

When the film was the actor.

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INTRODUCTION

Of our generally accepted art forms, film (with video as a subcategory) is the youngest addition to the list. In its relatively short 100 years of existence it had to develop fast to be able to catch up with such media as sculpture and theatre, which had been established artistic practices since before the days of Christ.

In the development of film, and especially in its early stages, the theatre has been quoted as a huge reference. The *mise-en scene*, plot and character development, dramatic use of lighting and actors are all aspects of which the theatre is thought to have provided a back catalogue for film to reference. It is true that, when we watch the earliest fictional features, their staging is very comparable to that of the theatre. This can clearly be seen in the films of Méliès but is perhaps more tellingly in 'traditional' features; such films as *Uncle Tom's Cabin; or Slavery Days* (1903). In these pictures there is no need, story wise, for the use of decor, as opposed to filming on location. Only practical considerations. This clumsy, semi-theatrical nature was accentuated by the stale camera positioning and lack of cross-cutting in such early features.

It is perhaps in part due to these apparent similarities, both visual and in terms of content and style, that filmmakers and scholars alike quickly began trying to get cinema out from under the wings of its much older brother. Searching for techniques and elements that were unique to the medium itself. This was necessary for film and its practitioners to gain some much needed artistic credibility. Over time, even though we still see how certain aspects in features were inspired by their theatrical counterparts, they have been significantly altered to suit the specific needs of film.

Everything from acting to staging has at its core quite a different approach in both media. When film allowed the audience to get closer to the players than ever before, all of a sudden the acting had to become smaller to accommodate this change. Similar to staging. In film's aptitude to convey realism and the possibility of shooting on location, the average set quickly had to become as subtle and realistic as possible, instead of lavish or abstract, to emphasize the natural strengths of film.

It is probably therefore that when certain movies come along, with either what we consider to be over-the-top acting or obviously fake scenery, that we give them the label 'theatrical' to refer to the fact that these elements in one or more ways seem unnatural. Of course this is used as a shorthand to describe a certain visual style or feel that disrupts or undercuts instead of enhances a sense of realism. But such statements, apart from misrepresenting the possibilities of staging in film, declaring anything outside the norm as copied from different media, also underlines a particularly bad habit of judging a book by its cover. First impressions which may just be false.

This leads me to my research question:

Are theatrical elements in film truly theatrical?

This is not to question whether or not cinema owes inspiration to the theatre, or if there are films that are in essence structured more like a play than a film, which it certainly does and there certainly are (although the degree to which is also often overstated). But rather to investigate if certain elements that tend to be described as theatrical, either found their origin in different sources, or are in fact more uniquely cinematic. I'll attempt to find out if theatre and film are as related as the whale and the dolphin respectively (with the dolphin evolving from the whale), or as the dolphin and the

shark; similar in appearance and habitat, but widely differing in origin and method. Or anything in between for that matter.

To do so I will look at the intertwined history of theatre and film, primarily from the very end of the 19th century to the mid of the 20th century, the birth years of cinema. I will then attempt to apply my findings to the film *Dogville* (2003). A film that is often described by critic and layman alike as being of a theatrical nature.

I reject that definition and will argument why I believe that *Dogville* is a perfect example of non-conventional ways to use the unique properties of film to full effect.

ABRIDGED THEATRICAL ORIGINS

In the consideration of the relationship between theatre and film, it is worth having a brief look at the origin and development of the theatrical practice up to the beginning of the 20th century, to be able to juxtapose it to that of the cinema.

The western theatre and its many subdivisions have their roots in the first plays performed in Ancient Greece around 550 BC. Many different forms of theatre already existed before and during this time, most notably on the Asian continent, but they were of no such major influence to popular theatre as we know it nowadays. Although the concept of acting and storytelling had existed throughout the Greek civilization for much longer, it had always been of a more loose nature. The concept of theatre as we know it today didn't exist until these performers were standardized into the Dionysia, a festival that was held in honour of Dionysus throughout the whole of Ancient Greece. The Dionysia came along multiple times each year and moved theatre from its improvised nature into the form we see reflected today. During this time, theatre quickly became an important form of expression to the Greeks, quickly functioning as the event around which the rest of the Dyonisia was focused. This was especially true in Athens, where the epicenter of theatrical origins and the festival was situated. We see here the emergence of the tragedy, the comedy and the satyr play.

Although we can find aspects in even the earliest surviving plays of this period that we still see in our Western theatre practices, it was some two hundred years later that the first true theoretical and philosophical study of the theatre was immortalized. In 335 BC the philosopher Aristotle produced a work called *Poetics*. At the time it was largely ignored because the idea of a separate theatrical (poetic) theory was not yet recognized. It wasn't until the end of the Middle Ages that it began to be recognized and influential. It has since become a seminal work in the history and development of theatrical practice, with Aristotelian theory still widely known and being used and taught (or variations on his concepts) to this day.

After the destruction of the Greek civilization by the Macedonians, it is (because of the Romans' taste for mindless spectacle and the Church's ostracizing anything but Catholic morality tales) not until the English reformation in the 16th century, in which the English church broke from the Pope and his Roman Catholic rule, that under Henry VIII theatre continued its development. Though not with a direct and acknowledged influence of the Greeks' groundwork (much of their influence had gotten distorted throughout the preceding years). It is during this time that the English Renaissance theatre came to be, which includes the works of William Shakespeare and many other world-famous playwrights. Due to the wishes of the English monarchs of this period (most importantly Elizabeth I), the theatre suddenly returned strongly. From the English Renaissance theatre onwards, modern Western theatre has been developing mostly uninterrupted.

It is in the 18th century that we see a reawakened awareness of the Greek traditions, specifically Aristotle's theories re-emerge among the theatrical world. During this period Neoclassicism was born and became the dominant theatrical form. Neoclassical theatre returned to the rediscovered theories and philosophies of early theatre and relied heavily on the classical unities as derived from Aristotle's *Poetics*. Defining them as such:

Unity of action | A play should have one main action that it follows. (Plot line)

Unity of place | A play should cover a single physical space and should not attempt to compress geography.

Unity of time | The action in a play should take place over no more than 24 hours.

These were all ideas that were nonexistent during Renaissance theatre, Shakespeare's plays broke all these rules regularly, as did those of his contemporaries. It would seem that Neoclassicism was a reaction to the popularity of the Renaissance theatre, redefining itself in order to be able to move forward.

The Neoclassicist movement brings us right up to the birth of modern theatre, which included such movements as Romanticism, melodrama, farces, and the well-made play. But most importantly for this investigation: realism.

Realism was a movement that sought to bring a stronger relation to life into the theatre. It was first developed in Russia and began to grow in popularity throughout the rest of Europe around the very end of the nineteenth century, around the time that the first films were being screened. This was also a starting position for what Stanislavski would develop into the 'Method' school of acting.

As the Late Modern theatre of the twentieth century came around, one of its most dominant surviving movements was realism, which to this day is very influential.

THE CREATION AND INFLUENCES OF EARLY CINEMA

The first known motion picture camera was developed in 1888 by Louis Le Prince. Before this we find many examples of devices which create the illusions of movement through a succession of pictures, such as the mutoscope. But it wasn't until 1888 that the device which our modern camera is a direct descendent of came to be.

Arriving some years after photography had the time to establish itself, film had a long way to go if it was to gain some credibility. Its critics were accusing it (not completely without merit at the time) of being nothing more than a copying device. At this time the potential of moving pictures was yet to be discovered, as seen in the early Lumière films; just the registration of everyday facts was amazing in its own rights. So cinematographers went out and filmed the most mundane scenes, provided that there was movement in them.

As the novelty wore off and people were beginning to understand that film could do nothing more than just that, it was considered a device with no artistic capabilities of its own. Filmmakers keen to prove their artistic merits developed onwards and quickly progressed and branched out into different methods and styles. Among other things, they were looking into staged action. While cinema branched out, its critics were no less damning towards the medium. It was so considered that any form of beauty, of interest, in short: of art that could be found in moving pictures came not from the camera itself, but from the thing it registered. Albeit a person or a happening. Cinema remained of no influence on it at all, a voyeuristic method of (poorly) registering reality. And in all fairness, at the time this was true.

Hans Richter, early experimental filmer from Germany, once told the following story illustrating this point:

On the roof of a tenement block one day, sets were put up and - so Henny Porten says, discussing the early days of cinema - Meester began to film her in a (much abridged) *Das Käthen Von Heilbronn*. Smoke from the chimney pots cast a magical veil over the sets. The sun shone, Henny Porten entered stage left on cue (as was customary in the theatre), acted her scene, Meester cranked, and she exited. The whole business lasted some three to five minutes, then they were finished - as was the film. The film was the actress.

In this case the art being copied or registered came from the theatre. This was a medium that early filmmakers had the most problems separating themselves from; the accusations and presence of theatricality in films and filmmaking traditions. Thus finally bringing us to the focal point of this research, the relation between theatre and cinema, most notably in the development of the cinematic practice.

As previously stated, even to this day film is considered or assumed by many to be grown from the theatre. The idea of the public, critic and even collaborator alike was this: after the earliest films (which were all actualities), when the cinema moved towards fiction, the theatre (which knew such elements as actors, directors, screenplays, mise en scene, etc.) became its model. And it has since steadily grown from the breeding ground that its predecessor provided. With time adding distance as the autonomous cinematic aesthetic was further explored and defined.

Also among film historians this view was widely accepted for many years. Vsevolod Pudovkin, a Russian film director that was influential in the development of montage theory, said the following:

The first films consisted of primitive attempts to fix upon celluloid, as a novelty, the movements of a train, a landscape seen from a railway-carriage window, and so forth. Thus, in the beginning, the film was, from its nature, only 'living photography'. The first attempts to relate cinematography to the world of art were naturally bound up with the Theatre. Similarly only as a novelty, like the shots of the railway-engine and the moving sea, primitive scenes of comic or dramatic character, played by actors, began to be recorded. . . . The first experiments in recording serious and significant material appeared. The relationship with the Theatre could not, however, yet be dissolved, and it is easy to understand how, once again, the first steps of the film producer consisted in attempts to carry plays over on to celluloid. . . . The film remained as before, but living photography. Art did not enter into the work of him who made it. He only photographed the 'art of the actor'. Of a peculiar method for the film actor, of peculiar and special properties of the film or of technique in shooting the picture for the director there could as yet be no suspicion.

Of D.W. Griffith, one of America's earliest influential filmmakers, was said: 'with his short films, America discovered a new art, quite different from the theatre, the decalomania (*a technique for transferring an image onto another medium*) of which was all that could initially be achieved.'

There are countless other accounts of people referring to the gradual development of the cinema from its stogy beginnings to its unique pictorial style. Nowadays however, professional film historians have altered their views on a theatrical dominance in early film.

After a specific study that looked at any surviving piece of celluloid from between 1888 and 1905, modern theorists concluded that the language of film had indeed borrowed and continued upon ideas given from different media. But it was the amount of different media that was especially striking. Historians now quote such diverging sources as short stories, novels, strip cartoons, political caricatures, lantern slides, wax museums and pyrotechnic displays as significant influences in researching the cinematic language. Added to that they found that theatrical sources that were drawn upon came from all kinds of theatre, from improvised and vaudeville to Shakespeare and the well-made play. This makes citing early cinema as theatrical an even more vague and inaccurate statement.

It is now considered that before the 1910's cinema drew from every possible medium and class within a medium for its experimentation, especially with the length of film restricting filmmakers' efforts, because of this, pre 1910 film had as much use for the theatre as any other medium. After 1910, when films began to be produced at future length, the biggest difference was the addition of narration. To study this addition a lot of inspiration was sought in literary display of narratives, specifically/particularly short stories.

In short, in modern thinking the theatre has diminished substantially as an assumed influence on cinema, whether it be positive or negative. Like stated before, despite the seemingly similar approaches in staging plays and films, there were many aspects that made the theatrical practice untranslatable to film. At the very least the consideration that the words of drama (absent in silent film), as Aristotle put it, were superior to the spectacle (that which appeals to the eye and what film, being silent until halfway through the 1920's, relied upon). Spectacle having 'nothing to do with poetry'.

Conversely, it is mostly theatre historians that still busy themselves with the shared history of theatre and film, a necessity to them when looking for objective material to study theatrical practice in the past century. Apart from studying production photos, playbills and reviews, there is no way to accurately research theatrical conventions, early film recordings are thus studied in the hopes of

learning more, even though theatre theorists are aware that the films' short durations and lack of sound made for important differences in practice.

This idea of theatre looking to the cinema instead of the other way around brings us to an argument made by Nicholas A. Vardac in his 1972 book *Stage to Screen*.

Vardac claims that the 19th century theatre had a proto cinematic tendency. In short, he believes that a large part of theatre had developed into a cinematic tryout. Even before the concept of moving pictures on celluloid existed. And that when cinema came along it fulfilled a role and vision that the theatre had attempted to achieve, but was lesser suited to.

He illustrates this by talking about a few of the dominant theatre genres that had emerged in the preceding decades. The pantomime, costume drama and melodrama to name a few. He states that pantomime only reached its potential and in course its popularity with the coming of cinema. Citing the likes of Buster Keaton and particularly Charlie Chaplin's enduring appeal to underline his argument.

More research goes to the analysis of the melodrama. At the time these were quite spectacular plays; with giant elaborate sets, state of the art effects and sweeping storylines. According to Vardac, film proved inherently better at realistically and convincingly presenting these storylines. Such spectacular effects as a train crashing or building burning down were very hard to recreate in the confined theatre space. And when a touring group would come to a smaller town the large three dimensional set pieces required to create these visual tour de forces would either not be available or not compatible with their lesser equipped theatres.

Cinema needed no such elaboration and did not know these compatibility issues. A director in need of a train wreck could simply film one from every angle he wanted, incorporate it in his film and send the finished product to be played in venues around the country. It was more realistic, easier and more practical, and was the fulfillment of what the theatre had strived to be. At least, according to Vardac.

In truth this turning of the tables is equally short sighted as rooting cinema firmly in the theatre. Even though it was easier to create a melodrama on film, the small projection screens certainly lessened the spectacular impact the stories were meant to deliver. Again the absence of sound contributed to this as well. Also the audience quickly became savvy to the fact that all that was required from a film director in a spectacular scene was to record an actual event happening. The fact that it is practically impossible to crash a train on the stage meant that any rendering of such a thing, however simple, on the stage is automatically impressive. It was then to be expected, as is the case, that the melodrama (as most other genres Vardac describes, barring pantomime) was still very popular, albeit less represented (due to the stated practical issues) nationally, in the theatre.

Instead of film building from the theatre, or theatre aspiring to be film, the relationship between the two is much more intertwined and complicated.

SIMILAR ELEMENTS IN THEATRE AND FILM INVESTIGATED

In 1910, when longer films were being made possible, comparisons as we know them between theatre and film become relevant. It is at this time, some 15 years after cinema's conception, that filmmakers look to theatre for inspiration in creating the longer stories that were now attainable and expected. Since this is fifteen years after the moving picture came to be, by this time they had already developed a wide variety of techniques that were also carried over to these longer features.

When looking at the similarities between Theatre and Film we find that most of their (assumed) common heritage lies, broadly speaking, in acting and staging (as defined below). I will explore these separately to see how the two media handled them and whether or not they utilize the same philosophy. First I will define the terms acting and staging as they will be categorized in this investigation.

Under acting I count not just the actors and their practice themselves, but also the director and the written word, or more accurately the spoken word.

Under staging I count not only the different approaches and styles to set design but also the use of special lighting and other effects, be it sound or other.

ACTING

Early film actors were, exclusively, from the theatre, being the only art form to employ actors at the time. It is therefore logical that acting in film was very similar to that of the stage initially. But the acting seen in the theatre had to be adapted to communicate in a way that worked on celluloid.

Theatre in the 17th and 18th century had what was known as a pictorial tradition. This falls within the traditional histrionic theatre that put an emphasis on the acting. In the pictorial theatre, the method of acting used a wide array of carefully selected poses and gestures that were used to underline the importance of words that were spoken. The difference with current theatrical practice is the high emphasis on these poses. Depending on the significance of the moment, a pose would last anywhere between 8 and 30 seconds. This could be even longer when a tableau took place; an important moment in the story (usually something like the end of an Act), in which all players on stage would freeze and a live painting was conceived for the audience to study. For instance a man accosts our main character out on the streets and accuses him of poisoning his mother. Bystanders react in shock. The scene freezes and we see the man pointing his finger to the accused, looking bemused, with the bystanders all showing different variations of surprise. The pose is held for a couple of minutes before the curtain closes.

The tableau and all other poses were inspired by the paintings of the Renaissance masters, able to convey entire stories through still images. It was believed that actors should be able to create these same images with their body in order to accompany their text with a visual clarity. A good actor at the time was able to convey his entire mood with a carefully studied, gracefully executed pose, and these would follow each other quite rapidly. In fact they made up most of the performance.

It is around the 19th century that the realism and naturalism movements that I discussed above are formed as a response to the highly dramatic pictorial form of acting. Naturalism quickly became popular for its anti-pictorial nature. We should not confuse naturalism with what we would consider natural or acting. The naturalist actor was one that would both in inflection and gesture respond as minimal as possible, even when a greater emotional reaction would seem more natural or logical.

Early film was mostly based on the pictorial tradition, instead of the popular naturalism. This is because even with the longer features of the time sound was still not available until some decades later. Naturalism was, compared to other movements, very talkative and therefore too reliant on spoken word for film. Film acting did however quickly adapt into a form of acting that plays like something in between these two styles.

This was not as with naturalism in the theatre out of a reaction against the established order, but rather because the pictorial style did not translate well to film. This was partly because it felt unnatural, in the sense that a performance felt over the top now that an audience could see an actor more clearly. On top of that film editing also became important in implying emotions. As Eisenstein's early experiments showed. When showing an identical shot of a man's face followed each time by a different image, the audience would relate his gaze to whatever they saw in succession. There was no expression added or required by the actor. But this was not as important until later, when screens became bigger and picture quality better, allowing audiences to see every tiny movement in a face.

For now it was mostly a matter of pacing, which was a result of two important factors. One, film has always been expensive. Instead of in photography, where one would take one picture at a time, a film camera took up to 16 shots per second, needing hundreds of feet of film even for movies only a few minutes long. Because of this, and projectors not being able to accommodate oversized reels, set times would be agreed upon before features were made. With the filmmakers trying to tell as much story as they could within the allotted time, pacing in general became considerably faster, as the following story by actress Florence Lawrence recounts. (The Mr. Griffith in question is the aforementioned D.W. Griffith).

What seemed to annoy us 'Biographers' (*the distribution company that employed her*) very much and hold us back from achieving greater artistic success was the speed and rapidity with which we had to work before the camera. Mr. Griffith always answered our complaint by stating that the exchanges and exhibitors who brought our pictures wanted action, and insisted that they get plenty of it for their money. 'The exhibitors don't want illustrated song slides,' Mr. Griffith once said to us. So we made our work quick and snappy, crowding as much story in a thousand foot picture as is now portrayed in five thousand feet of film. Several pictures which we produced in three hundred feet have since been reproduced in one thousand feet. There was no chance for slow or 'stage' acting. The moment we started to do a bit of acting in the proper tempo we would be startled by the cry of the director: 'Faster! Faster! For God's sake hurry up! We must do the scene in forty feet.'

That the slower pace of theatrical performance in general was not possible was of course even more crucial to the fate of the tableaux and shorter poses employed by most actors at the time. There was simply no time for such stale moments in filmic practice. Although examples of theatrical poses to emphasize certain moments can from time to time be found in films of this era, they invariably are much shorter than their theatrical counterparts, lasting no longer than a second or two. It is not long afterwards that the pictorial style disappeared from the cinema completely.

Film directors in general were more concerned with the camera than with the actors. This had to do with the fact that there was still a lot to be discovered about camera usage. Actors were assumed to be proper craftsmen and in control of their trades. This is of course logical since a director has made the choice to work on film rather than on stage, but it is not so simple as to say that film directors were merely interested in their new toys. Here it is prudent to note the change in importance that the actor and his craft had in film as opposed to theatre. Especially in the sense of emphasis and tempo.

In theatre, the actor as performer carries several functions towards the audience. Through their gestures and movement on stage they play a huge part in emphasizing or downplaying certain moments, in essence telling the audience where to look and when (Barring situations in which only one character is lighted). Additionally, actors are the most important factor in timing throughout the play, they are the ones to convey the pacing of the story at each particular moment.

In cinema, the role of the actor is severely diminished and usurped in these respects. Apart from giving life to the character, most of the actor's duties are taken over by the camera. By the shot, to be more specific. In film the shot dictates what the audience gets to see and when, simultaneously creating the pacing of the feature.

From all this we can see how the cinema traditionally became a medium that had its acting revolve more around story, whereas the theatre preferred a higher focus on character. As a Dr. Stockton, who researched the use of scenes in one-reel films back in 1912, said: 'The point is that not only did editing *permit* the actor to do "less" in terms of posing and gesture, but the pace of a highly edited film *required* it.'

STAGING

One of the most obvious differences that comes to mind when considering staging practices in theatre and cinema is the stage itself. In theatre the audience and actors on stage are in the same venue, able to see one another. In the cinema the actors are recorded elsewhere, leaving the audience in a voyeuristic role, unable to be seen by the people they watch.

In theatre, to introduce a character or have a character exit we need the backstage, although generally well hidden and non disruptive, it does serve as a constant reminder that these are actors we are watching and that there is such a thing as on- and offstage. A good reflection of how this instinctively differs in the cinema is the fact that at even the very first screenings of films, audiences were reluctant to applaud the actors at crucial times in the story, when they would have been expected to do so whilst watching a play. Because, (with possible exceptions) the actors weren't there to acknowledge the praise.

It is this principle, the pre-recording and its mechanics that play a huge role in most of the inherent differences in staging between these two media.

For one thing, on stage (with the exception of naturalism), the actors keep the audience in mind during their performance, whether it is through projecting their voice to be audible and understandable, or making sure their face and gestures are both visible and similar from each

viewing angle. The film actor does not need to keep this in mind and is instead prompted by the cinematographer or director from the camera's position, the only spectator perspective.

The necessity of visibility in the theatre reflects in more than just the actor's actions on stage. It is reflected in the stage itself. Firstly, although almost every theatre and stage differ in some way or another in shape or size, the distance and relative scale between performer and audience remains the same throughout a performance. But in film, cameras were being positioned, with different lenses, at widely varying distances from their subjects early on. This meant that, as opposed to the theatre where the human body was always the constant unit of measurement and sets were proportioned accordingly to define scale (for instance, sets could be enlarged or miniaturized to make the audience understand a character was either very small or very large), in film the human body knows no constant in terms of size. To the untrained eye a wide shot followed by a close up meant seeing a midget that suddenly became a giant. Even though relative proportioning didn't disappear, the always constant unit of measurement, the human body, was no longer a constant in film.

Secondly, a stage is relatively large and wide, particularly at the front. It can be anywhere between 15 and 60 feet in width but the theatre will be sized accordingly. This is so that wherever a spectator is seated, the stage will occupy a large part of their field of vision.

This brings us to our second scaling problem. Since the stage always stays the same size, the different sets were dressed according to the space. This would lead to extreme enlarging or shrinking of supposed locations to integrate into the playing area. What this means is that a small office would be scaled, in terms of architecture, not props, to the same dimensions as a castle. While in most theatres it is possible to partially seal off the stage through the use of curtains, it was very rare for plays to not make use of the entire space, especially since closing part of the stage blocked the view from the audience on the sides. Film director Urban Gad summarized the staging differences between theatre and film:

Cinematic décor is more real than theatrical scene painting, its dimensions are genuine and not obtained by painted perspective - but its greatest advantage over theatrical décor is that it can represent *small* spaces. Everyone knows the theatre's failings in this respect. A play demands a small confined room, the action presupposes it, the dialogue refers to it; and what do we see: a hall, larger in height and breadth than a banqueting room. Why? Because the theatre uses every inch of the auditorium for seats, right up to the roof, from where nothing at all would be visible if the décor were really of low height, because the *manteau d'Arlequin* (usually a flat cloth that covers the top part of the stage and curtains) would conceal everything happening on the stage. Similarly, spectators at the sides would see nothing if the décor were really narrow as the prescribed small room requires. The cinema is quite different; the thousands of eyes of the spectators are all pressed to the one tiny peephole of the camera, so one can make one's settings as small and narrow as one wishes.

The classic theatre stage is set up as a wide front playing area that funnels at the back like a fan shape. The narrowing of this area, combined with a sloped floor, is to create a forced perspective that gives the illusion of an even deeper stage than there is to the audience. This area is filled with increasingly smaller props and scenic paintings that bring more dynamics to the background than the painted backdrops that were used before. The problem this creates is that the actual depth of the stage is lost. If an actor were to move from the front to the back of the stage, it would seem as if he were growing rapidly. He would scale up in relation to his environment with every movement step towards the back wall he'd make.

This means that if a theatre director wanted someone to appear far off in the background first, and then travelling towards the foreground (or the other way around), the only way to do that was to have the transition appear offstage. In the background, scale models, children, or little people were used to represent their larger counterparts. In the foreground would be the actual actor or the object we saw, but now life-size. As a result, the action on a stage is constricted to movement along the width of the stage, in particular the front area. Instead of actors being free to move over the entire space. Making the theatre stage one with most of the action along lateral lines.

The cinema operates under a completely different set of optical (and eventually acoustical) properties by its very nature, which of course caused the creation of a quite different cinematic 'stage'.

First of all, we have to realize that film is a two dimensional medium, whereas theatre is three dimensional. This means that issues with audience perspective are mostly negated and issues with depth require a different approach than that of the theatre.

Cinema took the techniques for creating suggested depth in a flat image from the solutions found in photography and painting. Techniques that, next to perspective, deal with strategic lighting and focus. This helps to separate fore- and background figures from one another, thus creating depth in the mind. Cinema's depth of field was a combination of the blurring of less important elements in Renaissance paintings and the manner in which the cinematic stage was constructed as discussed further on.

Lighting, not just for depth perception but in general, came from photography. Instead of the dramatic use of lighting in theatres, cinema used light to emphasize its suggested realism. In early days this basically meant filming in natural light, since today's advanced lighting did not exist. This had a significant impact on the way studios and subsequently stages for the cinema were constructed, before I come to that however, I'll take a moment to define the set up of the cinematic stage.

The cinematic stage, theoretically, is a lot less restricted than its theatrical counterpart. Due to audience reluctance though, this wasn't immediately the case. The wide optical possibilities that were available when dealing with interchangeable lenses and camera positions were not much appreciated or understood by early cinemagoers. Whenever people were projected larger or smaller than life (or worse: alternating both), the audience could not relate. This was also true for actors being cut off at the feet in shots and other such cinematic techniques we have long since become accustomed to.

So as not to alienate the audience, projection screens were all around 12 by 16 feet, with the projected image corresponding in a life-size rendering of a human being. This gradually, literally inch by inch changed over time. By 1911 most similar scenes were filmed with actors framed closer, making their projections larger than life-size. This is the beginning of what is known in the cinema as 'scalar relativism' at the heart of which we find a lot of the differences between the techniques for stage scaling and film scaling.

As in theatre, a person's height (whether an inch or 9 feet on screen) would be determined in context to whatever it appears with on screen. But the two dimensionality and physicality of film print meant that the cinema had a lot more options in terms of forced perspective and other comparable effects.

In *L'Homme à la tête en caoutchouc* Méliès used this scalar relativism together with the technique of superimposition (the placing of one shot over another, combining the images) to create the illusion of a head being inflated. He used one shot of a human body without a head, and a shot that zoomed in on a man's head. When combined, the head appears to be growing because the body stays the same size.

Now to come back to the idea of the area in which the action takes place. The stage of a film is different than that of the theatre in that it is seen through the eye(s) of one viewer, the camera. This means that the actual playing space is defined by the optical properties of the camera, being the lens and the size of the film itself.

As to the dimensions of the film itself, it is interesting to consider the use of a rectangular frame when capturing light through a circular opening (the lens). It is in fact quite inefficient when compared to a circular or even square frame. It is quite plausible that the choice for a slightly rectangular, wide image was inspired by the aesthetics of the theatre stage.

A bigger difference in the filmic space compared to that of the theatre is the second optical property, lenses. There is a wide variety of lenses that can be used, each giving an entirely different image if filmed with from the same position. But since filming was generally done with a 50mm lens in the formative years (one that comes close to the viewing angles of the human eye and thus created more 'natural' images), this is not what makes the use of a single lens through which we see an image so particularly important.

What is of particular importance is what kind of a stage it creates. If we imagine a camera filming in a certain direction, we can picture its field of view as a pyramid, the top of which originates from the lens. This helps visualizing the narrow playing field created close to the lens, and the further we go back, the bigger the stage becomes.

This is the direct opposite of the stage playing space. The nearer they come to the camera, the littler room they have to perform. This also means that when giving a life-size rendering of the human body, the stage will always be smaller than that of the theatre, since only a part of the stage can be framed at the required camera distance.

The advantage to this cinema stage however, is that the camera simultaneously frees up the mise en scene. When working out a scene, there is no need to consider the three dimensionality of a situation, the way it looks from different perspectives, since the camera's perspective is that of the audience. This allows for framing shots with important things close in the foreground and other elements far away in the background, with both remaining eligible to the entire audience. This actual use of depth was not attainable in the forced perspective theatre stage. Making the cinema stage one that has the action mostly along the axis of the viewpoint, as opposed to the theatre's movement perpendicular to this axis.

What evolved from this is that cinematic sets were both able to be intimate and grand within the same story. Since these films relied on natural light, most studios were spaces with glass roofs,

through which daylight would come in and illuminate the stage. Because of the moving of the sun, the construction of the fixed stage set, with its trap doors and fixed constructions for adding moveable backdrops and such, was abandoned in favor of a simple dynamic stage. This could be positioned and moved within the studio efficiently to adapt to scene and lighting requirements.

Thus the moving-picture camera created new and unique parameters for the representation of space from the rules that had dominated the stage since before the eighteenth century. The theatrical stage was wide, the cinematic narrow, this alone made staging modeled on the theatre an impossibility for film. It solved this obstacle by creating a staging that instead focused on composition in depth, that was able to show both small and huge architecture at the appropriate scale, due to the relative screen size of the human body.

AN ANALYSIS OF *DOGVILLE*

'The sight of actors all occupying the same barren stage, and the knowledge that the camera will never leave this spot, induce a squirming, suffocating sense of claustrophobia, ... Everyone lives in a fundamental state of isolation, but no one is ever alone.'¹ New York Times

Using the conclusions on the differences between cinematic and theatrical practice, I will lastly investigate the attributed theatricality in certain films by analyzing *Dogville*.

Dogville is a 2003 film by Danish filmmaker Lars von Trier, placed in a fictional American town but shot entirely in Europe. The film is divided into nine chapters (and a prologue) over a runtime of 177 minutes. In the film, a woman named Grace finds herself in a small town after fleeing from some unnamed pursuers. She is taken in and introduced to the town by Thomas, the town's writer/philosopher. They are able to appeal to the townsfolk's good nature and Grace is allowed to stay in hiding for the time being.

As a way of paying people back for their kindness, Grace offers her services to each of the town's inhabitants. Though reluctant at first, it doesn't take long before Grace finds ways of helping every one of them. As time passes by Grace's mysterious past becomes more and more unsettling to the people, with police coming around asking for her. They decide there should be more compensation for their efforts and this starts a downward spiral that has Grace ending up as the town slave.

Still not satisfied and blinded by their own stupidity the people finally decide on contacting Grace's pursuers, supposedly for their own well-being and undoubtedly for the reward that comes with it. When they show up they are revealed to be a group of gangsters, led by Grace's father. The tables have turned and after being given the choice over its fate Grace decides to have Dogville rid from the face of the earth. The people are shot and the town burned.

All of this takes place on a soundstage, with the town's buildings predominantly represented by chalk lines on the floor of an enclosed soundstage out of which we never catch a glimpse of an exit. Though some functional objects (chairs, beds, wardrobes) are present, the actors mime such actions as the opening and closing of doors.

It has both been praised and critiqued for its theatrical qualities. On the one hand reviews spoke of a powerful film that used the strengths of the theatre, on the other, critics have lashed out at von Trier, stating *Dogville* is simply a play that he decided to register with his cameras, afterwards calling it a film.

'Argue that von Trier's latest is theatre and not cinema. But at least acknowledge that *Dogville*, in a didactic and politicized stage tradition, is a great play that shows a deep understanding of human beings as they really are.'¹ Empire

'Given that style, "*Dogville*" is essentially a filmed stage show -- a bad piece of '30s avant-garde theatre, to be specific.'¹ Charles Taylor, Salon.com

Be it positive or negative, any claim on *Dogville's* theatrical tendencies is essentially wrong. While it is true that von Trier was visually inspired by Berthold Brecht's epic theatre (he has quoted Brecht as a source himself) and in doing so steps away from a typical cinematic visual style, the similarities end there. In fact I will go so far as to say that not only is the film not a privately performed recorded play, it is also not theatrical in essence or style. And lastly, it should not be performed as a play

because it would destroy the essence of the story. This being of especial importance since many other films could be easily adapted into plays without many significant changes.

Of course *Dogville* has proven to be a popular play adaptation (in comparison to the average film, it is not often they get adapted for the theatre) and has been performed a number of times by different companies to date. For example, In 2007 theatre director Pieter Kramer directed a version in the Ro Theatre Rotterdam. Most recently Miroslav Krobot (Czech Republic) directed a version in 2010. It is ironic that exactly *Dogville* would be selected for the theatre. It seems to be the result of a somewhat shallow thought process, possibly considering it to be an easy adaptation with its already theatrical sensibility. When a film such as *The Godfather* would actually retain much more of its essence when turned into a stage production. This argument serves not to ascribe any primarily theatrical tendencies to Coppola's film. It serves to argue that, when reworked as a play, *Dogville* inevitably loses more of its potency than *The Godfather* would. It is, in that sense, more uniquely dependent on the idiosyncrasies of cinema.

In my attempt at analyzing the film I will not so much concern myself with the story or further symbolic meaning of the film, though I may touch on them at times. I will mostly concentrate on the way it communicates and visualizes its story and how that makes it distinctly cinematic. It is fair to say that camera placement (with one notable exception) or editing will not be considered in this study. For such things are true for all films and in comparison to theatre merely illustrate different techniques for reaching similar solutions (which is why a crossover between the media is always going to be an *adaptation*), making them irrelevant to my analysis.

First I want to take a moment to name the other, often not discussed, media influence apparent in *Dogville*. Most notably that of novels and short stories. This is important in relation to earlier noted influences of literary structure on feature films. An influence that we have already quoted as being of importance to the development of cinema, but see here in a more deliberately obvious manner.

The film is very much structured as a novel. It is divided up into chapters, each with their own title card and description of the events set to unfold in the present chapter. The film is also constantly accompanied by a godlike narrator. This novel structure of *Dogville* is something that could also be seen in early cinematic practices, where title cards were frequently used to divide and clarify scenes in the story (the use of title cards for a character's dialogue had a different function and reasoning).

To illustrate: in the 1903 film *Uncle Tom's Cabin; or Slavery Days* (based on the play and in turn the novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe), the story is divided up with the following title cards:

- Scene 1. Eliza Pleads with Tom to Run Away.
- Scene 2. Phieas Outwits the Slave Traders.
- Scene 3. The Escape of Eliza.
- Scene 4. Reunion of Eliza and George Harris.
- Scene 5. Race between the Rob't E. Lee and Natchez.
- Scene 6. Rescue of Eva.
- Scene 7. The Welcome Home to St Clare, Eva, Ophelia, and Uncle Tom.
- Scene 8. Eva and Tom in the Garden.
- Scene 9. Death of Eva
- Scene 10. St Clare Defends Uncle Tom.
- Scene 11. Auction Sale of St Clare's Slaves

- Scene 12. Tom Refuses to Flog Emaline.
Scene 13. Marks Avenges the Death of St Clare and Uncle Tom.
Scene 14. Tableau: Death of Uncle Tom.

Also note the use of the word of tableau as described earlier. Although remnants of tableaux can be found in the first motion pictures, in this case there is not being referred to an actual tableau in the theatrical sense since there is no prolonged dramatic pose involved.

All of these structural divisions alert the audience to the story development during the course of the upcoming chapter. A structure of course lifted from the chapter division of books, in this case specifically novels. This was also applied, and more strikingly so in *Dogville* (not in the least because it is a practice very rarely seen in modern cinema, with the chapters being a remnant from silent film days). The title cards for *Dogville* read:

- Chapter 1. In which Tom hears gunfire and meets Grace.
Chapter 2. In which Grace follows Tom's plan and embarks upon physical labor.
Chapter 3. In which Grace indulges in a shady piece of provocation.
Chapter 4. Happy times in Dogville.
Chapter 5. Fourth of July after all.
Chapter 6. In which Dogville bares its teeth.
Chapter 7. In which Grace finally has had enough of Dogville, conspires to leave town, and again sees the light of day.
Chapter 8. In which there is a meeting where the truth is told and Tom leaves (only to return later).
Chapter 9. In which Dogville receives the long-awaited visit and the film ends.

This division of course has an enormous effect on the story. It mainly serves, as it did in early films, to separate gaps in space and time, since on a closed set such as this it is harder to convey such moments. But Von Trier goes even further through the use of very long and overly descriptive titles, with the final one even self-consciously referencing to the story itself as being a film. The somewhat unnecessary extent to which we are led through the story is also reflected in the presence of the narrator. While having a narrator in film is usually avoided, if one is employed it certainly never is in the manner in which John Hurt's narration blankets *Dogville*. In general, narration is used to summarize a prologue or tie together a series of separate events for an overlapping moral at the end of a story; to emphasize what has already been told or is being told visually. Here the narration not only takes that function but also explains to us things that are so mundane and obvious, that it is clear that this is not about narration in the traditional cinematic sense. For example, in the beginning of the film, before Grace arrives, Tom hears gunshots and stands at the edge of town listening for more. As he gives up he sits down to think, the narrator tells us with his rich voice in Dickens' English: "A tad disappointed, Tom sat down on the old lady's bench to think." It then goes on describing all the thoughts and feelings that he experiences during his time on the bench. This is in no way a cinematic practice, which whenever possible operates under the 'Show, don't tell.' moniker. The idea is that the more room you leave for personal interpretation the better your audience can relate to your story. The apparent reason for this literary setup in *Dogville* is that it is, at the base, a typical morality novel (with a twist) as were being published aplenty both before and during the time in which the story takes place.

Looking at the film's cinematic style and origins it is interesting to note that Lars von Trier was one of the Danish filmmakers to author the Dogme 95 manifesto, in 1995.

This manifesto stated that cinema should pursue its autonomous nature by shying away from any theatrical or staged situations. Dogme filmmakers believed in the idea of naturalistic filmmaking to help immerse and engage their audience. They created the following rules for achieving this 'pure' cinematic style (abridged):

1. Filming must be done on location. Props and sets must not be brought in.
2. The sound must never be produced apart from the images or *vice versa*.
Music must not be used, unless it occurs within the scene being filmed.
3. The camera must be a hand-held camera. Any movement or immobility attainable in the hand is permitted.
The film must not take place where the camera is standing;
filming must take place where the action takes place.
4. The film must be in colour. Special lighting is not acceptable.
5. Optical work and filters are forbidden.
6. The film must not contain superficial action.
(Murders, weapons, etc. must not occur).
7. Temporal and geographical alienation are forbidden.
(That is to say that the film takes place here and now).
8. Genre movies are not acceptable.
9. The film format must be Academy 35 mm.
10. The director must not be credited.

Ironically von Trier seems to have never been too fussed about the set of rules he helped create. Only one of his to date 32 directing credits carries the Dogme seal: 1998's *Idioterne* (The Idiots). Other works of his, such as 2000's *Dancer in the Dark* certainly do show however that while he doesn't bind himself to the rules imposed by the Dogme manifesto, he does stay true in spirit.

Dogville in contrast is something of the ultimate anti-Dogme film; all lighting is artificial, not only are sounds edited and tweaked but in some places sound effects are added that would not have existed in the actual shooting of the scene (the opening and closing of non-existent doors, a dog barking). There are multiple crane shots (most notably an overhead opening shot) and the whole thing is recorded on a soundstage, with actors pretending to be early 20th century Americans of the prohibition era. To top it all off, there's the narration. We are told about the emotional states of characters as if we're not seeing them go through it ourselves.

And yet, for all these contrasts, The Dogme films and *Dogville* seem to have in common that they both aspire to create an experience that can only be offered within the realms of cinema. They just happen to use entirely different techniques and philosophies to bring this reality about.

The sets exist out of nothing more than functional parts, a mine entrance in which Grace hides, the top of the bell tower, without the structure beneath it to hold it up, the shop window. It is reflective of the town's cold practical attitude.

Here we come back to the visual similarities with Berthold Brecht. Brecht's philosophy was that theatre should be more of an experience for the mind than for the heart. He didn't want his audience to be thoughtlessly swept away by the momentum of a story. He wanted them to actively participate and understand that in theory the story could still go anywhere, that the characters had a choice. To

assure that the audience would remain emotionally detached he formulated the 'Verfremdungseffekt'.

This effect was at the heart of each aspect of Brecht's interpretation of theatre. He was trying to make this alienating effect pervade each aspect of his 'epic' theatre. The starting point of epic theatre was the idea of *gestus*. The philosophy behind this was that an actor should be able to convey his character through simply being, with the entire physical presence of his performance, with minimal to no use of the voice or facial expressions. This is what Brecht described as epic acting, and in his research and development he wrote a lot on different actors and actresses, specifically their techniques. In these essays, there is one actor that Brecht refers to time and time again, especially in the formative years of his epic theatre. It is the silent movie star Charlie Chaplin. Chaplin for Brecht represented the penultimate epic actor. With his face a blank canvas he was still able to create a full and completely understandable character for his audience while keeping an emotional distance. Chaplin, Buster Keaton and other (pantomime) silent movie stars of the time were a huge influence on the creation of Brecht's theatre. This is of less direct relevance to my comparison but it serves to illustrate once more how the line of influence between theatre and film became blurred, even this early on.

In his decors Brecht aimed to continue the same idea of the distancing effect. Brecht used his stage to underline the functional role he asked his actors to play. In that sense the philosophies between his works and *Dogville* differ. Von Trier does his best to involve us into the story, putting all the more focus on the characters by reducing the world around them to bare functionality. This accentuates rather than disconnects the inhabitants from the world. In the overall philosophy of *Dogville* we do however see some other remnants of epic theatre, in that Von Trier is less concerned with giving us a main character whom we can sympathize with, than trying to present us with a moral conundrum to leave us intellectually engaged.

Now I come to the biggest issue that separates Von Trier's stage with that of Brecht's work and theatrical realm in general. It does not translate back to the theatre. There is no way of making a stage production of *Dogville* that would be able to contain the story's essence. This comes from mostly practical problems that result in the loss of key elements vital to the logic of the film. Some of the most important untranslatable issues that one would encounter are as follows:

- The sounds of doors opening and closing. At first this effect is quite jarring; we are constantly being reminded of the absence of the doors and the actors acting. As the film goes on, the sound of doors opening and closing becomes as natural and logical as the sound of the characters' footsteps. Theoretically this should be possible on the stage, just as the sound effects of birds, the wind or the dog barking. But theatre has no active sound artists. It does not seem plausible if we imagine the entire town going about their business, reacted upon by a designated stagehand. It would mean having multiple people backstage being able to monitor the stage, assigned to different actors so they don't accidentally overlap. Not only would it be a logistical nightmare, but it shows us the problem of backstage, which I'll discuss further below.
- The change of the seasons. As the leaves and snow fall out of nowhere, everything is aligned precisely along the lines that mark the borders of the village's buildings. Leaving picture perfect divisions on the ground that not only help us believe in the unseen frames of these

houses, but combined with the lack of walls and roofs accentuate the strange universe we have been trapped in. This would be impossible to dress in between scenes and keep correctly aligned during scenes (because of actors walking around).

- The opening shot. A somewhat unfair comparison but one of the few that does not fall under the argument of the documented play. This shot alone explains the town to us almost before the film has begun. It is an overhead view that encapsulates the entire town, giving us a perfect vantage point for reading and observing its chalk lined layout. If we had not seen this blueprint like image we couldn't understand the rigidity of this town as instinctively as we do. It is simply not as simply recognizable and powerful from the ground level, undermining the value of the precise outlines and incredibly plain Main Street.
- The burning of Dogville at the end of the film. Not because a fire couldn't be theatrically constructed (The burning in the film itself is all suggested). It is because of the aftermath it creates. After all the inhabitants are shot and the town burned at the hands of Grace, we see no more remnant of its sparse buildings. Just the dead bodies lying around the barren surroundings. This is not impossible because of the change from decor to an empty space (for the action could always be intercut with an end of scene), but because of the lack of meaning it would have in a scaled down, fragmented stage town, as described in the point below.
- A stage version could never contain the entire town of Dogville, multiple reasons. Herein lies the biggest problem of all. Which is divided into several aspects:
 - In terms of scale it would be impossible to construct the entire town for a theatre production. Even with an adequate space to construct the town in, the distance between performers and public would mean the story would become inaudible and/or invisible (see below) to the audience.
 - It would be unable to hide such attributes as the lights needed to illuminate the set. Either that or the set would have to be constructed on a traditional stage, returning to the point made above. Both options make it impossible for us to forget that we are watching a staged event.
 - The three dimensional setup (not taking scale into account) of the town would also be a hindrance with an audience present, the town would have to be transformed into a more two dimensional design so that every location is visible from the audience's perspective, bringing us back to the fundamentals of theatre staging. Again, this makes it a lot more difficult for the audience to forget they're watching a play. Another solution would be to have the audience actively observe and walk on the stage, which would severely undermine the tension.

Because of all this, in order for the adaptation to work practically, the story would have to be divided up into several locations (this is indeed how the play adaptations that I know of went about it), in which we will not be able to see the rest of the town about its business in the background. Instead getting just a dislocated part of this world. This slicing up completely demolishes the sense of isolation the original film spends three hours establishing and exploiting. The fact that we can take this awful town and break it up into manageable pieces makes it lose all the menace it could have possessed. The same goes for characters being forced to go backstage and disappear, again breaking the illusion of captivity.

All of these are important additions to the story that give it its unique atmosphere and make it worthwhile. But the most crucial change lies with the audience, who are no longer just outsiders. As a theatre audience, even if a full scale set was somehow conceived, we would not be viewing this world from behind a safe veil. Like the inherent voyeuristic nature of the cinema. But at the same time we would still not be part of this world represented in front of us, even though we would be physically present. Our presence only makes the division between audience and performers more apparent. Although at first consideration it would seem that being 'inside' the town might possibly make the claustrophobic nature of the story even more tangible, when imagined it brings with it some inherent complications.

The menace in the story lies not so much in the characters. It lies in the feeling of isolation that the film gives us by showing us a 360 degrees stage with no discernable exit, from which the characters themselves, most importantly Grace, seem unable to truly leave. We can be aware of the cameraman but we remain clueless as to the other number of people on the set or how they get there, and if the cameraman leaves for that matter. Because of that, every escape attempt that Grace undertakes feels more and more futile as we realize that there lies nothing beyond the borders of this bleak town. At least not in von Trier's intentions.

As a member of the audience in the theatre, this works differently. We would not only remain aware of the rest of the people we are sitting among, but also the route through which we entered this place. If not that we would be reminded of the world outside by such mundane things as emergency exit signs. By always understanding that we, the audience, are part of this town and able to leave whenever we so wish, even knowing exactly how to do so, we cannot feel as if the players on stage do not share that privilege.

So we are reminded that the town is the most important player in the story. Its inhabitants serve as little more than stereotypes. It reminds us, as Von Trier himself has mentioned, that this story could happen anywhere. That evil can rise up whenever and wherever the circumstances are favorable. Cinema is the only medium that enables us to have the suspense of disbelief to travel to this incestuous alternative dimension. The dynamic staging it has developed allows it to show us the town from up close, far off and every other angle, without ever breaking the spell.

Without the camera, there can be no town. Without the town, there is no *Dogville*.

CONCLUSION

It must be acknowledged that the theatre has been an influence for filmmakers. Not the biggest but certainly still a great one. But as we understand now this is more of a dialogue than a monologue, the influence between cinema and theatre goes back and forth. Theatre stands out from other media that were influential to the cinema in that it has at the heart very similar elements to fiction film; with actors, dialogue, stage, etcetera. It differs in that both media have radically disparate dialectics and as a result make use of these elements in fundamentally contrasting ways.

Theatre practice at the time of the first motion pictures had all but abandoned its pictorial tradition that had permeated every facet of the craft. With different variations on naturalism being popularized in every facet of Western theatre.

Filmmakers do not owe their early inspiration to naturalism, as is often assumed, but this forgotten pictorial tradition. A combination of the framed picture (be it painting or photograph) already closely related to the rectangular celluloid, and theatrical acting and staging, which came as close to film's own potential as any other medium. But instead of copying these techniques when the shift to longer fictional dramas became more prominent, they were deconstructed and assimilated into a wide variety of already existing film techniques, developed in the twenty years prior. On top of that, fundamentals of cinema were too different to take over stage practices, both in a practical sense and in terms of content. Forcing filmmakers to create their own solutions, and styles from the very start.

It is therefore that, as is so particularly the case with *Dogville*, one should consider the properties of theatre and cinema before categorizing a film as theatrical based on solely on appearances. This is generally too vague and incorrect a term to apply.

In closing, even though the theatre mostly served as an inspiration rather than a guidebook, we still have to somewhat diminish the historical importance attributed to editing techniques in the creation of the definitive cinematic dialect, as was done by early film historians intent on establishing cinema as a unique form of art (and as is still taught to this day). Because the various elements of countless other, established media that were assimilated and adjusted according to the rules of the camera, had already firmly cemented film's idiosyncrasies long before the invention of pictorial juxtaposition. It just wasn't quite so obvious.

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