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# When a film remembers its filming: The New Hollywood zoom

**ABSTRACT**

*In film studies, the zoom is often thought of as a technique relating to thought and attention, removed from and irrelevant to a film's grounded, spatial identity. However, by making visible the physical compromises involved in the act of filming, the zoom can also draw our attention to the physical circumstances of a production's existence in the pro-filmic world. The present article argues that this quality has been overlooked in writing on the zoom, which has tended to characterize it as either a practical tool or a psychological effect. The rise of location shooting in the New Hollywood of the late 1960s and early 1970s was roughly contemporaneous with the rise of the zoom in American cinema, and provides an important context for this reappraisal of the technique. It was in this period that 'location' became not only an important practice, but also a common theme for films, and sometimes a key selling point. The New Hollywood zoom was thus especially well positioned to operate as a subtle reminder to audiences that a film's production is a physically located process – and that the fictions we witness are a product of people going somewhere and filming something.*

**KEYWORDS**

zoom  
New Hollywood  
camera  
presence  
location  
Sobchack  
Medium Cool

The 'zoom' is a variable-focal-length lens, but the word is perhaps more likely to be used in reference to a technique, a magnifying 'zoom shot', than to a physical piece of equipment. In his consideration of the zoom, documentary film-maker and theorist Dai Vaughan is able to invoke both notions simultaneously, when he is drawn to a 'strange' zoom shot in Robert Aldrich's *Apache* (1954). It is, writes Vaughan (1999: 140–41), 'a film replete with tracking shots, often over pretty uncompromising terrain; and there is no practical reason – as far as one can see – why the shot in question should not have been done with a track'. Although the zoom is not a technique normally associated with temporality, Vaughan's response to *Apache* begins to suggest some ways in which its use can raise questions about the 'when' of a film. In this short but revealing encounter between viewer and film, the zoom seems to shift Vaughan's attention towards the circumstances and conditions of *Apache* as a production, alerting him to the fact that, as well as a fictional text, *Apache* is simultaneously the record of an effort undertaken in the pro-filmic world. This is what I mean by a film 'remembering its filming'; the zoom, I will argue, can challenge the present-tense address of cinema by invoking (more directly than, for example, panning or tracking) the physical difficulties and compromises encountered in the act of going somewhere and filming something.

Rather than propose a theory of the zoom per se, I will instead turn specifically to its role in New Hollywood cinema of the late 1960s and early 1970s. First, this period has become closely associated with the zoom, a technique described by Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (2008: 99) as 'a marker of the period, like flared jeans or sideburns'; this is partly because New Hollywood marked the first widespread use of the lens in popular American cinema, and partly because some of its major figures – such as Sam Peckinpah and Robert Altman – developed a style and aesthetic heavily dependent on the zoom. Second, the rising significance of location shooting throughout this period did, I believe, provide a context in which the zoom could provoke the kind of temporal ruptures I describe above. The themes and narratives (as well as the promotional rhetoric) of Hollywood films such as *The Last Movie* (Dennis Hopper, 1971) and *Deliverance* (John Boorman, 1972) foregrounded the idea of location, and the zoom complemented this trend perfectly, by bringing to a film's style the traces of production as a logistical effort.

The approach I set out here runs counter to most critical and theoretical writing on the zoom, which generally characterizes it as a technique relating to thought and attention, removed from and irrelevant to a film's grounded, spatial identity. I will begin by outlining and critiquing this tendency in zoom scholarship, and then suggest some ways in which the particular context of New Hollywood location shooting might prompt a different reading. After all, as I describe, location practice brings its own (largely overlooked) temporal ambiguities, and it is against *this* backdrop that the New Hollywood zoom could come to act as an interface between the pro-filmic and the filmic.

## CONTESTING THE ZOOM

Nowell-Smith's comparison of the zoom with flared jeans and sideburns is characteristic of a squeamishness or embarrassment about the technique, and one which stretches back (at least) to the 1950s. A number of articles concerning the zoom were published in *American Cinematographer* from the 1950s through to the 1970s, and it is interesting to trace the unease with which it is treated, and the anxiety about whether it should be deemed a tool for

pursuing practical ends or an expressive technique. In 'Use and Abuse of the Zoom Lens', Joseph V. Mascelli (1957: 653) offers a qualified endorsement of the technology, advising that it should be used, when time and money are lacking, to imitate dolly or tracking shots: 'Restraint must be employed so that zooming is utilized only when the action calls for camera movement.' In 'New Uses for Zoom Lenses', published eight years later, Richard Moore (1965: 439) is similarly enthusiastic about the logistical benefits of shooting with a zoom lens, but he also refers to 'the zoom effect' as an end in itself, rather than an imitation of camera movement. Although he ultimately emphasizes the lens's use for re-framing *between* shots, Moore's tone, in contrast to Mascelli's, indicates a movement towards embracing the zoom's optical peculiarities. A later article in *American Cinematographer*, 'Using the Zoom Lens Creatively' by Robert Kerns (1971), returns to the question of how to ape moving-camera effects, but presents this as an option, rather than the *raison d'être* of the zoom. In 'To Zoom or Not to Zoom', Karl Malkames (1974: 713) accepts the growing centrality of the zoom in cinema, but expresses concern about its disruptive-ness and incongruity in film fiction: 'Because the audience accepts the unnecessary camera exercises and gimmicks doesn't mean that it wouldn't enjoy a greater feeling of participation if spared these diversions.'

By this point, critical and academic treatments of the zoom had begun to take seriously its creative – even its philosophical – potential. In 'The Aesthetics of the Zoom Lens', published in *Sight and Sound* in 1970, Paul Joannides (1970: 41) argues that the zoom's role in feature films is qualitatively and substantially different from its role in news and sports broadcasting, where it 'is a function, not a form'. In cinema, rather than simply perform a practical purpose, the zoom can allow 'a good deal of intellectually and visually fascinating material, extraneous in conventional terms, to be incorporated in the overall structure' (Joannides 1970: 42). One significant trend in such accounts is to describe the zoom's implications in terms of mental processes *as opposed to* practical means. Paul D. McGlynn (1973: 190) describes the zoom-in as analogous to learning as comprehension, and the zoom-out as analogous to learning as insight. John Belton (1980: 21) writes in the clearest possible terms about how the zoom warrants our interest *not* as a film-making tool for negotiating with an environment, but as a signal of psychological complexities:

If every tracking shot makes a moral statement, probing the physicality of man's relationship to the space around him, then every zoom makes an epistemological statement, contemplating man's relationship not with the world itself but with his idea or consciousness of it.

Tracing these evolving commentaries on the zoom, a particularly interesting pattern emerges. One strand of writing presents it as a practical tool, useful for imitating camera movement when conditions demand it but potentially vulgar if overemphasized, while another (later) strand is more willing to seek out the zoom's aesthetic potential as a technique in its own right. The distinction between these approaches is not absolute (and we should not be surprised that articles in a publication such as *American Cinematographer* would emphasize film-making practicalities), but I would argue that there has been an either/or dynamic governing the writing on the zoom: either it is a convenient instrument which can help film-makers overcome practical challenges, or it is a technique with profound formal implications, demanding us to rethink certain assumptions about, amongst other things, subjectivity and

spectatorship. Ultimately, I hope to reconcile these approaches, by suggesting that the zoom's status as a practical tool for negotiating a location can be incorporated into our understanding of its complex role in a film's fiction. Before doing so, however, I will examine in more detail one essay which makes a rigorous case for the zoom's complexity with regards to issues of spectatorship and ontology, and does so by explicitly and systematically arguing against its status as a means of engaging with space.

Vivian Sobchack's 'The Active Eye' warrants close attention partly because it is the most theoretically rich essay on the zoom, but also because Sobchack's conception of zooming as a performance of consciousness and a denial of embodiment crystallizes some common ideas about its role in cinema. (Not only is her articulation of this point especially challenging and persuasive, but the fact that Sobchack writes from a phenomenological perspective and yet *still* disassociates the zoom's optical effects from any consideration of the camera's physical presence is particularly revealing.) By presenting the zoom as a quintessentially ungrounded phenomenon, Sobchack underestimates the way in which zooms can – through their practical utility – shift our awareness back in time to the conditions of a film's filming.

Subtitled 'A Phenomenology of Cinematic Vision', 'The Active Eye' is an exploration of how four different types of cinematic movement invoke the essential phenomenological fact of vision's 'inherent reversibility of perception and expression' (Sobchack 1990: 21), a state of flux that Sobchack describes elsewhere in the essay as the constant interplay between the visual and the visible. The four variations of movement outlined in the essay, each of which gives a different phenomenological inflection to a film, are as follows: the fundamental movement inherent in cinema generally; optical movement (such as the zoom and shifts in focus), in which a film's 'viewing view' rather than its 'body' changes address; the movement of animate and inanimate beings (objects); the movement of the camera (subject). Optical movement, which Sobchack aligns primarily with the zoom, 'makes us visibly aware of the intentionality or consciousness of the cinema's "viewing view"', and this view 'traverses worldly space without materially inhabiting the distance between itself and the object which compels its attention' (Sobchack 1990: 25). Citing the famous zoom-track in *Vertigo* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1958) as a prime example of the zoom's lack of grounded presence, Sobchack (1990: 26) describes how, in this shot, can we see mind and body, vision and camera, at odds:

Looking down from a stairwell, the protagonist's attention transcends the intervening space and locates itself at the stairwell's bottom – but his body, aware of the fatal fall through space this attention implicates, rebels and intends itself in opposition to the transcendence of attention.

Developing these insights in relation to the phenomenological theories of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Sobchack (1990: 27) suggests (echoing McGlynn) that the 'attention' made visible in the zoom is analogous to learning, as an 'active and constitutive' state, rather than a benign status quo. The zoom, then, performs attention, and performs it as a process.

One cannot really dispute the claims made by Sobchack about the fact that the zoom does not signify (or perform) physical movement through space in the way that a tracking or dolly shot does. It does not follow, however, that the zoom renders terrain insignificant. While Sobchack (1990: 26) suggests that

the zoom ‘collapses or transcends the *bodily* meaning of distance’ (emphasis in original), one could also argue that it defers to that distance, and concedes the camera’s (or perhaps the film’s) inability to travel across the ground in question. Interpreted in this way, the zoom can act as a visible compromise, not expressing consciousness or attention so much as a desire to be closer to something which has been rendered inaccessible by non-negotiable conditions. A recurrent motif in commentaries on the zoom, and a particularly prominent feature of Kaminsky’s ‘The Use and Abuse of the Zoom Lens’, is the idea that it is misguided and unimaginative to utilize the zoom as a mere replacement for moving cameras. And yet the very notion of replacement is perhaps richer and more complex than these objections suggest. As with the comments by Dai Vaughan quoted above, when a film subtly makes us aware of filming practicalities, this can involve a significant shift in its implied temporality. Although in that passage Vaughan ultimately rules out the likelihood of environmental challenges to Aldrich (‘there is no practical reason – as far as one can see – why the shot in question should not have been done with a track’), his consideration of the possibility, accompanied by his attention to terrain throughout the rest of the film, is significant in and of itself, perhaps more so than any decisive conclusions about individual production decisions may be. Put another way, even if the priorities at play in choosing the zoom over an alternative technique seem relatively straightforward (because it is cheaper, for example, or because it makes the job of re-framing an actor much easier), to make such priorities visible – to point towards the effort that has gone into creating a fiction somewhere, at some point in the past – automatically affects the way we engage imaginatively with a film in subtle but profound ways.

And yet, in arguing that the zoom can automatically draw our attention to pro-filmic conditions, I do not mean to suggest that it does so consistently, reliably and unchangingly. The long take, for example, is a technique with certain discernible attributes that nevertheless takes on different inflections in, say, Jean Renoir’s poetic realism and Andy Warhol’s avant-garde experiments and Hou Hsiao-Hsien’s meditations on historical memory; likewise, the zoom *can* point us back to filming conditions, but perhaps only when it emerges in an aesthetic or industrial context conducive to those sorts of implications (for considerations of the zoom in contemporary digital cinema, see Barker 2009). New Hollywood, I will argue, as well as representing the first real intervention of the zoom into popular American cinema, is also a prime context in which the zoom can ‘mean’ something along the lines of what I have described.

## NEW HOLLYWOOD AND LOCATION

It does not have the iconic cachet of flared jeans or zooms, but location shooting is often referred to as an important trend in New Hollywood cinema – even if such claims are rarely, if ever, corroborated with actual figures. In his authoritative survey of Hollywood in the 1970s, David A. Cook (2000: 395) refers to ‘a steady increase in location shooting’ during the decade, but provides no more detail than this. Joe Mc Neill (2010: 616), in his study of Northern Arizona and film, asserts that location shooting in American cinema ‘accounted for nearly 80 per cent of all production by the start of the 1970s’, but cites no supporting evidence. The absence (or obscurity) of hard data may derive at least in part from the difficulty of defining ‘location’ in the first place, a question I will return to at a later stage. Nevertheless, even if the general decline in studio-based production is a subject which requires more detailed

analysis of statistics and terminology, the significance of the general pattern should not be ignored. It goes without saying that not all New Hollywood films were shot entirely away from the studio, but there is a correlation which is hard to ignore between the broad aesthetic and tonal changes which New Hollywood is thought to have ushered in (unstructured narratives, documentarist tendencies, etc.) and the burgeoning of location shooting. This correlation is also supported by studies of the important industrial changes in the 1960s. Michael Storper (1994: 210) convincingly argues that the decline of the Hollywood oligopoly and the rise of location shooting were inextricable:

Location shooting, which is a type of change in production technique, began as a direct *consequence of* vertical disintegration; like many such practices, it seems to have reinforced itself in circular and cumulative fashion [...] By the 1970s most of the studios had, in effect, ended their roles as physical movie factories. Even though disintegration had begun with the limited objectives of cost-cutting and product differentiation, in the end specialised firms and non-studio locations proved superior [...] The studios could no longer compete against the independent production companies and specialised contractors they had helped to create, in the very market segments they had hoped to retain.

(original emphasis)

How might this have any bearing on films as affective texts? The work and methods of Sam Peckinpah begin to suggest one manifestation of 'location-ness' in New Hollywood films. The story of Peckinpah as a hell-raising taskmaster is partly the story of a paranoid alcoholic who seems to have worked most fruitfully in a state of conflict, but it also points to the fact that Peckinpah was an artist who believed in, and encouraged, the physical endurance of film-making as a creative contribution to a film. Even editors were not exempt; Lou Lombardo recalls being forced to join Peckinpah on location for *The Wild Bunch* (1969) just to share in the physical wretchedness of it all: 'come out here and sweat with me' were Peckinpah's orders (Fine 1991: 139). Actor James Coburn found *The Wild Bunch* a similarly tough test, not least when forced to film in a river:

The river was a foot deep and the water was red and hot. Along the shore, you couldn't walk through the layer of flies [...] You had to be on the set every day, whether you were working or not. You'd sit for weeks with nothing to do. Then you'd do the work great because you were seething in this atmosphere.

(Fine 1991: 87)

Violence and misogyny are often cited as the common factors in Peckinpah's New Hollywood films, but there are more subtle qualities at play, too; these works are also about hot and tired people in hot and tiring places, in such a way that correlates closely with Peckinpah's imposed conditions. *The Ballad of Cable Hogue* (1970), in this respect, whose plot is premised on the miraculous discovery of water in an arid desert, deals directly with something which underpins other Peckinpah films. Beginning the film disoriented, hungry and thirsty to the point of death, Cable Hogue (Jason Robards) is a vivid embodiment of the effort that can be required simply to *be* somewhere – a struggle which characterized Peckinpah's production methods as well as his fictions.

Both the zoom and location shooting demand, or at least invite, descriptions and analysis which take into consideration a grounded pro-filmic experience *alongside* emergent textual and diegetic qualities. I argued above that studies of the zoom have overlooked this temporal aspect; location shooting, meanwhile, has received surprisingly little sustained attention at all in film studies, especially when we consider how widespread that term is in film discourse, from scholarly history to popular criticism. It warrants no entry in the index of Bordwell and Thompson's *Film Art: An Introduction* (2010), *How to Read a Film* by James Monaco (2009), *Cinema Studies: The Key Concepts* by Susan Hayward (2006) or the Routledge *Introduction to Film Studies*, edited by Jill Neldes (2012).<sup>1</sup> Even the increased interest in cinematic space, place and geography over recent decades has not prompted any comprehensive attempt to grapple with the question of what it means (and entails) to shoot, and to have shot, a film on location. However, the sporadic attempts to do so are revealing in themselves, at least in the context of the current discussion, because they immediately face challenges relating to the 'when' of location – whether it is a fact of production or a quality of the finished film, a site which is visited or a narrative element in need of realization.

Robert Maier's *Location Scouting Management Handbook* is a practical guide for film-makers and photographers, and includes guidance on logistics, organization and aesthetic considerations. It is a good place to begin thinking through what makes location such a tricky (and surprisingly rich) issue, precisely because it is a book which makes every attempt to explain and clarify location shooting in simple and accessible terms. Its first chapter offers an engaging potted history of location shooting in American cinema; from the 1930s until the 1960s, writes Maier (1994: 3), the 'sound stage's doors were locked, and filmmakers became virtual prisoners of the microphone and of the factory mentality of Hollywood's studio moguls'. Shortly after, Maier (1994: 7) then attempts to answer his own question:

What is a location? A location is a real place. It is a specific structure, an area, or a setting where action and/or dialogue occurs in a script. As differentiated from a 'set', a location is a place where a production must go in order to have the right background to tell its story.

The subtle contradictions here are both disorienting and revealing. First, Maier's use of 'setting' as a sub-category of 'real place' suggests that, even in the attempt to describe a stable pro-filmic reality, narrative and aesthetic associations are already present. He goes on to propose that these real places are where characters' action 'occurs in a script', which brings with it a confusing temporal complication: do locations pre-exist a script, and what is the relationship between an implied location in a script and a filmed location in the film itself? Finally, the relative status of narrative and environment is curiously contradictory; a production 'must go', is impelled to go, to a particular site, but that site then becomes relegated to mere background, permanently at the service of story.

I focus on Maier's somewhat puzzling definition less for its own sake than for the broader complexity it points to. The knotted question of what location in cinema is (or does?) warrants critical or theoretical reflection. As I have already mentioned, there are scant attempts to provide this, but Dai Vaughan – with whose thoughts on the zoom this article began – makes a tentative step in this direction with his short 'Sketch for a Lecture'. It begins

1. This is based on the latest edition of each volume.

2. Keith Richards's (2006: 60) claim that *The Last Movie* is one of 'numerous films that have merely plundered their location as colourful and exotic context' seems to betray an unfair disregard for the film's clearly ambitious – if not always coherent – consideration of location. Richards's approach is postcolonialist, and his displeasure with 'Hopper's wilful myopia towards the indigenous other' (2006: 61) is difficult to argue within the scope of such an approach, other than to say that *The Last Movie* at least tries to foreground the conditions in which such myopia can arise.

with a remark made by Fellini, in which the director (talking about his experiences of studio photography with *La dolce vita* (1960)) claimed that he would 'rather reconstruct reality than compete with it'. Vaughan takes Fellini's comment as an example of the director's break from neo-realism, a movement in which, as Vaughan (1999: 152) describes it,

it was felt that the actuality of the places where the events might have occurred, and of the people to whom they might have occurred, has, as it were, its own rights to which respect was due, and that only that conditional 'might have' stood – flimsily, as it were – between fiction and the world.

The contrasts with Maier's definition are profound; here, ethics looms large, and the independent agency of actors and environments makes terms such as 'setting' and 'background' seem inappropriate, or at least too closely tied to classical Hollywood norms. And yet those same confusions recur. Vaughan's knowing use of the conditional thematizes, but does not really face up to, the question of whether a location pre-exists a film's action; chronology is once again very confusing, as places become significant after story and character have developed, but in such a way that they can somehow predate that story (as when Vaughan refers to their 'rights'); and, finally, while fiction seems to be subservient to a pro-filmic reality, that reality is significant *to the extent that* the story 'might have' happened there.

Maier and Vaughan adopt very different approaches to the knotty question of location shooting, and it is significant that they should both stumble at a similar hurdle – namely the ambiguous temporality of location, the fact that it is simultaneously *of* a film and *before* a film. I have described New Hollywood as a period which was broadly characterized by an increase in location shooting, and thus a period in which the zoom's capacity to point us backwards in time to a film's production was especially pronounced. And yet there is a danger in painting this picture with excessively broad strokes. After all, certain films of the period – such as *Deliverance*, *Midnight Cowboy* (John Schlesinger, 1969), *The Last Movie* and *McCabe & Mrs. Miller* (Robert Altman, 1971) – are specifically concerned with the experience of exploring and coming to terms with an environment, and are deliberate in their blurring of pro-filmic and filmic location. I will conclude my discussion by looking closely at how the zoom might perform in such a film, and describing how my main contentions about the zoom and location shooting play out in a particular case study.

## ZOOMING ON LOCATION IN *MEDIUM COOL*

If films such as *Deliverance* and *The Last Movie* can be said to assimilate the production practice of 'going on location' into their themes and narratives, they do this by establishing encounters between relatively normative characters (urbanized, masculine, communicative) and unfamiliar places (rural, pre-modern, culturally alien).<sup>2</sup> *Medium Cool* (Haskell Wexler, 1969) adopts a different approach, taking place as it does in contemporary urban America, and more specifically a city in the grip of very real and very familiar political tensions and protests. One might say that while a film such as *The Last Movie* creates drama out of the presence of a production on unfamiliar ground, *Medium Cool* worms its way into an already dramatic and controversial happening – the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago – and meditates on

its presence there. Wexler's is a film which worries over the moral responsibilities of mediators, about the dangers of getting too close and staying too far removed; it is ostensibly about television, but in its concern over the implications and opportunities stemming from new technologies, and how such technologies raise new and difficult questions about presence and representation, it is acutely pertinent to the current discussion. We watch *Medium Cool* with the impression not of things happening, but of things having happened – and of a film-maker's presence at the place and time of that happening. The zoom is an important component of that effect.

One particularly rich sequence comes early on in the film, shortly after we have seen the main character, John (Robert Forster), interview young people on the sidewalk about their thoughts on Robert Kennedy. The camera, which has up until now generally shared John's perspective on the interviewees, abruptly tilts up, and instead focuses on an 'L' train passing by above and behind his head. At this point, there is a slight zoom, suggesting – as Sobchack and others would claim – a sense of heightened attention towards the train. However, this zoom is almost immediately interrupted by a cut, dramatically 'moving us' from one space to another with barely any discernible motivation, and indicating the compromised opportunities of a camera vis-à-vis the geographical mastery offered by editing. From the train, two young boys alight onto a platform, the elder one, Harold (Harold Blankenship), carrying a small basket. Moments later, still on the platform, Harold releases a pigeon from the basket, and the camera zooms in, struggling to follow the bird's path as it flies away. The terrain here appears to necessitate a zoom; the camera is positioned on a train platform, beyond which is a track, beyond which seems to be a sheer drop. The zoom's concession of its own limits is also given a poignant twist, as it is balanced against the liberation of the bird, towards which it looks but definitely does not travel. Harold's love of birds in *Medium Cool* sometimes veers towards a rather obvious kind of pathos, but here it is deftly interwoven into the film's interest in the physical phenomenon of recording. In a film which in so many ways positions itself in the here and now of contemporary Chicago, it is striking how in this brief moment both Harold and the camera seem to yearn to escape and be with the bird – and yet the 'failure' of both is vital to the beauty and significance of its flight. In witnessing the camera's compromise, we experience something of a temporal shift back to the conditions of production, but not one that distracts from or compromises the integrity of the fiction. This is in no small part because the fiction of *Medium Cool*, as with so many New Hollywood films, is from the outset concerned with presence and its implicit past-ness – to be somewhere is to have been somewhere, a condition which the zoom is especially adept at communicating to us.

## CONCLUSION

When witnessing the zoom in action, we are not – I have argued – necessarily forced to choose between understanding it as either a tool for production or as an active constituent in a film's fiction. By attending to the ways in which a zoom can refer implicitly to the challenging conditions of a production, these two interpretations can be mutually sustaining, especially in those films that foreground their on-location genesis, absorbing it into their narratives and themes. The question of camera presence is a rich and complex one, and bridges many areas of film studies beyond the scope of this current discussion,

from narratology and phenomenology to ethics and aesthetics. Edward Branigan brings together a number of these varying approaches in *Projecting a Camera*, in which he interrogates the inconsistencies and imaginative leaps at play whenever we employ the term 'camera' in our interpretation of films. Branigan's study must offer pause to any discussion of cinema that – like the present one – attempts to take seriously the issue of whether we should ever consider a camera as being present in a film text. Branigan (2006: 96) writes that 'the camera's status fluctuates in the twilight area between material object and interpretive subject', but the New Hollywood zoom seems capable of bridging these alternatives, alerting us to a camera's material presence in the pro-filmic world while also performing the fiction-sustaining role (as 'interpretive subject'), which is its primary function throughout popular American cinema. And so, when Branigan (2006: 167) suggests at a later point that knowing 'that some camera operated in the past to shoot the film [...] is quite different from knowing how a camera functions in a film fictionally and narratively', certain questions remain: Is it *entirely* different? Does it not depend on what the camera is doing, and the fiction within which it operates? The New Hollywood zoom suggests that perhaps it does.

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## SUGGESTED CITATION

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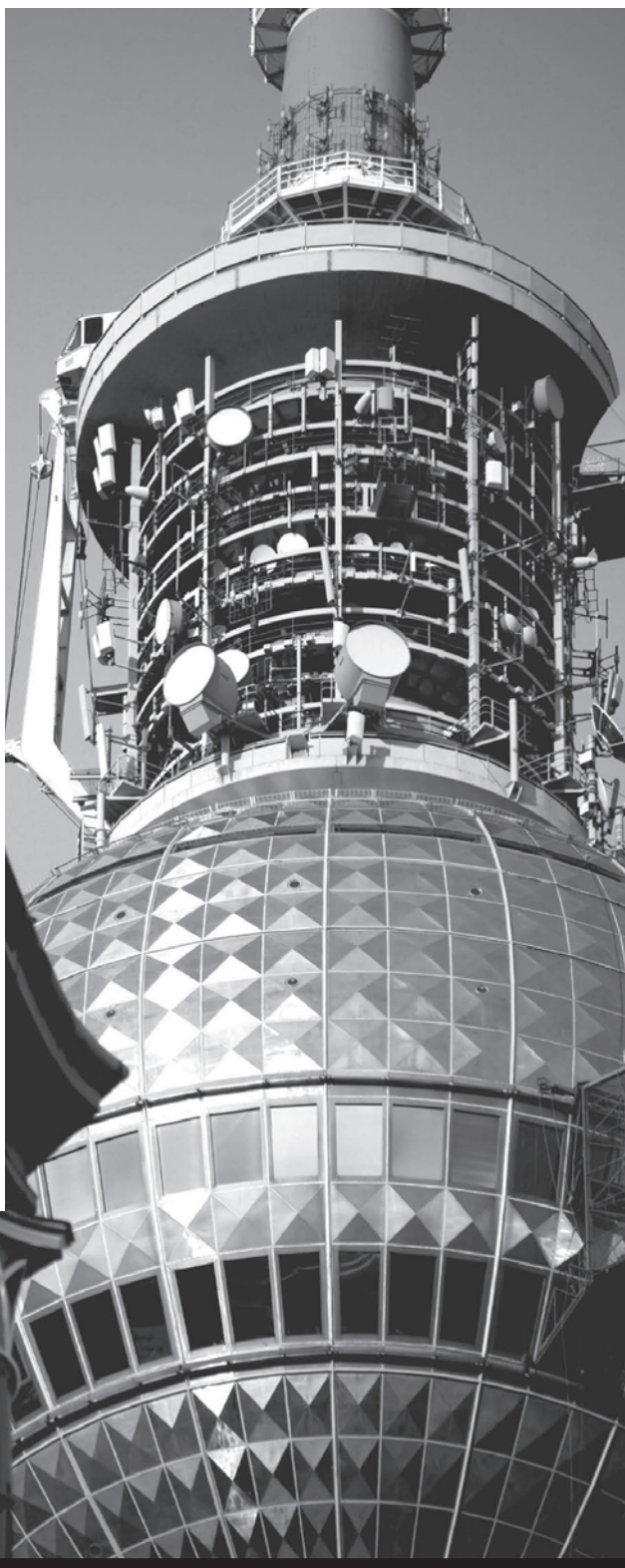
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