartre's analyses for the purposes of theorizing cinema. Yet Sartre's influence on film theory (despite his work on imagination and images) remains negligible.⁷ While it is customary to mention Merleau-Ponty's "Film and the New Psychology," the most influential source of phenomenological theory remains Vivian Sobchack's Merleau-Pontian approach (drawing on elements of Husserl's phenomenology), which has generated a rich stream of phenomenologically-oriented theorization emphasizing the notion of the 'film body' and the haptic-synaesthetic dimensions of film experience.⁸ Nonetheless, it is true that, despite the recent proliferation of work in film theory describing itself as 'phenomenological,' there has been as yet little engagement within phenomenological film theory with the role of imagination in cinematic spectatorship.⁹ This is unfortunate, for it is difficult to explore the phenomenon of emotional engagement, and especially the role of empathic and sympathetic responsiveness, without examining the ways in which imagination is at play in cinematic experience. Cinema, after all, is precisely an art of presenting, via audiovisual images, what is absent as though it were present; it is one that depends, moreover, on what is implied off-screen, or audio-visually suggested, rather than directly shown or depicted. Indeed, imagination is central, as I shall discuss, to one key element of such engagement, namely evaluative judgment or moral 'allegiance' with characters in narrative film, which means that imagination – or the cinematic moral imagination – will play a key role in understanding and articulating theoretically the ethical potential of cinema.

It is for these reasons that the English translation of Jean-Pierre Meunier's *Les Structures de l'expérience filmique: l'identification filmique* from 1969 represents an important theoretical intervention in the field of contemporary film theory. Indeed, this text represents something of a 'missing link' in the historical narrative spanning the development of *filmologie* as a diverse interdisciplinary research program during the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s and its marginalization by the rise of structuralist, semiotic, psychoanalytic, and Marxist-Althusserian film theories during the 1970s. Bringing together philosophical, aesthetic, psychological, historical, sociological, and anthropological approaches, *filmologie* now presents itself belatedly as a timely model of interdisciplinary inquiry, showing us how humanistic, hermeneutic and empirically grounded scientific approaches can work together in exploring

key problems in film theory. Meunier's phenomenological study of the modalities of identification in cinematic experience remains a landmark contribution to this movement, one with many theoretical resonances and unexplored potentials waiting to be explored today.

Meunier is also a missing link in a more theoretical sense, for he is one of the few film theorists to focus on the role of *imagination* in understanding audio-visual images. More specifically, he examines varieties of imagining (perceptual, affective-emotional, and cognitive) involved in processes of empathic/sympathetic responsiveness, emotional engagement, including moral-ethical evaluation of characters. Meunier's contribution thus offers a rich phenomenology of cinematic experience that seeks to do justice to the complex processes of identification. He analyzes the different modes of engagement with audio-visual images that contribute to our experience of perceptual and emotional responsiveness to moving images, and offers a timely defense of the concept of identification that emphasizes both its intersubjective and imaginative characteristics.

In what follows, I shall focus on imagination and its role in Meunier's phenomenological account of cinematic identification and explore some suggestive parallels with contemporary theorists' accounts of imagination (as perceptual engagement, mental simulation, or make-believe, as well as the threefold "structure of sympathy" that Murray Smith proposes as an alternative way of conceptualizing cinematic identification).¹⁰ Finally, I consider some difficulties in Meunier's model – his overly clustered concept of 'identification'; a tension between formal-phenomenological analysis and background cultural-historical pre-understanding; and his focus on character identification at the expense of background 'world' apprehension – that could be modified in order to enhance his original contribution to philosophical film theory.

Meunier on Film Experience

Meunier commences with the phenomenological insight that, before embarking on any empirical or scientific inquiry, we need to describe and analyze the basic structures of lived experience. Reflecting the influence of Merleau-Ponty, Meunier explores the "primacy of perception" in our experience of cinema: he rejects dualistic epistemological accounts that presuppose a disengaged subject confronting an external world of objects, and insists rather on the originary or 'primordial' relationship of perceptual openness towards the world – a relationship of practically engaged comportment,

rather than of disengaged knowing. Our pre-theoretical relationship with the world, moreover, is defined as holistic, relational, and intersubjective: a primordial intersubjectivity or anonymous 'being-with' others in a shared world that is constitutive of human experience. This phenomenological account of intersubjective *Mitsein* (being-with) provides the basis for his theorization of cinematic experience, and in particular, of the complex phenomenon of identification.¹¹

As has become apparent in the history of film theory, the concept of 'identification' – from psychoanalytical accounts of spectatorial 'suture' to recent cognitivist accounts of emotional engagement and moral sympathy – is at once influential and opaque.¹² While acknowledging the contribution of Freudian accounts of identification in the development of psychic life, Meunier criticizes the 'empiricist' and 'intellectualist' assumptions that render the psychic life of others as impenetrable or obscure to the isolated self or ego. Instead, Meunier's phenomenological account of identification begins with an anonymous "primordial intersubjectivity"; understood as "a kind of generic co-existence of multiple consciousnesses" that remains "open to the world and to other people" (p. 48). It is against this generic intersubjectivity that singular relations between individuated subjects or individuals can emerge, transforming "primordial intersubjectivity" into "private intersubjectivity" within a shared social world (p. 48). Such relations of private intersubjectivity, moreover, involve *reciprocal recognition* – the recognition of others as subjects coupled with their recognition of me as a subject – which is the fundamental feature of what Meunier understands by 'identification': a relationship or practical intersubjectivity or relational comportment that has perceptual, affective-emotional, as well as cognitive-practical aspects. In this respect, Meunier's account of identification re-situates the concept within the phenomenological domain of lived experience. Identification, understood as practical intersubjectivity, involves somatic and affective, as well as emotional and practical, comportment with and towards others. It provides the basis for the emotional-evaluative attitudes of sympathy and antipathy, which are themselves nothing other than "the affective dimension of the comprehension of other people" (p. 50) expressed in a variety of behaviors or relations of practical comportment within social reality.

Three Attitudes of Spectatorial Identification

Such an account of identification as intersubjective comportment offers a rich basis for describing the structures of spectatorial identification within

cinematic experience. Following Merleau-Ponty, Meunier defines this as an experience constituted through perceptual *gestalts* or the configuration of visual elements; but cinematic spectatorship solicits quite distinctive attitudes of consciousness compared with ordinary perceptual experience. As Meunier points out, this has led a number of theorists to posit cinematic experience as situated “midway between the real and the unreal” (p. 69). He develops this claim into the thesis that “filmic consciousness” can be understood as “a variation of the major category of consciousness that constitutes the imaginary consciousness” (p. 69). Filmic identification, as a form of spectatorial comportment, is thus presented as an “imaginary attitude” with distinctive modalities depending on the particular kind of cinematic image to which the spectator attends. This is Meunier’s most original contribution to film theory, which has, for the most part, ignored the role of imagination: an analysis of the three principal modalities of imaginary engagement with cinema pertaining to the *film-souvenir* (home movie), documentary, and fictional film formats.

Meunier’s analysis of cinematic perceptual engagement is indebted not only to Merleau-Ponty but also to a number of lesser-known *filmologie* theorists (Francois Ricci, Jean-Jacques Rinieri, and Albert Michotte van den Berck). These theorists examined the status of cinematic perception as intermingling the registers of the real and the unreal, where this intermingling solicits different spectatorial attitudes depending on the character of the image being perceived. Their common phenomenological starting point is the widely shared observation that cinematic perception involves a vivid impression of reality coupled with an awareness of ‘unreality,’ that is, of the imagistic or representational quality of the moving image. For Meunier, this points to the important distinction between *real* perception, which posits its object as present and as existent, and *cinematic* perception, which does not posit its object as present but as “absent, or existing elsewhere, or not existing at all” (p. 77). Cinematic perception is directed towards a reality that, although it appears as “real,” is not physically present: cinematic consciousness expresses “a relationship with the world, but a world that is not present” (p. 77).¹³ This apprehension of a perceived world that is presented as absent means that cinematic experience corresponds to key elements of the “imaging consciousness” that Sartre describes in *The Imaginary* (p. 77). Cinematic perception involves the “imaging function of consciousness” – in the phenomenological, rather than psychoanalytic, sense – that “renders present an object that we know is not there” (p. 78).

Meunier’s analysis, distinguishing between different spectatorial attitudes (presentification, instruction, and participation) towards different

modes of cinematic presentation (home movie, documentary, and fiction film), is original and impressive. Despite Sobchack's well-known criticism, namely that these three attitudes of consciousness and their corresponding forms of cinematic presentation are subjectively variable ("one person's fiction might be another person's documentary"), Meunier acknowledges that his schematic categorization of spectatorial attitudes should be taken as an analytic or theoretical artefact.¹⁴ In reality, spectators can move between all three modes of engagement (presentification, instruction, and participation) within the course of a single film-viewing; and there is also no firm "objective" distinction between the three "categories of film" he describes (p. 115) (home movie, documentary, and fiction), which can be combined in various ways in different kinds of cinematic works.¹⁵ Rather than focusing on putative properties of the cinematic work, his analysis emphasizes, rather, the solicitation of different "existential attitudes" (whether objects or subjects are posited as existing or not), which are not necessarily tethered to objective features of particular cinematic genres or styles.

There are a number of striking parallels, I suggest, between Meunier's phenomenological account of spectatorial attitudes, comprising the phenomenon of identification (different modalities of cinematic experience), and more recent analyses of emotional engagement and cinematic imagination. His model anticipates and reflects, for example, Murray Smith's influential threefold model of the "structure of sympathy" defining emotional engagement ('identification'): *recognition*, or what Meunier calls the "understanding" of individuated characters (p. 128); *alignment*, or what Meunier calls "affectivization and valorization" (p. 138) with regard to the experiential perspectives of characters; and *allegiance* with characters involving moral-ethical or aesthetic evaluation, which Meunier describes as imaginative "participation" focused on "sympathetic, valorized characters" (p. 139). Although these three aspects of identification are not as clearly or precisely marked out as in Smith's account of the structure of sympathy (there is some slippage between alignment and allegiance, for example), Meunier nonetheless anticipates Smith's important distinction between alignment with a character's subjective perspective or point of view, and moral-aesthetic allegiance involving a sense of imagined 'participation' with sympathetically portrayed or morally valorized characters. What could have been made clearer in Meunier's account is the possibility of alignment with a character's perspective occurring without necessarily being linked with the 'valorization' of that character, and that imaginative participation with valorized characters nonetheless typically depends upon

effective perspectival alignment coupled with sympathetic depiction and moral evaluation of their specific traits, views, or actions.

Meunier's model of identification, moreover, not only resonates with Sartre's theory of imagination, but also with more recent cognitivist accounts of cinematic imagination as a form of perceptual imagining that uses moving images as audiovisual props for emotional and cognitive forms of 'simulation.'¹⁶ Like Sartre, the audiovisual image serves as an *analogon* that enables varieties of perceptual imagining as well as emotional involvement in a fictional world. Like cognitivist theorists, such audiovisual images function as complex 'props' for imaginative forms of 'make-believe' that involve entertaining in imagination fictional characters, scenarios, and worlds in ways that do not entail corresponding attitudes of belief that would guide or solicit practical forms of action. The most significant difference with both Sartrean and cognitivist accounts, however, is that Meunier's phenomenological approach insists on a relational *intersubjectivist* model of perceptual and practical engagement with others within a shared 'being-in-the-world.' His model thus shifts from the solitary consciousness intending imaginary objects or the 'worldless' cognitive subject engaging in subjective forms of imaginative simulation to an intersubjectivist model of recognition that grounds our capacity for imaginative involvement within an originary intersubjectivity and shared sense of being-in-the-world.

This relational account of the phenomenon of imagination, moreover, encompasses individuated forms of intersubjectivity, which encompasses such recent theoretical insights and topics as affective mimicry, emotional contagion, as well as 'higher' cognitive forms of imagining (as in mental simulation or moral-normative evaluations).¹⁷ Here again Meunier's account provides a prescient 'missing link' between contemporary phenomenological and cognitivist accounts of imagining, emotional engagement, and the ethical evaluation of film.

Three Problems with Meunier's Filmic Identification

There are three problems, however, arising from Meunier's model of identification that I wish to consider further, suggesting that these could be theoretically revised drawing on contemporary phenomenological and cognitivist approaches. The first is to clarify the distinct senses of 'identification' at play here: Meunier's use of the term encompasses the *phenomenological* sense of primordial and private intersubjectivity providing the experiential basis for the development of personal identity through social interaction; the

aesthetic sense of imaginative involvement and emotional engagement with individuals or characters within different modes of cinematic presentation (home movie, documentary, fiction film); and the *psychoanalytic* sense of introjection and projection as well as ego idealization and psychological modeling played out in imaginative and intersubjective registers. It would be desirable to distinguish more clearly between these three distinct senses of 'identification' (phenomenological, aesthetic, and psychoanalytical) and to articulate more precisely the conceptual relations between them. The phenomenological sense of identification, for example, occurs at an implicit, perceptually engaged but not explicitly conscious or 'thematized' level, which is quite different from what one would describe as 'unconscious' in a psychoanalytic sense. The explicit forms of 'identification' pertaining to emotional engagement with characters, in contrast, occur at a different level from either ordinary intersubjectivity or the psychologically gratifying, culturally-mediated emulation of movie stars (Meunier cites the popular cultural example of female fans going for the "Brigitte Bardot look" [p. 149]). Using the same term to cover all three processes obscures rather than clarifies the conceptual distinctions and relations between them.

At the same time, there remains an important potential in the concept of identification that is worth retrieving and revising. Berys Gaut, for example, argues that the concept of filmic identification, despite its phenomenological and cognitivist critics, should not be rejected but revised.¹⁸ He advocates a pluralist conception of identification that distinguishes between different aspects of the phenomenon, arguing that only some, rather than all, of these aspects can come into play in processes of identification. Indeed, if we construe the process of identification as involving a plurality of aspects (perceptual identification, affective identification, epistemic identification, and so on), which need not be activated all at once, we may rehabilitate the term theoretically in a way that accords with the folk sense of 'identifying' with characters in film, while at the same time maintaining important distinctions such as sympathizing with a character in moral terms.¹⁹ Nonetheless, it is clear that there are many aspects involved in such processes of identification that require more specification than the concept of identification generally affords. Meunier's model could therefore be adapted here, along the lines that Gaut suggests, in order to specify more precisely the pluralistic forms of identification at play in the three modalities of home movie, documentary, and fiction film, and to distinguish more explicitly between phenomenological, aesthetic, and psychoanalytical senses of identification.

The second problem is a tension arising between the formal-phenomenological analysis of spectator consciousness in respect to the three modes of

intentional imagining, and the background cultural awareness of cinematic genres and conventions that operate in any 'immediate' subjective apprehension of audiovisual images (home movie, documentary, and fictional film). Meunier's analyses focus on the distinctive attitudes of existential positing in respect to the three modalities of moving image, but then treat these forms of subjective 'taking' as occurring independently of the hermeneutic 'background' or 'pre-judgements' inevitably shaping our engagement with (culturally and historically embedded) intentional objects such as filmic works, whether fictional, non-fictional, or reconstructive/memorial. This is not to deny the value and significance of undertaking the kind of subjective phenomenological descriptive analyses that Meunier offers. Rather, it is to suggest that these analyses could be more concretely situated within a hermeneutic 'horizon' of implicitly shared cultural-historical meaning that any contextually situated spectator would bring to such images and that would orient the manner in which spectators posit them as particular kinds of image. It is not immediately apparent on the face of the image whether it is personal/memorial, documentary, or fictional but soon becomes so once the contextual situation and background understanding of the viewer is taken into account. Adding this hermeneutic dimension to Meunier's phenomenological analyses would add the relevant contextual understanding and implicit situated knowledge that helps orient us affectively and cognitively in response to the contextually-defined varieties of audiovisual images we encounter.

The third problem is 'forgetting of world' characteristic of most psychological accounts of identification or spectatorial engagement. Despite drawing on phenomenological analysis of the primacy of perception and openness to the world, Meunier passes over the 'background' intelligibility or shared 'being-in-the-world' that make possible the identification with individuated characters that forms the focus of his phenomenological analysis. Since perception is attuned to an originary intersubjectivity within a relationally defined meaningful whole (a phenomenologically disclosed world), this suggests that filmic experience too, as perceptual and imaginative, is shaped via our affective-emotional and cognitive engagement with distinctive cinematic worlds. We do not simply encounter human figures, whether real individuals or fictional characters, in isolated abstraction from relational contexts or horizons of meaning; rather, it is against such background intelligibility or 'worldliness' that individuals or characters can show up as individuated personages that are perceptually recognizable or cognitively significant. It is these shared 'background' forms of meaning – or what we could call patterns of world-disclosure through 'mood' or

affective attunement – that open up or reveal the ‘foreground’ phenomena of individuated characters appearing within a meaningful context of action.²⁰ A phenomenological account attuned to specific cinematic world-contexts would shift the theoretical focus from individual perception to forms of intersubjective understanding, or enable us to move from a more narrowly author-based account to one that regards cinematic worlds as disclosing shared forms of meaning relating to extra-cinematic realities beyond that of the (narrative) film itself.

These three issues – refining and specifying the concept of identification; clarifying the relationship between phenomenological analysis of spectator experience and the background contextual knowledge that informs this experience; and contextualizing character engagement within the immersive experience of a cinematic world – could be elaborated further in order to revise Meunier’s phenomenological account of imaginative identification in regard to different modes of cinematic presentation. This would provide a basis for developing Meunier’s descriptive framework and integrating it with more recent work on the phenomenological and cognitive dimensions of affective and emotional engagement with both fictional and non-fictional film.²¹ In this way, the productive potential of Meunier’s long-neglected work could be realized in a context that opens up an interdisciplinary inquiry into cinematic imagination inspired by the pioneers of the *filmologie* movement and would thereby contribute to contemporary film-philosophical approaches to theorizing cinematic experience and renewing the concept of identification. These comments are offered in recognition of Meunier’s remarkable achievement: a rich phenomenological account of the basic structures of cinematic experience that shows how imagination, emotion, and cognition work together in our complex lived experience of moving images.

Notes

1. See Tamar Gendler’s comprehensive entry on “Imagination” (2011) in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/imagination/> (Last accessed on 1 September 2017).
2. Kendall Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 19.
3. Leslie Stevenson, “Twelve Conceptions of Imagination,” in *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 43:3 (2003), p. 238.
4. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001 [1790]). More-

- over, what Kant called the “transcendental imagination” played a key role in the ‘synthesis’ of concepts and intuitions necessary for cognitive experience (at least in the A version of the *Critique of Pure Reason*).
5. Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Imaginary: A Psychological Phenomenology of the Imagination*, trans. Jonathan Webber (London: Routledge, 2010 [1940]). See Sarah Marshall, “Sartre and the Imaginary,” *Evental Aesthetics*, 3:1 (2014), <http://evental aesthetics.net/evental-aesthetics-vol-3-no-1-2014/sarah-marshall-sartre-and-the-imaginary/> (Last accessed on 1 September 2017).
 6. See Gregory Currie and Ian Ravenscroft, *Recreative Minds: Imagination in Philosophy and Psychology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Matthew Kieran and Dominic Lopes (eds.), *Imagination, Philosophy, and the Arts* (London: Routledge, 2003); and Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe*.
 7. See J.D. Connor, “Sartre and Cinema. The Grammar of Commitment,” in *Modern Language Notes* 116:5 (2001): 1045-1068.
 8. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, “The Film and the New Psychology,” in *Sense and Non-Sense*, trans. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Patricia Allen Dreyfus (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964 [1945]), pp. 48-59. Vivian Sobchack, *The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992); Vivian Sobchack, *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004). Alan Casebier’s *Film and Phenomenology: Towards a Realist Theory of Cinematic Representation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), a Husserlian account of cinematic realism, has not been as influential as Sobchack’s work, reflecting the selective appropriation of phenomenology within (Anglophone) film theory (Merleau-Ponty rather than Husserl, Sartre, or Heidegger). For a comprehensive critical discussion of the history of film phenomenology, see Christian Ferencz-Flatz and Julian Hanich, “What Is Film Phenomenology?” *Studia Phaenomenologica*, vol. 16 (2016): 11-61.
 9. Two notable exceptions here are Julian Hanich’s chapter “Intimidating Imaginations: A Phenomenology of Suggested Horror,” in his *Cinematic Emotion in Horror and Thrillers: The Aesthetic Paradox of Pleasurable Fear* (New York and London: Routledge 2012), pp. 108-126; and Jane Stadler, “Imagination: Inner Sight and Silent Voices,” in her *Pulling Focus: Intersubjective Experience, Narrative Film, and Ethics* (London and New York: Continuum, 2008), pp. 168-205. See also Julian Hanich, “Omission, Suggestion, Completion: Film and the Imagination of the Spectator,” in *Screening the Past*, issue 43 (2018) <http://www.screeningthepast.com/2018/02/omission-suggestion-completion-film-and-the-imagination-of-the-spectator/> (Last accessed on: 28 April 2018).
 10. See Murray Smith, *Engaging Characters: Fiction, Emotion, and the Cinema* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).
 11. Although Meunier cites Merleau-Ponty and Sartre, there is an implicit ‘Heideggerian’ layer to his phenomenological analysis that remains opera-

- tive rather than thematic (to use a phenomenological distinction). This is evident in his recourse to terms such as ‘comportment,’ ‘being-in-the-world,’ and emphasis on the intersubjective relationality or originary ‘being-with’ others in the world.
12. See Jean-Louis Baudry, “The Apparatus: Metapsychological Approaches to the Impression of Reality in the Cinema” and “Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus,” in Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (eds.), *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, 6th edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 206-223 and pp. 355-365; Christian Metz, *Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema*, trans. Michael Taylor (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974); and Christian Metz, *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and Cinema*, trans. Celia Britton, Annwyl Williams, Ben Brewster, and Alfred Guzzetti (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1982); David Bordwell, “Contemporary Film Studies and the Vicissitudes of Grand Theory,” in David Bordwell and Noël Carroll (eds.), *Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), pp. 3-36; and Stephen Prince, “Psychoanalytic Film Theory and the Case of the Missing Spectator,” in David Bordwell and Noël Carroll (eds.), *Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), pp. 71-86.
 13. A phrase that anticipates Stanley Cavell’s reflections on the ontology of film. See Cavell, *The World Viewed: Reflections on the Ontology of Film*, Enlarged Edition (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), pp. 23-25.
 14. Vivian Sobchack, “Toward a Phenomenology of Non-Fictional Film Experience,” in *Collecting Visible Evidence*, ed. Michael Renov and Jane Gaines (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), pp. 241-254.
 15. A film can deploy all three modes – for example, Michael Haneke’s *Benny’s Video* (1992) – within an overtly fictional mode of presentation.
 16. See Gregory Currie, *Image and Mind: Film, Philosophy and Cognitive Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); and Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe*.
 17. See Amy Coplan, “Catching Characters’ Emotions: Emotional Contagion Responses to Narrative Film,” in *Film Studies: An International Review* 8 (2006), pp. 26-38; Jane Stadler, *Pulling Focus*, pp. 196-201; and Carl Plantinga, *Moving Viewers: American Film and the Spectator’s Experience* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009), pp. 115-136.
 18. Berys Gaut, *A Philosophy of Cinematic Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 258ff.
 19. Gaut, *A Philosophy of Cinematic Art*, pp. 260-261.
 20. See Robert Sinnerbrink, “*Stimmung*: Exploring the Aesthetics of Mood,” in *Screen* 53(2) (Summer 2012): pp. 148-163.
 21. See, for example, Asbjørn Grønstad, *Film and the Ethical Imagination* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016); Carl Plantinga, *Screen Stories: Emotion and the Ethics of Engagement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Robert

Sinnerbrink, *Cinematic Ethics: Exploring Ethical Experience through Film* (New York and London: Routledge, 2016); and Jane Stadler, *Pulling Focus*.

About the author

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