

# Introduction

Presentación

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## Film Languages in the European Collective Memory

### Lenguajes fílmicos en la memoria colectiva de Europa

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The conservation of the collective memory of sounds and images as a European cultural heritage means acknowledging the various evolutionary contexts of audiovisual communication in Europe as well as their relations with the cultures of the world at large, as these processes never occur in geographical or cultural isolation.

The language of film takes on a vital role in these processes of communicative and educational evolution as a vehicle of collective communication and education, that is, as a factor for an in-depth learning of the most varied domains of human knowledge. It is also important to examine the evolution of the pedagogical dimensions of audiovisual communication in general and cinematographic education in particular as the true starting point for an entire cultural repository that we cannot neglect or ignore, otherwise we risk casting into oblivion some of the most important traces of our European cultural identity which, by their nature, are often so fragile. We are therefore obliged to delve into the media, channels, technologies and language we have developed for over a century to add clarity to the collective creativity and necessities of the artistic and documentary narration that represents us and which enables us to reflect on our own human condition.

But strange though it may seem, the societies, sciences and technologies within which these narratives develop can also suffer memory loss, just as we as individuals are forgetful or get old and are unable to regenerate the hetero-recognition mechanisms, and sometimes not even self-recognition, or because we cannot distance ourselves sufficiently from our prevailing knowledge and narratives in order to gain a more holistic, universal and reflective perspective.

It is not because artists, scientists or pedagogues, like other human beings, have a «short memory», but because the arts, sciences and technologies and their languages are closed off and isolated within their own particular spaces and sometimes separated from knowledge, application and even dissemination. This can happen in any branch of the arts or sciences, even when the fundamental principles of their languages belong to education or communication, which in itself is an enormous contradiction. Thus the technological and communicative supports of the records of the individual and collective production of knowledge turn inwards in their apparent self-sufficiency from the standpoint of the evolution of communication, taking into account the technological and linguistic development of the past century, which has shown itself to be fairly redundant as well as being a reducing agent that has errone-

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ously and inefficiently conserved the procedural knowledge of construction and communication of scientific or cultural learning.

If the loss of memory results in damage of tragic consequences to the individual, albeit unconscious damage, which is often impossible to recover in terms of personal and cultural identity, the possible loss of collective memory in societies amounts to a level of damage that we could not even imagine. Consequently, we are now obliged to analyse the possible risks of the loss of this collective property, which is often incredibly insubstantial and for that reason all the more valuable. To do this, we must also conserve, articulate and systematize some of the main features of the processes of cultural communication as phenomena of collective memorization and learning. As so many scientists and researchers have stated over the years, in the exercise of their scientific irreverence and theoretical restlessness,



that the scientists are hardly ever able to take a step back and view science, in space and time, in such a way that they can see it move, «and yet it does move».

As for Art, various languages and certain technological supports have the ability to help us to simultaneously conserve a factual record of events and approach all these events and the phenomena that surround them in an inclusive and holistic way. In this sense, the richness and diversity of the language, technique and technologies of film are seen as instruments of great importance, from the primitive films of Lumière and Méliès to the most sophisticated virtual inserts in YouTube.

Their role as vehicles of artistic and documentary narratology, and as factors in authentic film literacy, acquires an absolutely unquestionable importance in any society that calls itself a knowledge and information society.

To underline the importance of this role and to contribute to a greater and deeper understanding of it is the objective of this current issue of *Comunicar*, in which we commend the following contributions to our collective cultural and film memory.

Cary Balzagette, head of the British Film Institute's (BFI) department of Film Education for many

years, refers to the vital, leading role of the BFI in this field, by presenting the main pedagogical approaches to film language, especially in what we call film pedagogy, as developed within the broader activities of the BFI, which pioneered an educational perspective for the media as a process that resulted in broader interest in media literacy and film literacy in particular. Her article «Analogue Sunset, The educational role of the British Film Institute, 1979-2007», traces the main lines of activity of the BFI in this field over the last 25 years, its continuous educational approaches clearly demonstrating that the study of cinema and films is absolutely essential for understanding the world and times we live in.

Michel Clarembeaux, director of the Audiovisual Centre (CAV) of Liège, Belgium, also reflects on «Film Education: memory and heritage», in which film education is identified, especially in these times of transition and migration in digital environments, as an urgent need to construct a literacy of the media, given that the importance of film language cannot be underestimated in the development of a capability to analyze contemporary media, in which cinema stands out in its various forms and supports as the supreme art form of memory, be it individual or collective. The author also suggests we can and should bring about a convergence between a so-called pedagogy of film education and a desire on the part of the public to conserve the collective memory of a broader and more varied cultural heritage, pointing to specific films to support this hypothesis.

Andrew Burn, professor of Media Education at London University's Institute of Education, contributes an article, «Thrills in the dark: young people's moving image cultures and media education», in which he discusses the role of film language in this era of transition among media, channels and cultural environments. He takes cinema and videogames as an example, and emphasizes the hybridization of genres and the transmutation of forms of interaction among the young and the media, film channels, and real and virtual videos; he shows how a particular love of horror and disaster movie genres in North American cinema still persists among the young, whose influence extends to other audiovisual forms, genres and products to the desperation of many an anguished teacher who is inclined more towards prohibition than the more complicated option of studying and analyzing.

Mirian Tavares, professor of Visual Arts at the University of the Algarve and coordinator of the CIAC (Center for Arts Research and Communication), in her article «Understanding cinema: the avant-gardes and the construction of film discourse», emphasizes the huge importance of the historic avant-gardes in the construction of film discourse and how they were essential in gaining recognition for cinema as an art form, in particular in the weaving of an artistic fabric among the forms of the visual and textual discourse that characterized institutional cinema, specifically the Hollywood films of the 1920s and 1940s.

Enrique Martínez-Salanova, author of the Creative Classroom of Cinema and Education, has written «Educational Systems in the Heterodox History of European Cinema», an article that performs a general analysis of European films about education, educational systems and the lives of teachers and pupils in the classroom, a subject that filmmakers treated right from the early days of cinema, and who have had considerable influence in the establishment of a collective memory of European culture. The author proposes a network of analyses that links specific films to traditionally difficult educational topics. The study develops a critical and ironic perspective that denounces situations that are sometimes uncomfortable for our collective memory – the violence, exclusion, marginalization and neglect to which the youngest are often subjected. Cinema is one of the most important vehicles of understanding, shelter and cohesion for these same children and their teachers.

Nelson Zagalo, professor of the Department of Communication Sciences at the University of the Minho, develops in his article «Creative Game Literacy – a study of interactive media based on film literacy experience a perspective» that analyzes the state of media literacy, relating the forms and narratives of the new media and channels to film drama and objects, as well as analyzing the creative capacity of new types of literacy, especially those based on the widely used gaming aspects of film drama in the virtual environment of videogames.

Francisco Javier Ruiz del Olmo, professor de Audiovisual Communication at the University of Málaga, contributes an article titled «Language and collective identity in Luis Buñuel. Propaganda in the film 'España 1936'», in which he discusses the pivotal role of one of the most important filmmakers in Spain, Europe, Ibero-American and the world, revealing one of his least known facets. The article

affirms that the Spanish civil war has a distinctive place in the European collective memory, and constitutes a more than sufficient reason for approaching particular lines of the European cultural matrix, through a typically Iberian example of Buñuel's filmmaking.

We hope the reader of this issue of *Comunicar* will see it as a serious contribution to a more assertive and principled literacy of film, and we hope it will be an enjoyable and informative reading.