of thought and great hope is the greatest legacy he has left to his students.

advocate of a binding procedure of doctrine. He emphasizes the importance of freedom and the love of declared according to circumstances, but always a conviction of his own rest in the

example: "The song in all three stages of his work. There was a leading figure: from poetic
deriving. "The best of all works in which a theme of external can display its own harmony.

John Studd (1661) said: "The expression was a mixture of a theme by Richard Swift, his last book, the formation, by swindles, "The work was highly influential in the elaboration of the

approaches and the theme of the work was highly influential in the elaboration of the (1777) he offered a broad and complex picture of the relations between psychopathology


Christian Metz was born in Breslau in 1931 and died in Paris in 1993. He was

Paradigms and Freedom

Francesco Casetti
"Cinema: Language or Language System?" and the establishment of film semiology

The revolution in theory that took place in France in the 1960s began with the "linguistic turn." Structuralism, born from a rereading of the Course in General Linguistics by Ferdinand de Saussure (1983), affected many fields, and in particular anthropology (Lévi-Strauss) to psychoanalysis (Lacan). Semiotics, which was also predicted in the pages of Saussure's book, began to take shape, finding applications in architecture, music, the analysis of folklore, etc. In the field of cinema, the monumental work by Jean Mitry, Esthétique et psychologie du cinéma (The Aesthetics and Psychology of the Cinema) (1990 [1963]), had just been published. Mitry explored the nature of cinema as a language, but he did so using the classical tools of film theory moving halfway between philosophy and psychology. His approach was "internal" to cinema, as he was intent on identifying an "essence," a "specificity." In his book, extraordinary as it may be, we cannot find any response to two demands that were making themselves felt at the time: the need for tools inspired by a scientific approach, and the need to connect the language of cinema to the broader field of the processes of signification. Christian Metz wrote a lengthy review of Mitry's two-volume work (collected in Metz 1972) and explained in depth the differences between his own approach and Mitry's. His own attempt to address the two needs just mentioned was developed in his essay, "Cinema: Language or Language System" (available in English in Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema [see Metz 1968]).

Metz's essay was published in the fourth issue of the French journal Communications, the same issue that by no coincidence featured "Eléments de sémiologie" ("The Elements of Semiology") by Roland Barthes. The goal of the essay was in fact to ask whether cinema could also become an object of semiotics. To approach an answer, Metz had to take up a second question, namely, the one that gave the essay its title: Only if cinema possesses a proper language system (a "langue," that is, an ordered set of codes, figures, or formulas which one can constantly refer to) and is not only a field of langage (a "langage," that is, a mostly self-regulated and spontaneous discourse) can it be a part of semiotics, since the latter studies systems, and not single occurrences or particular instances of language use.

Metz's answer to the question opts in favor of langage. If we look at it carefully, cinema is not a langue -- or more precisely, if a langue "is a system of signs used for intercommunication" (Metz 1968: 75), cinema does not have such a system or consist of signs or have intercommunication as a goal. First, a film does not rely on a system such as a dictionary, in which each term acquires its identity through its orderly oppositions to others. On the contrary, it is the result of an alignment of different shots, relying more on the combination of scattered elements than on a selection of the elements of a paradigm. Besides, a film's images cannot be equated with signs in any strict sense (as can words). Each shot is already like a spoken phrase, a sentence, because what appears on the screen (e.g., a visual representation of a dog) means at least "here is" (in this case, "here is a dog"). Finally, a film does not work at the level of communication, but of expression, or at a level where "meaning is somehow immanent in...
Christian Metz

"Cinema: Language or Image System" introduced a shift in the approach to the study of cinema. It argued that cinema is not just a representation of the world, but a medium of existence itself. Metz's approach was to see cinema as a system of signs, much like language, where the image is directly related to the text, much like a word is to its meaning. This system is not just a reflection of reality, but a creation of it. Metz's concept of the "image" is not just a visual representation, but a series of signs that are interpreted by the audience. This approach was revolutionary at the time and has had a lasting impact on the way we understand cinema today.
filmic phenomenon. A new research paradigm was born, as well as a new generation of scholars.

Language and Cinema: structuralism and post-structuralism

During the second half of the sixties and the beginning of the seventies, the semiotic project moved forward with great success. Much of film theory was dominated by the work of Roland Barthes and his contributions, both on cinema and other fields, later collected in Essais sur la signification au cinéma (1968; English translation, Film Language, 1974); then followed the trajectory of Metz's Essais sur la signification au cinéma – II (1972), and Essais sémiotiques (1977). Among the contributions of his most famous contributions is a reconstruction of the editing forms of classical and modern cinema, taking the name of the "Grande Syntaxmatique."

However, in these same years, semiotics also underwent significant changes. In the first place it gradually abandoned the idea of being simply the science of signs. Studying the way we signify and communicate means studying the ideology we are immersed in. Semiotics was increasingly seen as a "political" science, working to dismount elements and networks of the underlying mechanisms of society, which guarantee the subjugation of men and women. Second, semiotics departed from linguistics and began to draw upon work separated from other disciplines, which were similarly reshaping themselves taking linguistics as a model. Among these disciplines was, on the one hand, structuralist anthropology; on the other, Lacanian psychoanalysis. The structuralist framework was put in question, and semiotics became open and more dynamic. Linguistic phenomena, earlier thought to be models of the existence of a strongly structured form of the discourse and organization, determining and replicating itself in every discourse. It is not only language that exists; in fact, language exists too. And in language what matters are processes that give rise to disintegration and the formation of new structures. From the perspective of contemporary philosophy of language, we might say that the ability of semiotics to discover the pragmatics of language was extended.

This latter point deserves to be underscored because it is central to Language and Cinema, a long and complex book in which Metz in some ways concludes the project expressed in the last lines of his first essay. In this book, Metz first of all tries to clarify the objects of semiotic research. There are four such objects. First, we have the text, which is a concrete and singular occurrence: the film. Then we have the message, which is a realized occurrence that intervenes in several productions and is therefore not singular: a play of light in a film, which is part of that text but is not exclusive to it. Third, we have the code, which is something constructed by the analyst and not a singular: the "grammar" of lighting, for example. Fourth, we have the singular system, that is something that has been constructed, and is indeed something singular: the organization of a film text, the system of linguistic devices brought into focus by the analyst.

What is then the path that semiotics has to follow? As a rule it starts from the text and message and moves toward the code and singular system. In other words, it...
The following party ladies, who have not been able to see the finished discussion, demand the right:

"Christian Metz"
The Imaginary Signifier: psychoanalysis, semiotics, apparatus

As I said above, in the seventies semiotics adopted a more markedly political perspective, and connected with other disciplines such as anthropology and psychoanalysis. In the field of cinema, the study of the apparatus – a term that refers to the "technical-psychological machine" that presides over the construction of a film – gives theory a great opportunity, both to cast a critical glance at cinema and its ideological effects, and at the same time to build an approach combining different disciplines. Apparatus theory embraces the work of such scholars as Raymond Bellour, Jean-Louis Baudry, Jean-Pierre Oudart, Stephen Heath, and Colin MacCabe and intersects with the emerging feminist film studies of the period. Christian Metz intervened in this context with the very influential book, *Le signifiant imaginaire* (*The Imaginary Signifier*).

The present discussion of this work focuses on its first section. Metz contends that in the establishing of the *cinematic signifier*, three main psychoanalytical processes are brought into play: specular identification, voyeurism, and fetishism. With regard to specular identification, Metz asks himself whether the film screen functions as a mirror, that mirror in which, according to Lacan, the child finds his own image and, by seeing himself, learns to recognize himself. Metz dismantles this analogy: on the screen the spectator will never see his own body reflected; therefore, he will never be able to identify with himself:

But with what, then, does the spectator identify during the projection of the film? For he certainly has to identify: identification in its primal form has ceased to be a current necessity for him, but he continues, in the cinema – if he did not the film would become incomprehensible, considerably more incomprehensible than the most incomprehensible films – to depend on that permanent play of identification without which there would be no social life. (Metz 1977a: 46)

At the movies the spectators may well identify with a character of the fiction, or with the actor playing the role, but they can also identify with themselves. This is an apparently impossible step (as we have seen, "contrary to the child in a mirror, [the spectator] cannot identify with himself as an object, but only with objects which are there without him" [48]). Still, it is fully understandable if we consider that cinema implies a double, although unitary, "knowledge." When I watch a film, "I know I am perceiving something imaginary ... and I know that it is I who am perceiving it. This second knowledge divides in turn: I know that I am really perceiving ... and I also know that it is I who am perceiving all this" (48). This is how spectators identify with themselves or, even better, with themselves "as a pure act of perception (as wakefulness, alertness): as the condition of possibility of the perceived and hence as a kind of transcendental subject, which comes before every there is" (49). The spectator is a transcendental subject, rather than an object, as well as identifying in turn with the camera eye or with the director's point of view.
On the subject of voyeurism, Metz observes that it "always keeps apart the object observed from the object looking at it" (59). Hence, an interesting connection emerges.

The voyeur is very careful to maintain a gap, an empty space, between the object and the eye, the object and his own body. This is what hinders the objects of the drive, i.e., the generating organ of the subject. The eye therefore the object looked at, the source of the drive, remains far from the object. The eye is never close to or too far from the screen. (60)

With the exception of those spectators apart, cinema always widens the gap between the object and the eye. Cinema not only gives its data in empy, but places them in an impossible relation of "unreachable" images. For cinema, the image is not reachable except by a signifying chain, by a narrative that keeps the object inaccessible from the outset, which is that of absence. (61)

By showing the absence, cinema makes it appear and, by showing the absence, cinema makes it the absence. This shows that absence is the desired, that absence is the object, that absence is the space of the object, that absence is the space of the object seen. (62)

Consequently, cinema relies on the impossibility of the object, on the creation of an unbridgeable gap, on the impossibility of the object seen. The spectator's desire is to see the object, but not to be there. (63)

For its spectator the film unfolds in a scene inaccessible elsewhere in which the child and the amorous play of the parental couple are sufficiently close and definitive. The spectator is not shown the scene, but is surrounded by the object seen. This is the only condition for the spectator to experience the illusion of presence. (64)

After the mirror, the prismatic scene: the fundamental elements of an individual's psychic life penetrate deeply into the cinematic machine. With regard to fetishism, cinema is a machine of projection. (65)

A fetish, the cinema as technical performance, as prowess as an exploit, an exploit that undoes and denounces the lack on which the whole arrangement is based (the absence of the object, replaced by its reflection). This is the cinema in its physical state. (75)

How cinema comes into being is therefore, the core of its interest.
Sublime dolly shots, wonderful “plan sequences,” extraordinary takes, all tell us about the reality we lost, while they present themselves as adequate substitutes for this loss. They both hide a lack and admit to it between the lines. According to Metz, this process blends a total love with the effects of knowledge.

Specular identification, voyeurism, and fetishism are therefore the elements through which a film on the screen actually acquires substance. Thanks to the dynamics underlying these phenomena, the cinematographic signifier comes into being. It is obvious that these points do not exhaust what psychoanalysis has to say about cinema. In the third section of his volume, Metz goes on to a review of the analogies between film and dream, while in the last section he analyzes the functioning of metaphor and metonymy, relating them to the mechanisms of condensation and displacement in Freud's analysis of the “dreamwork.” But the essential thing is how the psychic machine of the spectator functions along with the functioning of cinema, to the extent that it becomes that which helps construct what the spectator sees, the image, the signifier.

**L’Énonciation impersonelle: context and reflexivity**

During the eighties Christian Metz devoted much of his energy to a book on witticism, which would never see publication. Meanwhile, around him cinema semiotics sought another road: it tried to unify the attention to the dynamics of language and the symbolic device through an analysis of enunciation. The latter term is used to refer both to the “making” of the film, that is, the way in which it establishes itself as a signifying object, and to the “giving” of the film, that is, the way in which it offers itself to its spectator and, by offering itself, shapes its reception. The topic of filmic enunciation is especially brought to light by a special issue of the French journal *Communications* (38, 1983), and by the work of Jean-Paul Simon, Francesco Casetti, Marc Vernet, and Nick Browne. Metz had already intervened on the topic of enunciation with an essay in honor of Émile Benveniste, the linguist whose work on this concept was extremely influential in the context of semiology. Metz returned to the theme with his last book, *L’Énonciation impersonelle, ou le site du film* (1991), in which he rethought and systematized the debate. He observes that one should not equate cinematic and verbal enunciation, which differ in many ways. Whereas a dialogue presents specific signs defining who is implied in the production or the reception of the text (deictics like “I,” “you”), a film has no equivalent terms. Similarly, while a dialogue involves real people (the “I” and “you” define them), a film can only refer to generic and biased figures (the spectator reacting to a look into the camera is a typical, not an actual, spectator). Finally, while the sender and the receiver of a dialogue can trade places (so that the “I” becomes “you” and vice versa), a film is a predefined text, where no such exchange can take place. Hence, Metz suggests that cinematic enunciation should be seen not as the creation of one person for another person, but as the simple fact of the film’s manifestation of itself (here enunciation is in fact impersonal). He also encourages us to perceive film not as a device that connects the text with its context, but as a moment of general self-reflection (here the enunciation involves above all the reflexive dimension).
References

 propositions (Chapter 1) and Semantics and Semiotics (Chapter 9), and Morphy (Chapter 3).

 In addition to the works of the authors, the text refers to works on other topics, such as the role of language in thought and communication processes in general. The text also draws on the work of philosophers and linguists on the nature of language and communication, including the work of Peirce on semiotics and the work of Austin on speech acts.

 Christian Metz

 Examples of the use of reference to other works and the incorporation of historical and theoretical frameworks into the discussion are provided throughout the text, as are discussions of the implications of these frameworks for the understanding of communication and language. The text also includes references to specific works and theories that are relevant to the discussion, such as the work of the structuralists on the role of language in thought and action.

 The text concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the current understanding of communication and language, and the need for further research and exploration in this area.

 Christian Metz

 The text is written in a clear and concise style, with a focus on the key concepts and ideas that are central to the discussion of communication and language. The text is well-organized, with a logical progression of ideas and a clear structure that makes it easy to follow the arguments presented. Overall, the text is a valuable contribution to the field of communication and language studies, and is recommended for anyone interested in this area.