

Introduction

In many accounts of social and cultural change, from modernity to post-modernity, Fordist to post-Fordist production, standardization to flexible specialization, national to multinational, the film text has stood as a metonym of such transformations. From the Benjamin–Adorno debates of the 1930s, to Jameson’s postulation of the retro film as a sign of historical amnesia, through to David Harvey’s use of *Blade Runner* to represent space–time compression, film has served as an emblem of the ‘new’, of mechanical reproduction at the beginning of the twentieth century to a culture of immediacy and spectacle at the beginning of the twenty-first. Film is part of, culpable even, in the former era of commodifying social relations, and latterly in the process of scrambling spatial and temporal co-ordinates, of bringing elsewhere into proximity, and lifting the local into a global circuit. As such, film has been central to an understanding of the alienation of modernism and the fragmentation said to characterize post-modernism. Yet these perspectives on the ‘present’ are a grand orchestration of a narrowly Western view of modernism and globalization. The diverse experiences of both global change and of film cultures mitigate against a universal fluidity, materially embedded in historical paradigms of identity and culture altogether less mobile. Doreen Massey articulates this materialism notably in her description of everyday practices: against the image of the sky-bus gliding across the horizon in *Blade Runner*, ‘most people actually still live in places like Harlesdon or West Brom. Much of life for many people, even in the heart of the First World, still consists of waiting in a bus-shelter with your shopping for a bus that never comes’ (Massey, 1993: 61).

One of the notable strains of critical discourse of recent decades has been the claim that postmodernism has collapsed boundaries, tastes and hierarchies, fragmenting social cohesion and social inequality at one and the same time. This debate has then entertained the argument of whether such splintering has produced a new equality of subcultural, multi-ethnic affiliations, or obfuscated political activity of various kinds. This book starts from a different premise, stepping back from this precipice of the postmodern to consider how film, beyond the representation of postmodern cities, enters our lives. Given that most

of our experiences of film begin with waiting at a bus stop on the way to the multiplex, or slumped in the luxury or squalor of our front rooms in front of the television, film texts may offer us the view of the sky line, but we inhabit film as *culture* somewhere altogether more pedestrian.

The title of this book is a reworking of what and how we might think about and analyse film, not as the scrutiny of texts or studies of audience behaviour, but as a practice embedded in spatial and psychological contexts of social hierarchy and distinction.¹ Choices about film, our putative tastes, are derived from our position within what Bourdieu images spatially as a field, a matrix of relations structured by class, ethnic and national differences. We bring to film, and what brings us to film, is our own individual histories, which are none the less social histories produced through institutions of the family, education and work. Our tastes for film, located within our broader positioning of dispositions more generally, lead us to the social comfort and ease of certain texts and locations and the rejection of others. They propel us towards certain imaginary constructions of film as 'serious', 'entertainment', 'high brow', 'cult' or 'trash'. Yet filmic taste is not simply an arbitrary projection of individual preferences onto a range of film texts. Films themselves, as they are circulated through different paths and networks, different institutional and discursive domains, are produced and presented as a range of aesthetic objects and practices competing for status.

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How then can we 'think' the spaces between production and consumption, the text and the bus stop, which open out onto a spectacular array of circuits, networks and pathways? The aim of this book is to trace the circulation of film in distribution, exhibition, official competition and marketing: sites where the value of film is produced and are yet elusive to trace. One example of this production is the meaning that accrues to a film, independent of what the film is in itself, when it travels a festival circuit. Festivals are events of competition and judgement, are inhabited by industry professionals and have limited access for the public. In Europe festivals are located in significant cities, flagships of creativity in the post-industrial era of culture as the new economy, competing against one another for attention in the global arena. Festivals carry the symbolic capital of select spaces of cultural competition, and as such, films that premiere at these spaces accrue this restricted distinction. Unlike Oscar ceremonial awards, festivals provide classificatory awards prior to a film's general release, based on expert opinion, a marker that appears in advertising and marketing materials. Film, in turn, reciprocates the status of the city as a centre of cultural prestige.

This is an argument that the 'value' of a film is produced relationally. The festival circuit provides a particular, restricted circuit of initial distribution, which takes on meaning in relation to the mass release of other films into the public domain

as a media event, characterized by informational saturation. The relational discourse of value operates across a set of opposing terms extending beyond open access and restriction; it operates most poignantly in our conceptualization of the film itself. If we open a cereal box and a protagonist from a feature film clatters into the cereal bowl, if we open the pages of a magazine and the character of a film is promoting Diet Coke, the film slips into various practices and texts of everyday life. Whether we conceive of film as a discrete object with integral boundaries or as one component within a range of ancillary products is a distinction drawing on a historical opposition of purity and proliferation. The versioning of certain film narratives as games, toys, soundtracks and clothing repositions certain films as hyper-texts, creating links to other products and applications. The relational discourse of value operates across discursive domains where film as culture is produced – in marketing and journalism, the texts of advertising, promotion, reviews and features. The apparently ‘neutral’ decision of choosing which film to see is conditional upon where we recognize ourselves in the profiles of magazines, newspapers and television, where we share the language of reviews, identify with the ‘you’ and ‘us’ of advertising, and are reviled by the ‘you’ and ‘them’ of other texts. ‘A comedy-romance’, an ‘action-adventure’, ‘Tunis new wave’; ‘riveting, pure cinema’, ‘guaranteed to thrill’, ‘packed with testosterone’ – such taxonomies speak ‘our’ language.

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However, more than simply confirming existing tastes for individual films, this infrastructure of circulation affects and conditions our relationship to spatial practices. The paths of filmic circulation, whilst not strictly determined or fixed, deliver different film cultures to locations with diverse symbolic status. The multiplex at the outskirts of town is an environment that threatens to elide film exhibition with shopping, locating film within the context of commodity culture. It is a site, as Friedberg notes, predicated on social separation, a fabricated space cut off from the elements, a time capsule set adrift from the encounter of difference in urban life. Whilst the arthouse, a declining exhibitionary space under threat of closure in many parts of Britain, locates the cinematic experience within the heart of a historically dense fabric. More distinct still, the art gallery relocates film within a history of art practice and tradition, providing the intertextual referents for film within the surroundings of other artworks. Our taste for film is suggestive of our relationship to these spatial sites and whilst we may not inhabit each of these sites exclusively, foregoing all others, patterns of consumption fall into familiar routines rooted in the social comfort of environments, the ease and familiarity of the habitus as a spatial framework.

The methodology of tracing intermediary networks emerges as part of a conversation about how we might analyse and understand the part that film plays in forging connections between space and texts, between images of nationhood

and social subgroups. Certainly, there are markers in the field where the study of filmic taste cultures occurs, in the analysis of popular film (Dyer and Vincendeau, Hollows and Jancovich, 1995), and in the exploration of film as social practice (Friedberg, 1993; Staiger, 1992; Turner, 1992; Stacey, 1993; Wasko, 1994; Willeman, 1994). Yet the methodology of these accounts has remained fairly peripheral in the canonized approaches to the study of film, evident in text books, readers, curriculum and conference schedules. These texts narrate a story of analysis that moves through film history, aesthetics and textual semiotic analysis, ideology and the apparatus, towards a more recent emphasis on audience research. Film Studies is a broad church, of course, with greater nuances than this account can cover. Yet there is a particular shift in film studies from the text to the audience that for my own purposes of situating the debate that follows I will briefly reference.

4 The film text has been central to a range of methodologically and conceptually different approaches which I will gloss here. From the earliest writings on the nature of film, which strove to locate the 'essence of cinema' (Germaine Dulac, 1925), the notion of film as a 'new' art form and experience propelled a taxonomy of the technical and aesthetic features of the medium. Analyses of the effects of projection, editing and sound, the performance of the camera, contributed a broad and discursive sense of film language and practice. It is an approach that is not singular, nor singularly academic; from Eisenstein onwards, many contributors to the debate have been practitioners as well as writing about film. More singular in its approach, structuralism brought semiotics to bear on the text, drawing an alignment between wider ideologically motivated discourses of subjectivity and the particular ways in which the filmic experience had become sedimented. The psychoanalytic turn of 1970s *Screen* theory sealed an understanding of the filmic text as operating a compatible ideology through mainstream production processes, exhibitionary apparatuses and textual form. Continuing into the present, the desire to comprehend, codify, reread film language and effect centres the text as the subject of analysis.

In many ways, the empirical turn of audience studies has been a reflexive response to the difficulties that arise from the methodology of textual analysis. These are problems of determinacy, structure and agency. To render the argument crudely, the structuralist and poststructuralist readings of particular films or genres instates an ideological determinism to the practice of film spectatorship under the influence of Althusser. Emerging out of a movement where the critical imperative was to demonstrate how significant and forceful the effects of culture (rather than simply economics) were in reproducing dominant ideology, the danger of a structuralist account was that the spectator appeared as a two-dimensional walk-on part. In response to this, a more Gramscian notion of nuanced cultural engagement replaced the abstract spectator with the empirically grounded audience.

Influenced by a range of writings of the 1980s, most poignantly Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life*, audience studies repositioned the focus of film studies, or opened out a new dimension, with the study of the practices and tactics of viewers located in the cracks between ideological slabs. The notion of the active audience has redoubled textual readings, made them more complex, dissonant, at times backfiring against the perceived intentional effects of apparatus and formal textual positionings. With this renewed concept of ideological engagement as complex and indeterminate, has come the charge of ascribing utopian forms of resistance to audiences; audience studies are accused of placing the fulcrum at the farther end of the spectrum between structure and agency.

The starting point for this book is the space between these two approaches of text and audience – the spaces, networks, structures and flows through which film travels between these poles. Part of the argument is that film never finally arrives or is fixed at any one point but, like Appadurai's phases of the commodity, enters certain windows and arenas, before moving on to the next. And not only a deferral of the arrival of the one text but its afterlife, in a range of ancillary texts as the film undergoes metamorphoses of various kinds: animated as a computer game, reformatted as video, spliced into soundtracks, miniaturized as toys. The practices that shape the flow of film include (but are not exhausted by) production strategies, marketing, film festivals, reviewing, distribution channels and sites of exhibition. These are more than mediating processes suturing the path between supply and demand. The structures, patterns and formations produced by these practices in part inform production and shape consumption in a circle that never quite connects. What these practices engender, I argue, are particular film cultures, embedding film within practices of everyday life that are to a certain extent mapped out historically, filling the contours of the existing socio-cultural formations. Why might a seemingly innocuous manifestation of preference, that is 'taste', be a significant tool in understanding our relationship to film?

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nausea

Paris, the late 1970s. Two French men are busy, labouring over the production of two different texts in different parts of the city's suburbs.² It is summer, afternoon, the air is thick with the smells of cooking mingling with a less distinct toxicity of car fumes. Voices, the sound of children playing, waver on the air. Bourdieu is writing up the findings of a large survey on taste conducted 10 years before; the book has been a long time coming, a huge gestation. But the findings are conclusive; this is a game, he writes, the playing of culture and taste to win advantage but on a field that is far from level. Derrida, meanwhile, is putting the

final touches to a work on aesthetics, *The Truth in Painting*. It is a culmination of a different sort, expanding on the playful business of an earlier essay, 'Economimesis'. Smell, asserts Derrida, is simply taste distanced, held off. There is a sense of nausea for both writers.

'In matters of taste, more than anywhere else,' writes Bourdieu, 'all determination is negation and tastes are perhaps first and foremost distastes, disgust provoked by horror or visceral intolerance ("sick making") of the tastes of others' (1979: 56). In this account, the articulation of taste is not merely expressive, the **indication** of a preference, but a refusal, functioning through the necessary construction of others' tastes. To be able to express a taste, and if taste is always the taking up of a position, albeit unconsciously, this is then dependent on a knowledge of the social cartography of taste formations.

6 Otherness enters both accounts as that which is refused, dispelled. Both, like the majority of works on aesthetics in the past century, are in dialogue with Kant's thesis on aesthetics. For Derrida otherness represents the binary oppositions that Kant's work is predicated on; pure art against the copy, distanced pleasure against proximate enjoyment, creativity against mechanical production, infinite value against exchange value. Stumbling across the taste of others, Derrida writes, attempting to incorporate this difference, the subject of this masterful discourse chokes, vomits out what cannot be assimilated; the act of vomiting, like Bourdieu's sickmaking, is the expression of disgust. From these accounts, taste is returned to its corporal paradigm; not natural 'taste' but a refusal of the split between mind and body that Kant's writing enforces. Here, the body returns, explodes orally onto the scene as a loss of corporal control.³

Despite this common assault on Kant's thesis, Derrida and Bourdieu pursue different disciplinary approaches to taste, which lead in opposite directions. For Derrida, taste as the aesthetic is a category to be emptied out (as Armstrong notes), deconstructed, pulled apart to show the fallacy of binarized thought; taste is the expulsion of difference. In Bourdieu's work in *Distinction*, on the other hand, taste is the site of difference, a mechanism no less, crucial to the operation of social ranking; binarized thought persists in naturalizing our differential relations to culture, suturing cultural preference with social position. Bourdieu's account pursues a neo-Marxist approach to the study of culture as social reproduction, but placing culture (rather than economics) more centrally and insidiously as the key mechanism through which social difference is unwittingly perpetuated.

How then does taste operate, and how do we acquire tastes? In the thick volume of *Distinction* Bourdieu presents empirical evidence of the patterns of cultural preference that correlate to the structures of class in French society. Through an

interpretation of the survey material, Bourdieu cross-references cultural preferences for a range of objects and practices with demographic information on education, familial status, vocation and age. The findings dovetail into a range of social predilections for particular cultural forms clustering into groups that represent the divisions between classes. Why should this be so? For Bourdieu, the sedimented histories of identity, indelibly shaped by education and the family in particular, form an unconscious framework, at once a map upon which we orient ourselves, and a set of approaches as automatic as speech, that enable us to respond to the moment: taste as a knee-jerk reaction (again, the body). This Bourdieu names the habitus.

In positing such an argument, there is an immediate risk of overemphasizing social reproduction and the power of the infrastructure in determining behaviour. This is a criticism levelled at Bourdieu, accused of overemphasizing the systematic effects of social infrastructure whilst ignoring both the internal contradictions inherent to social formations (Garnham, 1993), and underplaying individual agency (de Certeau, 1984). Bourdieu has been cautious to situate his project (beyond *Distinction*) across the dualisms of structure and agency, structuralism and poststructuralism (Bourdieu, 1990).⁴ Whilst his work draws attention to the part that culture plays in reproducing the social formation, he is eager to point out the contingency of social positioning, the ability of agents to shift position and thereby move the dynamics of any given field whilst remaining within its confines. His work is both riveted and riven by the forces of stasis and change which, when not the subject of critique, are taken up in oppositional ways. Susceptible to appropriation by both neo-Marxists and postmodernists alike, Bourdieu is at times wheeled on to underscore the immutable nature of social structures and, paradoxically, called upon to 'redeem' popular cultural tastes.

This book attempts to move away from the dilemma of reproduction and change, structure and agency, the stark terms that trouble the emphasis of any critical account of culture by holding these forces in tension. The way that this tension is presented conjoins another dilemma of the present, the reading of modernism and postmodernism. The debate whether modernity has succeeded, whether its project was ever desirable, or whether we have moved beyond modernism into a differently textured moment, has had extensive play (and canonization) in the work of Habermas, Lyotard and Jameson. This exhaustive debate, and its many critiques, circles questions of periodization and change without coming to rest. The level of generalization that besets any such description as modernism and postmodernism opens out onto other questions of individual perspective and investment, of which dates are significant and for whom, of which cultural and geographical terrain these terms claim to speak. Rather than falling into step with these accounts, I have used the terms modernism and postmodernism as *processes*

which exist simultaneously, rather than as discrete epochs. Their co-existence has been remarked upon elsewhere, as Stuart Hall argues, 'postmodernism remains extremely unevenly developed as a phenomenon in which the old centre peripheries of high modernity consistently reappear' (Hall, 1996: 466). Yet the terms continue to strike a resonance; situated in tension, they speak of the dual forces at work in the present, of modernist forms of hierarchy and postmodern forms of fragmentation. Whilst not commensurate with the strain between structure and agency, modernism and postmodernism as processes offer a way of articulating the forces of change and stasis, of flow and fixity, that characterize the movement of culture, and film in particular.

8 The positing of modernism and postmodernism as process here owes much to the incisive critiques and critical reworkings of these terms from writers working in the area of postcolonial studies. Beyond the argument that modernism and postmodernism are historically redolent and geographically remiss, writers such as Ahmed, Appiah and Gilroy have reconceptualized the somewhat linear model of historical succession as a series of movements and effects that are scrambled in the ways that they take root globally. Appiah notes the co-existence of modernity and tradition in Ghana during his childhood as thoroughly imbricated facets of a culture. In a different context, Gilroy has written and recovered a history of black slaves as among the first postmodern peoples, displaced, transnational, acting within a double consciousness of cultures, identifications, allegiances.⁵ Dispelling notions of mobility and displacement as symptoms of the present, Gilroy writes in a postmodern vein of ships as 'modern machines that were themselves micro-systems of linguistic and political hybridity' (Gilroy, 1993: 12). The critical endeavour of this work illustrates how the concepts of modernism and postmodernism appear as processes – of displacement, of hybridity, of transnationalism – that resist the orthodox account of temporal classification. The use of modernism and postmodernism in this text as processes suggest a dynamic at work between forms of mobility and stasis, networks of flow and centres of production, a horizontal surface and a vertical hierarchy. Here, the structures of nationhood manifest in institutions of policy formation and funding, in governmental reviews of national culture and in forums of European cultural legislation, are positioned as the modernist points of fixity in a system of cultural exchange and flow. In contrast, the mechanisms of circulation, the channels of dissemination that traverse national boundaries, and that proliferate film narratives across various media formats, are situated as the more liquid processes of postmodernity.⁶

The tension between these oppositional processes is often more a case of collision than of polite encounter, and film occupies a peculiarly important place in national cultures. Film is not simply a component part of the heavily ideologically

invested 'cultural industries', but holds particular sway in several ways. First, as a product laden with the promise to generate employment as a 'creative industry', film reproduces the image of nations as productive, a crucial sign in an age of post-industrialism. Second, the film industry is also a service industry for international production companies, a facilities house with highly skilled labour. Third, film as a product is also constructed as an index of national attributes, representing the nation as an export intended for circulation elsewhere. In this multifaceted role, film inhabits a interstitial position between nations and transnational companies, between policy makers and film makers, and between various critics and audiences in debates on cultural worth. These fractious discourses are conducted in multiple forums – perhaps most obviously in the forums of international trade discussions such as GATT, where the modernist structures of the nation state attempt to place constraints on the processes of cultural flow. Yet they also occur in the pages of newspapers and on radio phone-ins for example, in Britain in relation to the spending of lottery money on film. Perceived to be a tax on the poor, the allocation of lottery funds to films that proved to be commercially weak performers produced a debate in which filmic taste came to represent divisions of class, ethnicity and other differences of identity and interest. The debate has a divisive edge in that class antagonisms emerge in resistance to what is perceived to be an erudite, avant-garde culture, suggesting in its place the possibility of a more popular, national film culture. Yet, this produces a sense of a preconstituted homogenous, national culture, whereas the major struggle facing European nations, and Britain in particular (whether evidenced on the streets of Bradford, school curricula or policing the Channel Tunnel) is the recognition of the ethnic and cultural diversity within its bounds.

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An important part of discourses of value is that taste exceeds any simple adherence to class affiliations; taste for film cultures involves our imaginary identifications, our familiarity with certain institutions and cultural spaces. And whilst subtitled films are distributed by arthouse cinemas alone, and commercial success and competitiveness in overseas markets remains a priority for national film policy, the spectre of multiple, culturally diverse film cultures co-existing becomes more obscure. This book takes as a starting point the most polarized images of contemporary film cultures, the arthouse and the multiplex, in order to attempt to locate the origins of such a division, a path that leads back to early film and its institutionalization, and earlier still to the separation of the terms 'commerce' and 'culture'.

the chapters

The first chapter of the book returns to the beginning of the twentieth century and the emergence of cinema, to locate the divisions in film cultures in an historical context. Film is, of course, born into the moment of what has become known as European modernism, where technology takes on the dual charge of negative alienation through industrialization, and technology as progress, potentially breaking with tradition and simultaneously promoting enlightenment ideals of evolutionary progress. Cinema insinuates itself in the social fabric in various ways (Gunning), as multiple forms of entertainment drawing on popular forms of vaudeville, the spectacle of the fairground, the surveillance of anthropological travelogues and an imperial gaze, as the mimesis of local scenes of everyday life. The historical descriptions of early film emphasize the heterogeneous nature of cinema; its consolidation as a culture in particular exhibitionary practices and sites is predominantly read as a reduction of possibility, a paring down of the variety of cinema. The reasons for such a narrowing of scope are attributed variously to an economic imperative to standardize practice in the name of efficiency and economic return (Musser, 1990), to promote a respectability to cinema—going by eliminating its carnivalesque features, and institutionalization of production practices such as parallel editing, in line with recognizable features from other forms of fiction such as the novel. Whilst each of these points is persuasive, I would argue that the institutionalization of film, resulting in the production of a dominant mainstream and a peripheral avant-garde (or independent) sector, is also attributable to an earlier split between commerce and culture.

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If Kant provides an origin of debates about the aesthetic, the context of Kant's work is also a moment in which the relationship of art to institutions of patronage is redefined. With the rise of the free market and the mercantile class in the eighteenth century came also fractures to the relationship between state, the production of culture and patronage. In brief, cultural production oscillates between the official art of state patronage, a bohemian rejection of such official practice, and culture as commerce. These divisions, I argue, are reproduced around film at the beginning of the twentieth century, and become located in different sites which acquire the values of their historic origins (the nickelodeon, the art gallery, the specialized film club). Each site cultivates a culture of film that distinguishes it from other sites (Neale, 1981).

These divisions of filmic cultures are complex configurations manifest in institutions, production practices, texts and exhibitionary contexts, and in ways that are not completely consistent with any neat polarization. My argument here is not that distinct aesthetic practices emerge with no traffic between them, but rather that film becomes recognizable through certain institutional and discursive

domains: the film society, the political and oppositional discourse of manifestos, the shopping mall, film criticism. The sites and cultures that are given prominence in this account represent the outer edges of the field, the more extreme positions where such oppositions retain a particular symbolic charge. Chapter 2 pursues this extremity of film cultures in a polarization of arthouse and multiplex institutions, the former concentrated on the object of the text (and the gallery pushing this to a further extreme), the latter relocating cinema to the out-of-town leisure and shopping centre. As James Hay (1997) notes of recent geographic and architectural developments, contemporary cinema is less recognizable as a distinct site for some subjects, blurring into the experience of leisure pursuits and ancillary texts, whilst arthouse remains an object-focused practice within a clearly bounded space.

If Chapter 2 suggests that film plays a part in our relationship and inhabiting of space, Chapter 3 pushes this enquiry further in a reading of European film festivals. Festivals provide a material text for the otherwise abstract circulation of film across national spaces. Festivals publicize the trajectories of film in the promotion of the event. Simultaneously film publicizes place, particular places, as symbolic capital accrues to the sites of events, restricted in access and mediated by journalists. Yet the festival provides an exemplary instance of the confusion that arises in the mixing of categories of commerce and culture. The relationship of art to commerce is troublesome, with sponsorship and marketing troubling the 'seriousness' of this cultural arena. Similarly, festivals bring into tension the interests of regional, national and international bodies, foregrounding policies to promote cultural diversity with the desire to brand film nationally and circulate it beyond the borders of the nation state.

The fourth chapter addresses the issue of the imagined and constructed audience through marketing. Whilst it is claimed that marketing has shifted its focus from demographics to psychographics in a manoeuvre that represents a reconceptualization of audiences as fragmented rather than socially structured, the practice of market research suggests otherwise. With reference to research conducted on behalf of the cinema advertising association (CAVIAR), information on audiences is classified in demographic terms, utilizing categories of social class, age and gender. What emerges from the profiling of audiences is a desire to complexify the knowledge of the range of associated media and leisure practices of audiences rather than the audience itself. Marketing for film places emphasis on the inter-relation of media platforms, in a survey of cinema attendance, video rental and purchase, cable and satellite, computer games. In a reading of genre and marketing together, the desire to maximize the life of a film across different media operates in tandem with information on the social categories of audiences and their practices of consumption.

The debates about fragmentation and flexible specialization continue in the fifth chapter in relation to film production. The influential account of film production as a vertically disintegrated practice by Christopherson and Storper (1986), is reconsidered in relation to transformations of film texts, and in relation to global and national policy. In terms of film production, the developments of the high budget and high concept feature suggest that mainstream film has developed formally as spectacle and effects, whilst capitalizing on narrative segmentation (Wyatt, 1994). The vertical disintegration at the level of production is replaced by an emphasis on horizontal reintegration (Wasko, 1994) in the versioning of film across different media forms. Such syncretic integration of multinational interests provides both the impetus for and the resistance to global trade negotiations in GATT, and more recently through the World Trade Organization. The particular focus of the debate here is how spatial and cultural affiliations are redrawn. Whilst global negotiations have effectively consolidated a European suprastructure of audiovisual partnerships, in policy if not practice, the union is troubled by national and ethnic differences, and by its relationship to a multinational presence within its borders. Cultural diversity is presented as a solution, but it is also a troubling factor in attempts at unification (Schlesinger, 1997).

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The final two chapters of the book pursue questions of filmic effect and cultural transformation, questioning to what extent film cultures are fixed. Chapter 6 addresses the subject of aesthetic in terms of the relationship between viewing subjects and film texts. In surveying cultural theorization's of the aesthetic, it is argued that the effect of film can not be guaranteed or assured, and that whilst an analysis of film circulation emphasizes the constraints of our relations to film, this does not extend to individual texts; the aesthetic encounter, its actual effect, remains a potentially enabling relation across film cultures. The final chapter of the book considers the impact of digitalization on the circulation of film, on the practices of production, distribution and consumption. Whilst digitalization opens up possibilities of extending our experience of film through new distribution systems, digitalization, like other technologies, remains embedded in the historical context of its emergence. Digitalization potentially redirects our viewing experiences to the home, where the ambient space of consumption may be enhanced by surround-sound, wide-screen and other developments. The practices of home viewing are not purely postmodern in nature, but practices such as collecting film (reformatted digitally or supplied with additional information) are cut through with the modernist impulse of ordering, collecting and controlling. Digitalization, perhaps more than any other framing of film culture, emphasizes our relationship to films as culture as both enabled and constrained.

Notes

- 1 The title of this book, I have come to discover in the writing, resonates with an earlier usage of the singular 'Film Culture' as the title of an American magazine devoted to avant-garde film making. In 1955 Jonas Mekas, a poet and an immigrant from Lithuania, discovered cinema in New York and founded the magazine, devoted to European-influenced experimental cinema in America. The title of the magazine underscores the ways in which taste for film extends beyond the text to embrace a whole culture, a matrix of shared values; in so doing, 'Film Culture' provides an exemplary instance of the ways in which the value of film exists in a wider body of texts that might, in Foucauldian terms, be thought of as discursive formations. For further reading see P. Adams Sitney (ed.) (1971) *Film Culture: An Anthology*.
- 2 The imaginary setting for both writers is of course of my own creating. Although the texts were published within a year of each other, I have no knowledge of where they were produced.
- 3 Apart from their common national origins, the two writers are distinguished from each other in many ways, not least in writing into different disciplinary traditions. Where Derrida is the flighty philosopher, musing on the abstraction of thought, Bourdieu digs around in the empirical matter of 'real' lives; the split of mind and body, and its attendant social values (where philosophy wins out), play on in disciplinary distinctions.
- 4 In the book *In Other Words*, Bourdieu redresses these criticisms and positionings of his work: 'If I had to characterize my work in a couple of words, that is, as is often done these days, to apply a label to it, I would talk of *constructivist structuralism* or of *structuralist constructivism* . . . By structuralism or structuralist, I mean that there exist, in the social world itself, and not merely in symbolic systems, language, myth, etc., objective structures which are independent of the consciousness and desires of agents and are capable of guiding or constraining their practices or their representations. By constructivism, I mean that there is a social genesis on the one hand of the patterns of perception, thought and action which are constitutive of what I call the habitus, and on the other hand of social structures, and in particular of what I call fields and groups, especially of what are usually called social classes' (1990: 123).
- 5 Moreover, the canonized uses of the terms modernism and postmodernism have mitigated against such an understanding, keeping in place the defining binary of modern, developed world versus traditional, under-developed world, a division that has facilitated the recent and devastating imaging of Islam as a pre-modern religion.
- 6 Zygmunt Bauman uses the property of liquid to describe modernity; in his account, the process of liquification has won out over the the features of resistance, of what I would want to call the continuing modernist structures. See Bauman (2000).