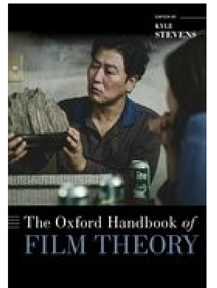

The Oxford Handbook of Film Theory
Kyle Stevens (ed.)

https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190873929.001.0001

Published: 2022 **Online ISBN:** 9780190873950 **Print ISBN:** 9780190873929

CHAPTER

29 An Invention with a Future: Collective Viewing, Joint Deep Attention, and the Ongoing Value of the Cinema

Julian Hanich

https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190873929.013.31 Pages C29–C29.N80

Published: 21 September 2022

Abstract

Since it is first and foremost the cinema that enables—or at least facilitates—concentrated and focused film experiences, this article makes a strong plea for the ongoing importance of the movie theater as a vital cultural practice and social institution. Although we better engage some films privately and alone at home, we do better to watch other films in the public space of the cinema and in the company of others. The latter is especially the case for challenging modernist art films, slow cinema, avant-garde films, and the like. Among the phenomena that make me think so is "joint deep attention." Due to its spatial and technological features, the cinema allows us to follow more challenging films with deep attention, in part because of the co-presence of other viewers: Their deep attention can contagiously rub off on ours and help us keep focused. Tentative evidence for the contagious joint-deep-attention effect of the cinema exists in empirical studies dealing with analogous experiences: studying in a library and collectively meditating in a meditation retreat. But apart from the social aspect of the movie theater, three further characteristics of the cinema dispositive contribute, at least implicitly, to the joint-deep-attention effect, characteristics hardly available when we watch a DVD or stream a film at home: its nonmundane space, the impossibility of manipulating the film, and the silence of the auditorium. The chapter revisits—and positively reevaluates—these features as forms of freedom: from the everyday, from having to act, and from noise.

Keywords: cinemagoing, collective experience, attention, dispositive, social affordance

Subject: Film, Literature

Series: Oxford Handbooks

> "[M]y consciousness of the attention of others
>
> affects the orientation of my own attention."
>
> —Yves Citton[1]

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/edited-volume/44429/chapter/374916077 by University of Groningen user on 05 October 2022

Dispositive Consciousness and Challenging Films

IT'S surely one of the most beloved ironies of cinema history: when Louis Lumière, at the very beginning of the history of cinema, famously predicted that what he had helped to create was an "invention without a future," he did not foresee that the future of the cinema was to become the most important art form of the twentieth century.[2] As we all know, this art form was, from the start, tightly tied to a specific dispositive: the movie theater. Today, in our age of mobile screens—and long after the age of television, the VHS recorder, and the DVD player—these ties are loosened to the point where viewers watch only a small fraction of films in movie theaters: Cinemagoing has ceased to be the default way of watching films long ago. It is an almost equally great irony, though, that the cinema, once praised or derided as a place of distraction by film theorists and cultural critics, is now valued by many as a sanctuary of focused attention and concentration. As Daniel Fairfax has recently put it, only slightly exaggerating, "It's the place where we have the possibility for the most concentrated experiences possible in the modern world."[3] Precisely because the cinema is a p. 591 dispositive that enables, or at least ↳ *facilitates*, these concentrated and focused experiences, we have to insist on its ongoing existence as a vital cultural practice and social institution, securing its place in what Yves Citton calls a healthy "ecology of attention."[4]

At the same time we need to develop a greater sensitivity, in our students and in ourselves, to when it is more appropriate to view a film in a cinema rather than watch it elsewhere. Like a child in a toy store trembling with consumer frenzy, how can we not feel overwhelmed by the enormous choice of filmic artworks, movie entertainment, serial television fare, multiscreen installations, and endless amounts of other moving-image offerings surrounding us? At the risk of evoking a "Gothic nightmare of fragmentation, sensory overload, an excess of meaninglessness, loss of tradition," as Adrian Martin puts it, I will urge us to reconsider not only to *what* we devote our attention but also *where*, *when*, and *how* we do so.[5] I will suggest that more than ever it is necessary to become dispositive conscious—even *dispositive conscientious*. Put bluntly, once we decide to stay on our sofas and stream challenging films—like modernist art films, slow cinema, avant-garde films—on our laptops, we knowingly or unknowingly run the risk of robbing ourselves of experiences available first and foremost in the cinema.[6] In accordance with a number of other scholars, Shane Denson and Julia Leyday have proposed the term "postcinema" for today's collection of newer media and dispositives which follow (but also coexist with) the cinema. For Denson and Leyda, taking a postcinematic perspective implies thinking about "the affordances (and limitations) of the emerging media regime."[7] I agree: We have to investigate—and teach—what particular media and their dispositives make possible for us and what they prevent us from.[8] Seen from this perspective, it is not at all far-fetched to believe that we better engage some films *privately* and *alone* at home, whereas we do better to watch other films in the *public space* of the cinema and *in the company of others*. The latter, I claim, is the case for challenging modernist art films, slow cinema, avant-garde films, and the like.

Among the phenomena that make me think so is the one in which I am most interested here: *joint deep attention*. According to Katherine Hayles, *deep attention* is a cognitive mode characterized by "concentrating on a single object for long periods [...], ignoring outside stimuli while so engaged, preferring a single information stream, and having a high tolerance for long focus times."[9] Hayles contrasts deep attention with another cognitive mode she calls *hyperattention*, which is characterized by "switching focus rapidly among different tasks, preferring multiple information streams, seeking a high level of stimulation, and having a low tolerance for boredom."[10] Due to its spatial and technological features the cinema allows us to follow films of the more challenging kind with deep attention, but it does so in part because of another central characteristic: the co-presence of other viewers. Their deep attention can contagiously rub off on ours and help us keep focused. Hence my term "*joint* deep attention."

Let me illustrate this claim with an analogy: I can surely read a bewilderingly complicated philosophical text by Hegel or Heidegger, Adorno or Arendt while standing in a crowded subway or, even more absurdly,

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/edited-volume/44429/chapter/374916077 by University of Groningen user on 05 October 2022

dancing in a club. Does this change the content of the book? Obviously not. But my experience of *The Phenomenology of Spirit* or *Being and Time*, *Negative Dialectics,* or *The Human Condition* will be a different one if I read ↳ the book in a quiet library peopled with quietly reading scholars whose attention helps me keep my own attention focused.

p. 592

Something similar can happen when we watch, in the company of quietly focused co-viewers, films that pose challenges to our physical and mental endurance and take us to the brink of our attention span.[11] Think of challenging works by Michael Snow or Béla Tarr, Maya Deren or Ingmar Bergman, Apichatpong Weerasethakul or Chantal Akerman, Albert Serra or Wang Bing, Tsai Ming-Liang or Marguerite Duras, James Benning or Michelangelo Antonioni, Paul Sharits or Angela Schanelec.[12] In the cinema and in the co-presence of quietly attentive others, chances are high that we have a different, more jointly deep attentive viewing experience than when we watch these films on our computers alone at home. To be sure, there are viewers with special attention capacities who can easily blend out sources of distraction and concentrate equally well when watching films on a laptop; some might even do so more effectively when without others.[13] But by and large and on average, viewers will be able to reach a state of deep attention more easily in the cinema and in the co-presence of deeply attentive viewers—or so I will claim.[14]

Next to *deep attention* there is another, more associative, even meditative type of spectatorship of challenging films that can equally profit from co-present viewers: *heightened tranquility*. In the first case—*deep attention*—we contemplate the images and sounds, interrogate their properties, and notice something unseen and unheard before, either because there is plenty to discover (the images are full of visual "information," as in the films of Roy Andersson) or because they allow us to see something mundane to which we have never really paid attention in everyday life (there is little "information" to take in, as in Robert Bresson).[15] In the second case—*heightened tranquility*—the film puts us at ease and makes us reflect on things only loosely connected or even entirely unrelated to it: we become "pensive spectators" (Raymond Bellour), drifting off into reverie, daydreaming.[16] In the most extreme case we feel so deeply at ease that we fall asleep, as Justin Remes has shown with reference to Abbas Kiarostami.[17] Importantly, we don't have to attend to the same properties of the filmic image simultaneously, nor do we need to follow the same associations or indulge in the same reveries. In the cinema, we are helped by the presence of others to reflect *individually* by paying attention or daydreaming *next to each other.* While in what follows I will focus on deep attention, it is important to keep in mind that both modes of spectatorship can derive from an audience effect: It is because I am surrounded by other viewers who keep on following the film in a deeply attentive or a heightened tranquil mode that it doesn't even occur to me to check my emails, text my friends, or talk to my neighbors.

The Social Affordances of the Cinema

There can be no doubt: the cinema is, for better or worse, a decidedly social institution. We can always count on—and have to reckon with—the physical co-presence of ↳ others. This has tremendous advantages *and* disadvantages: The collective character of the auditorium plays significantly into the cinema's enabling but also constraining effects. In my book *The Audience Effect*, where I deal at length with the advantages and disadvantages of collective viewing, my goal was to describe the effects that the cinema's collectivity can have on our film experience but to avoid utopian visions and overt value judgments about the superiority of the movie theater.[18] Here, I will let go of this neutrality; I will voice a straightforward plea in support of the collective cinema experience when watching films precisely of the challenging kind.[19]

p. 593

Given that it is one of the crucial features of the movie theater, the experiential effects of co-present viewers have mobilized surprisingly little film theoretical energy. With the notable exceptions of Victor Freeburg, Walter Benjamin, Erich Feldmann, Edgar Morin, and Roger Odin, the effect an audience can have on one's

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/edited-volume/44429/chapter/374916077 by University of Groningen user on 05 October 2022

film experience has largely gone unnoticed in the history of film theory.[20] Some theorists—like Boris Eikhenbaum, André Bazin, or Christian Metz—have even postulated an experiential solitude and isolation in the cinema, a position echoed by Jacques Derrida who claimed as recently as April 2001 that "there exists a fundamental disconnection: in the movie theater, each viewer is alone. That's the great difference from live theater, whose mode of spectacle and interior architecture thwart the solitude of the spectator." What made Derrida "happy at the movies" was precisely the cinema's "power of being alone in the face of the spectacle."[21]

This seems to me both phenomenologically wrong and insensitive to the benefits of watching a film with others: Some films offer *social* affordances over and above *individual* ones, affordances they lose once we watch the film alone. The term "affordance," famously coined by psychologist James J. Gibson, has gained enormous popularity in media studies and literary studies lately. With literary theorist Rita Felski, I believe that it "offers a helpful way of thinking about the *properties* of a substance in relation to those who make use of them (thus a knee-high surface, for example, affords the possibility of 'sitting-on'). Especially salient [...] is that affordance is neither subjective nor objective but arises out of the *interaction* between beings and things."[22] Thus, one and the same film can assume different characteristics—offer different affordances—under changing circumstances: Depending on where, when, and with whom we watch it, the film grants us different possibilities to act on and with it.

Let's take a drastic example, pornography, an example I do not use gratuitously. Even though I reject the essentialist claim that pornography is nothing more than material for masturbation, there is nothing outlandish about the assumption that under specific circumstances, pornographic films afford the possibility to masturbate. But, then, art films like Catherine Breillat's *Romance* (1999), *9 Songs* (2004) by Michael Winterbottom, Abdellatif Kechiche's *La vie d'Adèle* (2013), or *Love* (2015) by Gaspar Noë—films with very explicit sex scenes—may grant viewers the chance to masturbate in private, too. As a female student of mine has recently explained to me, one can even find the sex scenes from David Cronenberg's *Crash* (1996) compiled on porn sites ready. However, the individual "masturbatory affordance" is seriously constrained in arthouse cinemas with other physically co-present spectators. The very same properties of a film thus offer an *individual* affordance in one case but not in the other.[23]

 In contrast, take the *social* affordances of trash films and cult movies like Tommy Wiseau's *The Room* (2003), Jim Sharman's *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975), or films by Ed Wood. In the company of other like-minded trash- and cult-film fans these movies afford a strongly expressive-diverted type of viewing with all the collective vocal and motor actions that can come with it: speaking the dialogues, dancing in the aisles, throwing spoons or confetti, using water pistols, doing the time-warp, and so on. But who has ever thrown spoons at their own laptop while watching *The Room* alone at home?

Joint deep attention, too, is a social affordance which we can draw on only in the co-presence of others: It derives from the contagiousness of other viewers' highly focused attention. In 1969 Jean-Pierre Meunier, a film-phenomenologist recently rediscovered, suggested that "between the spectators of one and the same film, there exists a community of comportment [...] this behavioral community reinforces each individual's behavior through what they have in common." According to Meunier, the spectators in the cinema form "an anonymous intersubjective link, drawn from a contagion of reactions, and through which each individual has a vague feeling of solidarity with the crowd."[24] While Meunier omits possible distancing and individualizing audience effects, his remark gives us an interesting hint regarding the origins of the cinema's joint deep attention.

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/edited-volume/44429/chapter/374916077 by University of Groningen user on 05 October 2022

Social Facilitation and Contagious Attention

But before looking more closely at this bottom-up contagion effect on attention, I first want to zoom in on two top-down factors based on social facilitation: heightened alertness and social conformity. Social facilitation is one of the oldest topics in social psychology, reaching back to the late nineteenth century. Following Bernard Guérin, it occurs when "one animal increases or decreases its behavior in the presence of another animal which does not otherwise interact with it."[25] Social facilitation research thus deals with the minimal conditions for social behavior: "the difference between doing something alone and doing the same thing with another person present who is not influencing you in any direct way."[26] Oftentimes greater control is taken over behavior when another person is present—either to gain social approval or to avoid social disapproval.[27]

Here we could imagine cinematic situations of competition and rivalry—like seminar viewings or press screenings but also regular projections one attends with friends—that can increase alertness and lead to monitoring how strongly you pay attention to a film. You apprehend the reactions to a task waiting for you after the screening: an analysis of the film in the seminar discussion evaluated by the professor, the writing of a review more perceptive than those of other critics, or the discussion about the film with your p. 595 ↳ friends over dinner. Physiological arousal increases attention for apprehension of being shamed in class or for not winning the competition against the critic's peers or your friends.[28]

Of course, such cases of *heightened alertness* do not constitute run-of-the-mill experiences when confronted with challenging slow films or experimental works. Instead, theories of *social conformity* may have more explanatory power for the increased focused attention we pay in collective viewing constellations: "without directing the behavior of the subject explicitly, the presence of another person can lead to an increased awareness of the *social value* of certain behaviors, of social standards, or of the social consequences of behaviors," Guérin informs us.[29] The social conformity theory would postulate: in a cinema we often pay sustained quiet attention to a challenging film that we would not follow as closely when alone because paying quiet attention to an artwork is the social norm of behavior we implicitly honor in the presence of others. Just as we don't crack jokes at funerals or go to a job interview in underwear, paying quiet attention to a challenging film is what one does in the presence of other viewers in, at least, certain types of cinema—it is a display of what we accept as the socially desirable standard. In contrast to the more competitive and performance-oriented alertness factor, in the case of social conformity the idea is not so much "standing out" than being "normal" and "conforming."[30]

In both cases, we have previously learned that our behavior can have consequences when surrounded by others, although it might not have these consequences when alone. In alertness cases, the costs can be both positive and negative, whereas in instances of social conformity the emphasis lies primarily on avoiding negative consequences—like being shushed, reprimanded, or even expelled from the cinema.[31]

Now, strictly speaking, in both cases we are not dealing with *joint* deep attention: social facilitation research is primarily interested in behavior and not in collective phenomenal states (i.e., in experiential states of individuals in a group shared collectively), where the collective experience is more than an aggregation of individual states and comprises a comparatively strong form of alignment.[32] Unfortunately, it is not entirely clear yet how to define collective phenomenal states and how they come about. As Elisabeth Pacherie notes: "With the exception perhaps of collective emotions, collective phenomenology remains to this day a largely uncharted territory. We still lack detailed conceptual analyses of what exactly collective experiences are, how they relate to individual experiences and what phenomenal properties they have."[33] Especially, instances of collective perceptual or collective cognitive phenomenology—the domains the contagious effect of joint deep attention would belong to—demand further research.[34]

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/edited-volume/44429/chapter/374916077 by University of Groningen user on 05 October 2022

This goes—a fortiori—for the joint deep attention effect in the cinema, whose lack of research confirms the broader neglect of the cinema's collective experience I have criticized above.[35] However, tentative evidence for a contagious deep attention effect exists in empirical studies dealing with analogous experiences: studying in a library and collectively meditating in a meditation retreat.

 Just like a cinema is more—and something else—than a mere place for watching movies, a library is not simply a storage warehouse for printed materials.[36] As library scholar Jeffrey T. Gayton points out, the communal aspect of the library involves seeing and being seen working quietly. Emily Ranseen assists: "We live in a noisy society, where it is frequently expected that exchange of energies necessitates sound. But communal study in a library fosters a *silent* exchange of energy."[37] In an empirical study on a public library in Porto, in which she used ethnographic and interview techniques, Paula Sequeiros furnished evidence for these claims: the library, she writes, "clearly allows for the construction of a feeling of togetherness, seeing others absorbed in their tasks stimulates concentration in study."[38] Sequeiros underlines that tranquility, concentration, an integrative collective intellectual labor, and an encouragement to concentrate and work were among the most valued aspects by the visitors of the library.[39] As a student interviewed for her study phrased it: "I myself enjoy being able to look around and say 'look, all the other people are also doing the same as I do' [...]."[40]

Similarly, in an ethnographic study on silent interaction in meditation centers in the United States and Israel, sociologist Michal Pagis found that participants reach the pleasurable and sought-after state of equanimity much more easily in the presence of others: Through social attunement, the group facilitated the experience of equanimity. The participants she interviewed claimed that "when compared to individual meditation, they reach deeper experiences of equanimity when meditating collectively."[41] Pagis sees a form of collective contagion at work when the silent and relaxed bodies influence each other.[42] Even afterward, when the retreat has ended, many practitioners find it easier to meditate in a group and therefore look for group sittings to help reproduce the formerly achieved equanimity.[43] As Pagis puts it: "Paradoxically, meditation participants need others to forget about others. They utilize the group in order to be able to put aside their social concerns and reach a calm and relaxed state."[44] Importantly for our analogy to the cinema, the interviewed participants hardly ever mentioned other participants; only after Pagis asked them directly did they recall social interactions. In other words, whether in meditation retreats or the cinema one may well be contagiously influenced by others—and be only *tacitly* aware of their presence—without focusing on them explicitly.[45]

Of course, what Pagis calls "contagious relaxation" is not the same as contagious deep attention—the former is more closely connected to the spectatorial mode of heightened tranquility mentioned above. But in conjunction with Sequeiros's library study, Pagis's insights make it likely that the quiet attention of an entire audience can contagiously affect my own concentration, leading to a prereflective experience of deeply attending the film *jointly*. Thus, we are dealing with a shared phenomenal state: It is not only that you and I and everyone else socially conforms to the value of quietly paying attention individually (as the social conformity argument would have it), but there is a tacit sense that we, as viewers, deeply attend to the film collectively. And this is the case even if we don't reflect on our joint attention and form an explicit thought along the lines of the participant in the library study quoted above "Oh, wow, look, all the other people are also doing the same as I do."

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/edited-volume/44429/chapter/374916077 by University of Groningen user on 05 October 2022

p. 597

Challenging Films and the Movie Theater's Joint Deep Attention

If we now return to the example of demanding art films, slow cinema, and experimental films, films that pose challenges to our attention, endurance, and patience, we can see how joint deep attention becomes a helpful and at times necessary scaffold. Take director Paul Schrader's minimal definition of slow cinema: "making something take longer than we have been conditioned to expect."[46] If something lasts much longer than expected, it becomes difficult to know when exactly one has devoted enough attention to it. Here the audience's continuous attention can become indicative: other viewers signal to you and you indicate to them that there might be more unnoticed nuances and overlooked details to be discovered or that the durational experience aimed at by the filmmaker asks for yet more patience and endurance. In other words, the attention of the others can guide you, indeed infect you, just as much as your attention can be contagious for them. Looking and listening can turn into a mutually reinforcing attention loop.

Compare how Lutz Koepnick imagines an audience's irritated response to the first long take in Béla Tarr's *The Turin Horse* (2011):

> "I get it, so now please cut!" it shouts inside our heads as the camera holds on without giving us any hint at what could possibly end the shot's durational excess. Our fingers start tapping our knees; our eyes begin to veer across the screen, yet they fail to discover anything new. We squirm in our seats, *look around for support*. Contemplativeness yields to exasperation. [...] We yearn for redemption by something as simple as a perspective different from the present one. And finally (if we haven't left the theater already), we may give in and open up to our own exhaustion, to how Tarr's shot has completely consumed our initial sense of anticipation. We surrender to the slow passing of time.[47]

Although Koepnick's account does not mention this, we can easily imagine that those impatient viewers who look around in the auditorium do indeed find support: The unyielding attention of others acts as a shepherd that guides them out of the valley of boredom onto the plateau of an unusual temporal experience.[48] Affected and infected by the deep attention the other viewers devote to the Tarr film, the annoyed viewers unfamiliar with this type of spectatorial mode thus shed their encrusted viewing routine which usually opposes such "underwhelming" or "boring" stuff.[49]

No doubt, watching challenging films with others privately *at home* can also yield the benefits of joint deep attention (I regularly invite friends over to my house precisely for that reason). However, the cinema's public sphere has an additional positive effect, because we are dealing with *anonymous* others whose attention vectors we cannot as easily predict as those of our parents or friends. It therefore means something else to collectively watch a film in the public space of the cinema than in the privacy of the home, as we are not surrounding ourselves with an "attentional filter bubble"—we have ↳ to remain open to the unforeseeable responses of those unknown others. While my hurried brother and my impatient self may easily agree on stopping the Béla Tarr film and watching a different one once we discover the tiniest durational demands, we may be surprised and positively influenced by the attention spans of unknown viewers in a cinematheque or film museum.

p. 598

Not least, our presence in the public space of the cinema can imply what Yves Citton calls an "attentional activism." By this he means the "conspicuous demonstration of one's joint attention so as to draw collective attention to an unjustly ignored object."[50] Not literally contagious, our presence in the public space of the cinema can spill over and have a "magnetic" pulling-in effect outside the cinema: Watching a film alone on platforms like *MUBI* or *Alleskino* merely sends data to the owners of the platform but does not signal attentional activism—attending a challenging experimental film, a demanding art film, or an extremely slow film in a cinematheque issues a *public statement* to the local community in Brussels, Paris, Munich,

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/edited-volume/44429/chapter/374916077 by University of Groningen user on 05 October 2022

New York, or Bologna: hey, here are challenging films worthy of attention! Due to the "circular self-reinforcing dynamic" according to which "attention attracts attention," the interest we show in public may convince others to see it as well and pull them, as if magnetically, into the cinema.[51]

The Cinema Dispositive Revisited: Space, Projection, Silence

Apart from the social aspect of the movie theater, I believe that several other characteristics of the dispositive contribute implicitly to the joint deep attention effect—characteristics hardly available when we watch a DVD or stream a film at home. In recent years, film scholars have begun to reevaluate some of the key features of the cinema dispositive. Take Dennis Göttel's book-length study on the movie theater screen in his German monograph *Die Leinwand* or William Paul's look at the influence of cinema architecture in *When Movies Were Theater* (both from 2016). Paul seriously rejects the idea of a filmic text unencumbered by the context in which it is placed. He not only unearths a subterranean connection between the architecture of the movie theater and the kinds of films shown in those theaters but also thinks that the viewing surroundings influence the experience of the film.[52]

In a similar fashion (if much more cursorily), I will now revisit—and positively reevaluate—three characteristics of the cinema dispositive: its nonmundane space, the impossibility of manipulating the film, and the silence of the auditorium. This will help us to further clarify why we profit from watching films that challenge our attention capacities and endurance *in the cinema* and *in the co-presence of quietly attentive others*, despite the fact that we can also encounter them in dispositives like private home viewing, the museum, and the gallery.

p. 599

(1) The Cinema as a Non-Mundane Space, or the Freedom from the Everyday: Film scholars like Thomas Elsaesser have variously emphasized the event character of going *out* to the movies and watching a film in a classical projection hall.[53] Extending a popular quip about the difference between cinema and television we can say that while on television the film comes *to* us, and with portable devices the film moves *with* us, we have to make a move *toward* the film when we watch it in a cinema. More so, we have to cross a liminal threshold into another "world" that keeps the mundane world at bay. As one cinemagoer nicely put it: "As soon as I am in the closed-off, dark space of the cinema, it begins: the magic of the new. I am bereft of the wealth of mundane impressions that beleaguer me elsewhere."[54]

Let us assume that, like Paul Schrader in the following example, we are watching a Robert Bresson film:

> a man exits a room, closes the door. Normally in a regular film, you lay the splice as the door closes. Bresson waits one, two, three seconds on the closed door. What's happening then? [...] In real life you don't watch a closed door when someone leaves. Your eye moves somewhere else. But in a movie, he holds it on that door. Now what if he holds it ten seconds on the door? What happens? What if he holds it 30 seconds?[55]

Again, we have a scene that puts our attention to the test because "our sensory apparatus and our nervous system are always moving and looking to move, the greatest challenge for them is to stay fixed on something that does not move or change," as Citton points out.[56] When watching the Bresson film on a computer at home, numerous means of diversion surround us: the fridge, the bookshelf, the smartphone, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, and the internet more generally with its endless offerings to look things up and get carried away. We have to ward off the tendency to do something else much more deliberately than in the cinema, where few options remain other than looking and listening.[57]

Yet going to the cinema not only helpfully protects us from the affordances of the everyday—by voluntarily enclosing ourselves in a different, heterogeneous space we also ascribe a special value to the institution: our

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/edited-volume/44429/chapter/374916077 by University of Groningen user on 05 October 2022

"effort" of going to the movie theater is, in the first instance, a positive evaluation of the cinema as such, an evaluation that we signal *each other* in the auditorium. Our presence demonstrates publicly that the institution has a certain "value" for us, as an audience, before any kind of evaluation of the individual film has taken place. Moreover, *literally* spending 10 Euro for the ticket of the Bresson film and thus demonstrating the willingness to *figuratively* "spend" two hours looking at it is another signal of "worth"—especially at times when almost immediate free (if often illegal) download access levels the value of individual films. Taken together, this will make it much more likely that we stay committed to looking at a closed door for thirty seconds. In the words of Schrader, a filmmaker who has always been open to the idea that watching films can have a transcendental side: "Going to a film is like going to a church. A commitment is made. 'I've come here of my own will and I accept the rules.' One doesn't leave a church service after half an hour because it's boring."[58]

 (2) The Impossibility of Manipulating the Film, or the Freedom from Having to Act: An important facet of our contemporary interaction with moving images is the fact that we often encounter them individually and that we are able to manipulate them according to our own liking.[59] However, unlike on our computers or DVD players at home, in the cinema we have no mastery over the film whose "succession of automatic world projections" (Stanley Cavell) we are bound to follow.[60] This means, first of all, that the cinema qua its unstoppable projection leaves the integrity of the filmic object intact for all of us: it stabilizes an object that has become ever more destabilized and fragmentary by the various technological means we have to change and manipulate it. The film comes to us as a (more or less) contained *work* rather than an *agglomeration of fragments* into which we transform it once we stop and resume, stop and resume, stop and resume. What might look like a decided form of *unfreedom*—after all, the "dictatorial" projection makes us follow the film linearly and without intermissions—can become an enormous *freedom*: the freedom of not having to choose between the various possibilities what to do. That's, then, what the cinema does for us: We cannot—or better: don't have to—act on the film; we have to—or better: are allowed to—follow it in its stabilized form. Nor do we have to "share," to "participate," to "touch," to "play," to "create," to "turn into prosumers." The movie theater imposes on us—but again we should better say it *allows* for—a linear form of thinking and perceiving together in deep attention.

Elsaesser even assumes, against the predominant mode of "distracted" viewing, that watching a film without interruption is considered a special privilege today. For Elsaesser, this trend is particularly evident in recent slow or contemplative cinema.[61] Their often ascetic form implies a cinema of deferred gratification: Its much-vaunted durational aesthetics means that the viewer needs to "spend" time and "pay" attention in order to see its aesthetic potential gradually and ever-so-slowly unfold. What is at stake is not presently visible, let alone can we experience it at once. It simply has to be followed *for a while.*[62] When a viewer interrupts Tarr's long-take or the door scene in the Bresson film and cuts its duration, she destroys the effect: There is no duration left. It's like turning off the sound before we expect a jump scare in a horror film, using the black-and-white function on our television set when we watch a film in glorious Technicolor, or turning to our friend who has already seen the whodunit and ask her, after five minutes, who the murderer is. For some experiences to become rewarding means having to go through a period of waiting. A vocational hunter who sees his prey upon arrival, shoots the deer and goes home with his "trophy" has most likely a much less rewarding experience than the one who had to wait for hours in his hideout before spotting the animal. And those who dislike such martial analogies may think of other pastimes that imply waiting and duration like chess-playing, bird-watching, or train-spotting. In the case of challengingly slow films, destroying the aesthetic effect is particularly problematic if we assume—for good reasons—an ethical or political function of its duration.[63]

With an eye on other media, Jacques Aumont has claimed, "Playing video games, strolling around a gallery, surfing the Internet, these are also experiences, of course, but there is no *constituted* time. Everyone
 constitutes their own time, in an aleatory ↳ manner."[64] In the cinema, by contrast, time is constituted *for*

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/edited-volume/44429/chapter/374916077 by University of Groningen user on 05 October 2022

us, *together.* Following Laura Mulvey, today's viewers who interrupt the filmic narrative and derive pleasure from gaining control over the object can be considered "possessive spectators": "The possessive spectator commits an act of violence against the cohesion of a story, the aesthetic integrity that holds it together, and the vision of its creator."[65] For Mulvey, this act of violence has, of course, an empowering effect. But let's not overlook its downside: When we manipulate films according to our own liking, the medium becomes a much more individualized, even narcissistic one.[66] Contra possessive spectatorship, the cinema urges us to give up possession of the film and let it remain a *communal* good for all to perceive rather than an individual property for me to work on or otherwise interfere with.

(3) Silence in the Auditorium, or the Freedom from Noise: A quiet cinema is a space that allows the aesthetic object of the film to stand out as a Gestalt to perceive and to concentrate on. For Susan Sontag, silence therefore counts as one of the "strategies for improving the audience's experience."[67] Just like a film watched in bright daylight "shades into" the surroundings too easily, a film that we attend to in a hustling-and-bustling train or gallery space is auditorily "flattened" and "disappears" into the surrounding soundscape ("how to deal with the 'bleeding' of sound between zones or booths in a gallery, from one work to another: is each one cancelled, or will only the strongest survive?" Adrian Martin asks).[68] We should not forget that the cinema knows a gradual dawning of silence when the lights go out and a gradual increase of noise when the lights are turned on after the final credits: Just like the screen frame spatially separates the moving images from their ensuing surroundings, this fore- and after-silence is important for our perception of and attention to the film as it creates a proper temporal embedment.[69] That's why it can be so disturbing if the couple next to you talks throughout the credit sequence at the beginning and your partner asks "Did you like it?" right after the film has ended.

Of course, some films are less harmed by competing light and sound; others—like soundless Stan Brakhage films or very quiet Albert Serra slow films—need the protection of darkness and silence to reach their full aesthetic potential. It's like listening to an aggressive Rammstein number vs. a quiet song by Norah Jones: The former is less influenced by surrounding noise than the latter. We should therefore reconsider the demand for silence in the cinema: While it may come across as a form of limitation of our freedom to talk, it should rather be seen as a form of freedom from the individual noises of others and an enabling condition for quiet things to be heard. We could characterize it as a form of protection of something fragile, and this goes for the object of the film just as much as the easily distracted viewer whose attention suffers from noise. As Sontag has argued, "One important function of silence is "providing time for the continuing or exploring of thought. Notably, speech closes off thought. [...] Silence keeps things 'open'."[70]

Somewhat paradoxically, silence in the cinema can have a communicative effect: In the co-presence of others silence can express—and thus unwittingly communicate—that an entire audience is awestruck, overcome emotionally or following something in joint deep attention.[71] This aspect is nicely captured in a p. 602 1907 *Corriere della Sera* article ↳ by Adolfo Orvieto (writing under the pseudonym Gaio): "What silence! That same audience that chats, coughs, and fidgets about in the theaters where people go to hear and to see —often more to see than to hear—here, where people go only to see, they don't even breathe. Hardly a stifled exclamation of wonder, hardly a weak whisper of commiseration underscore the moments of pathos: the bloodshed, the disaster, the end of the world."[72]

On the one hand, silence is easily achieved because we only have to sit still and refrain from speaking; on the other hand, it is so easily destroyed because one person alone can readily disrupt it. This is why some commentators claim that silence is not a phase of passive receptivity—to some degree it needs to be actively produced.[73] Abiding by the codes of quietude in the cinema should therefore be considered a *collective* production of silence that has a deindividualizing effect because viewers accept their individual voices to remain quiet. This greatly distinguishes the silence alone at home from the silence of the cinema with three hundred other viewers, because the latter is not the outcome of my own decision but depends on the three hundred others as well. Especially against the background of our "noisy" societies, where making oneself

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/edited-volume/44429/chapter/374916077 by University of Groningen user on 05 October 2022

heard and being heard are so important, three hundred people remaining quiet during a film is a remarkable sign of respect and valuation—respect for the social norms of the cinema and the film on display.[74]

The Cinema's Place in an Ecology of Attention

Since our 24/7 media culture relentlessly confronts us with an overabundance of cultural products, many of us try to optimize the limited amount of attention available by doing various things at once: while walking through the Alte Nationalgalerie in Berlin we may listen to the new album by Kendrick Lamar; while following a Mozart piano concerto played by Alfred Brendel we may delve into the new collection of short stories by Alice Munro; while watching the new Terrence Malick film we may check football results.[75] But this multitasking comes at a price: "What our attention gains *quantitatively* by considering several objects simultaneously, it loses *qualitatively* in intensity with each taken separately," Citton writes.[76] If we want to keep alive intense concentrated aesthetic experiences, we must not budge.

First, we have to protect institutions, like the cinema, that grant us profound aesthetic experiences.[77] Or, to put it slightly differently, we have to create a cleaner and healthier ecology of attention. Who doesn't sometimes have the feeling that our environment is visually and acoustically polluted with the waste of so many advertisements, commercials, pop-up windows, hyperlinks, ever-present muzak, to name but a few?[78] From the standpoint of an ecology of attention it is important to keep the cinema available *as a choice*, over and above other media and their dispositives. As Citton underlines, p. 603 ↳ not without biting polemic, "Reading rooms, classrooms, cinemas, concert halls, dance theaters and theaters are without doubt, along with churches, the last sacred spaces where the attentional vampirism of communication still respects the superior values of a certain mystical communion—which would be sacrilegiously disturbed by a mobile phone ringing."[79]

Second, we need to cultivate a sensitivity and sensibility about the right choices—when it is valuable to watch a film in a cinema and when it is not necessary or is even counterproductive. This implies becoming what I have called dispositive conscious. However, as Lars Henrik Gass rightfully points out, "One cannot expect that people go to the cinema or the opera if they have never learned to enter a cinema or an opera." Going to the cinema therefore has to be taught—and it has to be learned.[80]

Third, we have to develop a sensibility for adequate attentional styles and learn to understand when deep attention is appropriate and when hyperattention is called for. Yet different attentional styles are not a mere question of willfully choosing one over the other. Again, they are a matter of habit and learning. As everyone who works in a university will agree, this also implies a challenge for pedagogy and education: We have to develop the skills for both deep attention *and* hyperattention. Due to its social obligations and the other characteristics of the dispositive that I have sketched above, the movie theater is one of the prime places to train one's *deep* attention with others.

Is the cinema an invention without a future then? Only if we are ignorant or careless enough to deny ourselves the chance to make experiences of deep attention together.

Notes

1. Yves Citton, *The Ecology of Attention* (Cambridge: Polity, 2017), 83.

2. The quote is apocryphal, and it isn't even clear who is its originator. Tom Gunning, Jean-Luc Godard, and many others name *Louis* Lumière; some people, like Walter Murch, refer to *Auguste* Lumière; and Thomas Elsaesser and Malte Hagener ascribe the quote to *Antoine* Lumière, the father of Louis and Auguste.

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/edited-volume/44429/chapter/374916077 by University of Groningen user on 05 October 2022

3. Daniel Fairfax, “The Cinema Is a Bad Object: Interview with Francesco Casetti,” *Senses of Cinema* 83 (June 2017), http://sensesofcinema.com/2017/film-studies/francesco-casetti-interview/.

4. This chapter was written in Fall 2018, a long time before the lockdowns of the coronavirus pandemic made film critics around the world put their longing for the collective movie theater experience into affectionate words. I have refrained from updating my chapter with these—often heartfelt—contributions, but, if anything, they lend evidence to the claims I make here.

5. Adrian Martin, *Mise en Scène and Film Style. From Classical Hollywood to New Media Art* (Houndsmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 201.

6. I am very sympathetic with Raymond Bellour’s position to retain the term “cinema” for the classical dispositive of the movie theater and to avoid applying it to all the other moving-image viewing constellations. Of course, to a certain degree this is a mere question of semantics. But semantic choices can, as we all know, have real effects. I therefore find it p. 604 problematic to “explode” the term and consider cinema to take place everywhere ↳ (*pace* Francesco Casetti). See Raymond Bellour, *La Querelle des dispositifs: cinéma-installtions-expositions* (Paris: P.O.L., 2012).

7. Shane Denson and Julia Leyda, eds., *Post-Cinema: Theorizing 21st-Century Film* (Falmer, UK: Reframe Books, 2016), 2.

8. As Adrian Martin puts it, “Every medium or art form (whether novel, theater, or art gallery/museum) possesses its own *dispositif*, in the sense of the essential or usual conditions under which it is experienced. What theorists once defined as the basic set-up of the cinematic experience is neither eternally immutable nor all-determining, but it does offer what we can call (after Kant and Eisenstein) a *Grundproblem* with which every film must work, whether it chooses to or is even aware of it. Thus, each medium has its own broad *dispositif.*” Martin, *Mise en Scène*, 189.

9. N. Katharine Hayles, “Hyper and Deep Attention: The Generational Divide in Cognitive Modes,” *Profession* (2007): 187.

10. Ibid., 187.

11. Note, however, that the viewing mode I refer to as “deep attention” goes beyond these types of films. As Charles Musser has demonstrated, we can already find it in early films of the 1890s where the sustained presentation of a given motif suggested contemplative absorption and exploration of the image: “one way that early audiences were meant to look at films was not unrelated to the way they were meant to look at paintings.” Charles Musser, “A Cinema of Contemplation, A Cinema of Discernment: Spectatorship, Intertextuality and Attractions in the 1890s,” in *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, ed. Wanda Strauven (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 162.

12. When I talk about *challenging films* I do not intend to lay the foundations for a new genre. I merely want to point out that some films pose considerable challenges to the viewer’s attention, endurance, and patience. With reference to recent debates about *narrative* complexity, which is measured in cognitive comprehension, understanding, and interpretation, we could argue that we are dealing with *durational* complexity here.

13. With regard to concentrated listening to challenging classical music, the composer Ernst Křenek claimed, in the 1930s, precisely the latter: Rather than listening to it collectively in the concert hall he advocated the solitude of the private room as most conducive to concentration because it also allowed for reading the score, smoking, drinking, and walking around. Ernst Křenek, “Bemerkungen zur Rundfunkmusik,” *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* 7 (1938): 160–61.

14. Note that my plea for the cinema and a heightened dispositive consciousness does not at all deny the innovations, functions, and pleasures of other media, for instance, small-screen or digital-born fictions. For the latter, see Astrid Ensslin, Lisa Swanstrom, and Paweł Frelik, “Introducing Small Screen Fictions,” *Paradoxa* 29 (2017): 7–17.

15. In these cases we could also speak of *aesthetic* instead of *deep* attention. For illuminating revisions of the term “aesthetic attention,” see Bence Nanay, “Aesthetic Attention,” *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 22 (2015): 96–118, and Peter Fazekas, “Attention and Aesthetic Experience,” *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 23 (2016): 66–87.

16. Raymond Bellour, “The Pensive Spectator,” in *The Cinematic*, ed. David Campay (London: Whitechapel Gallery, 2007), 119–23. On daydreaming, see Julian Hanich, “When Viewers Drift Off: A Brief Phenomenology of Cinematic Daydreaming,” in *The Structures of the Film Experience by Jean-Pierre Meunier: Historical Assessments and Phenomenological Expansions*, ed. Julian Hanich and Daniel Fairfax (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019).

p. 605

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/edited-volume/44429/chapter/374916077 by University of Groningen user on 05 October 2022

17. “Kiarostami has claimed,” Remes notes, “that he would be pleased to see a spectator of [his film] *Five* enjoying ‘a pleasant nap’. He adds, ‘[…] The important thing for me is how you feel once the film is finished, the relaxing feeling that you carry with you after the film ends.’ ” Remes concludes that “the spectator who falls asleep during *Five* has absorbed the spirit of the film. She or he has given herself/himself over to the work’s soothing quiescence, its uneventful tranquility.” Justin Remes, “The Sleeping Spectator: Non-Human Aesthetics in Abbas Kiarostami’s *Five: Dedicated to Ozu*,” in *Slow Cinema*, ed. Tiago de Luca and Nuno Barradas Jorge (Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 235. Director Lucrecia Martel defends a similar position. See, for instance, film scholar Elena Gorfinkel’s tweet from May 18, 2018: “Lucrecia Martel talking abt her cinema & making space for the spectator: ‘falling asleep in the cinema is not about boredom but a feeling of comfort, as when sun is shining on you and you feel warm,’ ” https://twitter.com/cinemiasma/status/997492839167791104?lang=en. See also Jean Ma, “Sleeping in the Cinema,” *October* 176 (2021): 31–52.

18. Julian Hanich, *The Audience Effect: On the Collective Cinema Experience* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 2018). See also Julian Hanich, “Shared or Spread? On Boredom and Other Collective Emotions in the Cinema,” in *Atmospheres and Shared Emotions*, ed. Dylan Trigg (London: Routledge, 2022), 135–51.

19. To be sure, even the attempted neutrality of my book could not entirely chase off the specter of normativity. As Hans Bernhard Schmid has pointed out with regard to recent debates in social ontology, claims about “what there is” in the social world are tightly connected to views about how social life “should be”: “Indeed, ontological claims are often a cover-up for normative views.” Hans Bernhard Schmid, “Collective Emotions: Phenomenology, Ontology, and Ideology: What Should We Learn from Max Scheler’s War Propaganda?” *Thaumàzein* 3 (2015): 104.

20. For an overview of these positions, see Hanich, *Audience Effect*, ch. 2.

21. Antoine de Baecque and Thierry Jousse, “Cinema and Its Ghosts: An Interview with Jacques Derrida,” trans. Peggy Kamuf, *Discourse* 37 (2015): 29. Thanks to Christian Ferencz-Flatz for bringing this interview—as well as the Křenek article mentioned above—to my attention.

22. Rita Felski, *The Limits of Critique* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 164–65 (emphasis added).

23. Here we also find a reason why pornographic theaters have almost completely disappeared from our urban environments. See Julian Hanich, “Clips, Clicks, and Climax: The Relocation and Remediation of Pornography,” *Jump Cut* 53 (2011).

24. See *The Structures of the Film Experience by Jean-Pierre Meunier: Historical Assessments and Phenomenological Expansions*, ed. Julian Hanich and Daniel Fairfax (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019). For empirical evidence from social psychology, communication studies and media psychology, see Hanich, *Audience Effect,* ch. 1. Another interesting study I have only recently discovered is Suresh Ramanathan and Ann L. McGill, “Consuming with Others. Social Influences on Moment-to-Moment and Retrospective Evaluations of an Experience,” *Journal of Consumer Research* 34 (2007): 506–24.

25. Bernard Guérin, *Social Facilitation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 1.

26. Ibid., 1.

27. Ibid., 165.

28. To be sure, this evaluation apprehension can also be based on an *imagined* audience. However, the co-presence of other viewers more forcefully reminds the viewer of the ↳ future task (but, of course, the more familiar and benevolent the others the smaller the evaluation apprehension).

29. Ibid., 67.

30. Ibid., 77.

31. The alertness theory can of course imply elements of social conformity, too, as doing well in seminar debates, discussions over dinner, or writing better reviews than others may confirm the social value of competition. However, here the evaluation apprehension will likely be more foregrounded (“I have to really pay close attention now, otherwise I will get a poor evaluation from my professor”), while in social conformity cases the evaluation apprehension remains mostly a background phenomenon not focused on during the screening.

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/edited-volume/44429/chapter/374916077 by University of Groningen user on 05 October 2022

32. Elisabeth Pacherie, "Collective Phenomenology," in *The Routledge Handbook of Collective Intentionality*, ed. Marija Jankovic and Kirk Ludwig (London: Routledge, 2018), 162 and 166.

33. Ibid., 170–71.

34. Ibid., 171.

35. For instance, in a recent quantitative study on the gratifications of watching a film in a movie theater rather than at home, Alec Tefertiller did not offer a single item in his questionnaire that would have allowed his participants to indicate that they may *generally* prefer watching films in the co-presence of largely anonymous others, let alone making them choose from a range of *more specific* benefits of collective viewing—such as being able to concentrate more deeply on a film. Alec Tefertiller, "Moviegoing in the Netflix Age: Gratifications, Planned Behaviour, and Theatrical Attendance," *Communication & Society* 30 (2017): 27–44.

36. On libraries, see Jeffrey A. Gayton, "Academic Libraries: 'Social' or 'Communal?' The Nature and Future of Academic Libraries," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 24 (2008): 60–66.

37. Quoted from ibid, 61 (emphasis added).

38. Paula Sequeiros, "The Social Weaving of a Reading Atmosphere," *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science* 43 (2011): 268.

39. Ibid., 264.

40. Ibid., 265.

41. Michal Pagis, "Evoking Equanimity: Silent Interaction Rituals in Vipassana Meditation Retreats," *Qualitative Sociology* 38 (2015): 45.

42. Ibid., 51.

43. Ibid., 52.

44. Ibid., 54.

45. Ibid., 45.

46. Paul Schrader, "Rethinking Transcendental Style," in *Transcendental Style in Film. Ozu, Bresson, Dreyer. With a New Introduction* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018), 11.

47. Lutz Koepnick, *The Long Take. Art Cinema and the Wondrous* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 11–12 (emphasis added).

48. For a compelling recent overview of research on boredom, see Andreas Elpidorou, "The Bored Mind Is a Guiding Mind: Toward a Regulatory Theory of Boredom," *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 17 (2018): 455–84.

49. Yves Citton speaks of *improvisation practices*: "showing yourself to be attentive to the attention of the other requires to get out of pre-programmed routines." Citton, *Ecology of Attention*, 88.

50. Ibid., 154.

51. Ibid., 48.

52. William Paul, *When Movies Were Theater. Architecture, Exhibition, and the Evolution of American Film* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 3, 12, and 293. See also Lutz Koepnick's claim: "the specific milieu of moving-image display might matter as much for how the images interact with their viewers as to what is solely visible on screen." Koepnick, *Long Take*, 28.

53. See, for instance, Thomas Elsaesser, "Kino als Erfahrung und Ereignis," in *Kinoerfahrungen: Theorien, Geschichte, Perspektiven*, ed. Florian Mundhenke and Thomas Weber (Berlin: Avinus, 2017), 23, 26.

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/edited-volume/44429/chapter/374916077 by University of Groningen user on 05 October 2022

54. Claudius Beutler and Johanna Niermann, eds., *Die Schönheit des Betrachters. Eine fotografische Annäherung im Dialog mit Filmschaffenden* (Munich, Germany: Edition Text + Kritik, 2018), 94 (translation mine).

55. Alex Ross Perry, “Paul Schrader: Deliberate Boredom in the Church of Cinema,” *Cinema Scope* 73 (2018), http://cinema-scope.com/cinema-scope-magazine/paul-schrader-deliberate-boredom-in-the-church-of-cinema/.

56. Citton, *Ecology of Attention*, 128.

57. Here John Belton’s observation is apposite: “On a big screen, a film fills our field of vision and becomes a world for us to enter, a world that is bigger than life. On a small screen, as Nicholas Rombes points out, the film is ‘just a piece, a fragment’ of the larger world that surrounds us.” John Belton, “Psychology of the Photographic, Cinematic, Televisual, and Digital Image,” *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 12, no. 3 (2014): 241. See also the strong arguments put forth in Martine Beugnet, “The Bigger Picture: On Watching Films on a Cinema Screen,” in *What Film Is Good For: On the Ethics of Spectatorship*, ed. Julian Hanich and Martin Rossouw (Oakland: University of California Press, forthcoming).

58. Schrader, “Rethinking Transcendental Style,” 20.

59. Lars Henrik Gass, *Film und Kunst nach dem Kino* (Cologne, Germany: Strzelecki Books, 2017), 15.

60. Stanley Cavell, *The World Viewed. Reflections on the Ontology of Film*, enlarged ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 72–73.

61. Elsaesser, “Kino als Erfahrung und Ereignis,” 26.

62. See, for instance, Asbjørn Grønstad, “Slow Cinema and the Ethics of Duration,” in *Slow Cinema*, ed. Tiago de Luca and Nuno Barradas Jorge (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 273–284.

63. For an argument along these lines, see, for instance, the aforementioned articles by Koepnick and Grønstad, as well as Song Hwee Lim, “Temporal Aesthetics of Drifting. Tsai Ming-Liang and a Cinema of Slowness,” in *Slow Cinema*, ed. Tiago de Luca and Nuno Barradas Jorge (Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 87–98.

64. Daniel Fairfax, “The Experience of a Gaze Held in Time: Interview with Jacques Aumont,” *Senses of Cinema* 83 (2017), http://sensesofcinema.com/2017/film-studies/jacques-aumont-interview/.

65. Laura Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second. Stillness and the Moving Image* (London: Reaktion, 2006), 171.

66. Gass, *Film und Kunst nach dem Kino*, 28.

67. Susan Sontag, “The Aesthetics of Silence,” in *Styles of Radical Will* (London: Penguin, 2009), 12.

68. Martin, *Mise en Scène*, 184.

69. The term “fore- and after-silence” comes from Bernard P. Dauenhauer, *Silence, The Phenomenon and Its Ontological Significance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 9–16.

70. Sontag, “Aesthetics of Silence,” 19–20. This is not to say that silence in general is always benign. In fact, silence is an ambivalent phenomenon: It can link people in national moments of silence, religious worship, or cinematic joint deep attention, but it can also separate them and create power relations.

71. Of course, in the cinema, just as in the library, we cannot easily decide if the cause of a viewer’s silence is voluntary and internal or institutional and external: “When a person enters a library to read something, the source is ambiguous. The reader wants to be silent, to read the text and not to be disturbed. In such a case, we may talk of intentional silence with an internal source. But being silent in a library is a social norm; such a norm may be said to exist in order to take into account an individual’s wants, but to ensure that the individual’s personal wishes are addressed, this silence may be considered an imposed silence, i.e. external source.” Dennis Kurzon, “Towards a Typology of Silence,” *Journal of Pragmatics* 39 (2007): 1682.

72. Gaio, “Summertime Spectacles: The Cinema,” in *Early Film Theories in Italy, 1896–1922*, ed. Francesco Casetti, Silvio Alovisio, and Luca Mazzei (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017), 52.

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/edited-volume/44429/chapter/374916077 by University of Groningen user on 05 October 2022

73. Dauenhauer, *Silence*, 24. Compare also what Pagis observed in her empirical study on meditation: “even though silent interaction is based on rules and structural conditions that are set by the meditation center, it still needs to be *actively produced* by the participants.” Pagis, “Evoking Equanimity,” 47 (emphasis added).

74. Cinemas are thus spaces that provide what Sam Demas and Jeffrey A. Scherer call an “increasingly rare commodity—[a] quiet area within a public space.” Sam Demas and Jeffrey A. Scherer, “Esprit de Place: Maintaining and Designing Library Buildings to Provide Transcendent Spaces,” *American Libraries* 33 (2002): 67.

75. The term “24/7 media culture” comes from Koepnick, *Long Take*, 8.

76. Citton, *Ecology of Attention*, 32 (emphasis added).

77. Ibid., 159.

78. As Susan Sontag noted already in 1967: “in an overpopulated world being connected by global electronic communication and jet travel at a pace too rapid and violent for an organically sound person to assimilate without shock, people are also suffering from a revulsion at any proliferation of speech and images.” Sontag, “Aesthetics of Silence,” 21.

79. Citton, *Ecology of Attention*, 159. For Raymond Bellour, the champion of the cinema experience par excellence, the mobile phone equally threatens the integrity of the cinema dispositive, “as if it is being eaten away from within by the private disaffection of a new kind of spectator.” Quoted from Hilary Radner and Alistair Fox, *Raymond Bellour: Cinema and the Moving Image* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 170. For literature on the attention *economy*, see the classic Georg Franck, *Ökonomie der Aufmerksamkeit: Ein Entwurf* (Munich, Germany: Hanser, 1998), and Jonathan Beller, *The Cinematic Mode of Production: Attention Economy and the Society of the Spectacle* (Lebanon, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2006).

80. Gass, *Film und Kunst nach dem Kino*, 59. See also “Orte des Films: Kino, Festival, Kunstmuseum. Barbara Pichler im Gespräch mit Chris Dercon und Lars Henrik Gass,” *Nach dem Film* 15 (2017), http://www.nachdemfilm.de/issues/text/orte-des-films-kino-festival-kunstmuseum.

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/edited-volume/44429/chapter/374916077 by University of Groningen user on 05 October 2022