The Lecturer, the Image, the Machine and the Audio-Spectator

The Voice as a Component Part of Audiovisual Dispositives

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When one examines the various uses that were made of sound before talking films became the general rule and that have been recently brought to light by research into the archaeology and history of the cinema by scholars such as Jacques Perriault, Giusy Pisano or Rick Altman, one is struck by the fact that the co-presence of a voice and a visual representation[1] makes up one of the major hallmarks of 'cinema',[2] whether one extends one's epistemological viewpoint to cover earlier spectacles, the technologies then available, or the tangle of cultural sequences to which cinema – in its various disguises – belonged. The interest that early cinema historians such as Germain Lacasse have shown over the last decade for the figure of the lecturer[3] (known in francophone historiography as the *bonimenteur* – the smooth talker or 'barker')[4] is the sign of a new way of conceiving of this period and a desire to rehabilitate not just the vocal element, but also more generally the oral dimension of what were essentially ephemeral 'events'[5] – cinematographic projections.

In this article,[6] my aim is to put forward a conceptual framework that can be used when studying the ways in which the voice of a speaker – whether live or recorded – is integrated into (pre-)cinematographic spectacles. There are many differences between the two types of voice production, but they both raise the question of the place and function given to a specifically human characteristic within a *dispositive* that for the greater part is governed by technological parameters.

To study the discursive networks that are associated with historical objects such as lecturers, machines for audiovisual representation or the means of (tele-) communication – whether real or imagined by scientists or novelists – one may use a theoretical framework that is gradually (and reciprocally) built up on the basis of the discoveries of new practices or inventions and that is used to organise the information that is gleaned from work on the various sources. In my view, the notion of *dispositive* is a productive one, as it allows one to link the study of voice production with that of other parts of the spectacle, and thus to reach a better understanding of what is specific in the role that falls to the voice. While it is clear that some of the criteria that underpin the typology put forward

here work for all the various means of transmitting an audiovisual message, the object of focus will be the early cinema lecturer[7] – to my mind a highly suitable means of studying the interactions between word and image, between the audio-spectator[8] and the whole of the representation, and between the human element (the performance of a speaker) and the machine (the magic lantern or cinematograph), and which, from a methodological viewpoint, allows one to work on theoretical proposals based on the advances of historic and historiographic research.

A threefold conception of the dispositive

Maria Tortajada's and François Albera's project to categorise and conceptualise visual dispositives (see above in the present volume) provides in my view a basis on which one can address the audiovisual field.[9] They set about analysing a dispositive as a defined set of interactions between three poles: the *spectator*, the *machinery* and the *representation*. It is certainly true that some uses of sound may initially seem to be devoid of any type of mediation that could be assimilated to 'machinery' – such as the voice of a person commenting on views, where there is no fundamental difference from other uses of the word – after all, the most widespread means of communication. Nonetheless, the model does encourage one to study the specific functions of such uses when they are part of the dispositive of the spectacle. Indeed, as soon as there is the simultaneous presence of image and voice production, one may see how the voice element can be integrated within the particular dispositive. Whether the voice be reproduced and amplified mechanically or electrically, or produced 'naturally', it plays a part in assigning a certain spectatorial position. The notion of dispositive can thus be enlarged to include the coexistence of a spectator and an agency situated where the production of a representation originates, the whole within a common space possessing certain characteristics. The 'machinery' pole described by Albera and Tortajada may include diverse non-machine elements (human agencies such as musicians, singers, the lecturer, the person responsible for sound effects, orchestral conductor, projectionist, etc.), I shall thus refer to it by using the less restrictive expression of *production space* (*of the audiovisual representation*), with the 'machinery' (projection apparatus, noise machine, phonograph, etc.) making up only a subset of this pole. The different devices or agencies belonging to this space sometimes intervene together, in particular in order to produce a 'synchronisation'[10] which, at different times and according to varying practices, has led to human, mechanical or semi-mechanical means being employed. The following description by Rodolphe-Maurice Arlaud, who

is recalling memories of commented projections, reveals the potential that may result by associating the different agencies within the production space:

> In front of the speaker there was now a row of little buttons, and between him and the booth there was a mysterious and silent dialogue punctuated by red, white, green or blue lights. It meant: 'Show a fixed view, show the film'. Or it was intended to stop the orchestra, or start it up again, or change music.[11]

According to this account, which describes a configuration and a specific function of the production space, the lecturer deals with the controls of the different parts of the machinery. It shows that to account for the heterogeneous – and more or less artisanal and innovatory – practices of the 'sound of the silent era', it is important to broaden the machinery pole and include the presence of a person or persons, whose main representative is the lecturer. As we shall see, the lecturer is an agency who mediates – by defining what access the audio-spectator is given on the one hand to the visual representation and on the other hand to the 'machinery'. This agency does not exactly correspond to any of the poles within this three-part configuration, but intervenes between each one of them. This position of intermediary can be explained by the fact that the person of the lecturer is a source of 'production' comparable to the machinery; lecturers can, moreover, be replaced by or share the stage with a phonograph (generally by alternating with it).[12] Moreover, they have a direct relation with those who in like fashion watch the images. As they follow how the spectacle unfolds, they can intervene physically to give more weight to what they say, thus creating a visual representation that 'competes' with the projected image.

We can thus see that the machinery-spectator-representation model postulated by Albera and Tortajada for image production may equally well be applied to sound dispositives. From the Kinetophone (when one person pays to listen for a brief moment) to pre-recorded radio broadcasts via the Theatrophone, limited to one individual at a time,[13] the various types of phonographs for use at home or by a presenter, and even all the machines invented by engineers or novels that only existed on paper,[14] each system gives rise to a specific dispositive that one can envisage within this theoretical framework. I shall restrict myself here to the dispositives that use image and voice together and that have a mechanical element in at least one of the two parts of the representation.

The correlation between the mechanical (re)production of sounds and the showing of images does, however, require a twofold conception of the machinery and the representation (and even of the receiver, whose senses are divided and who thus becomes an audio-spectator). It can thus be said that on the one hand, a *vertical relation* is established between the visual and sound components (either inside the machinery or the representation), and on the other hand a *horizontal relation* between what belongs to the machinery and what belongs to

the representation. The first type of relation deals with the linking of the appa-
ratuses producing the sound and pictures, and on the level of the representa-
tion, the links that are established *de facto* when sound and image occur to-
gether. The horizontal relation is generally less visible in cinema as it
constitutes an obstacle to the referential illusion, for example becoming appar-
ent when the sound setup ostensibly influences the audio-spectator's perception
of the diegetic space. One must also consider the representational nature of the
sounds themselves as, in the words of Rick Altman (following Alan Williams),[15]
recorded sound 'reveal[s] its mandate to *represent* sound events rather than to
reproduce them'.[16] It is thus necessary to postulate that the occurrences of sound
produced by mechanical means themselves belong to the pole of representation.

One must moreover stress that what is perceived plays a primordial part in
the phenomena involved in representation, since in order to institute represen-
tation, one must necessarily involve the spectator and/or auditor. As cinema
became an institution, both narration and a closure of the diegetic universe
were privileged, thus bringing about a 'verticalization' of horizontal relations –
the current practice of synchronism follows the same trend, as it aims to erase
the horizontal relation by displacing it by a sleight of hand exclusively to the
level of representation. To varying degrees, these two types of relation can
either be hidden or exhibited by the dispositive.

One may wonder what happens to these relations when there is human inter-
vention. Given that the speaker also introduces a secondary visual element,
they are necessarily made more complex. Indeed, presenters can make them-
selves visible, look at the spectators and, by means of their acting, gestures,
mimes or dress, create a distinctive referential universe that may prolong, con-
tradict, ironize, and so on that of the film. In his 1908 treatise on the oratorical
art of the magic-lantern speaker, G.M. Coissac noted: 'The word is indeed not
everything – the expression of the face and the gesture accompanying it give it
more energy and meaning'.[17]

Typology of sound parameters

In order to put forward a synthetic vision of these various aspects, I have chosen
a grid based on the model proposed by François Albera and Maria Tortajada for
visual dispositives. Exhaustiveness is not the aim here, given the specific case
examined – and it would be a tall order indeed in this highly heterogeneous
field of practices made up of cinema managers' one-off and ephemeral innova-
tions. I am looking to put forward a whole series of criteria to analyse specific
auditory dispositives. It goes without saying that the parameters chosen in this

typology must be combined with the elements of the machinery that are neces-sary for image production – such as Albera and Tortajada have shown. The typology put forward below follows an increasing order of 'dematerialisation' of the speaker, allowing me to highlight one of the main distinctions between the cinema with lecturer and the talkie. If, as André Gaudreault has noted in his essay on narrative enunciation,[18] the voice-over of the speaker constitutes a re-surgence of the voice of the early cinema lecturer's voice, one must not overlook the disembodiment that is characteristic of all voice-overs. One may, of course, say with Mary Ann Doane that even when a filmic representation diverges from the norm of voice-lip synchronism, as is the case with the voice-over, 'the phan-tasmatic body's attribute of unity is not lost' for 'it is simply displaced – the body *in* the film becomes the body *of* the film'.[19] However, that particular 'body' – that of the filmic discourse that the aesthetic of 'transparency' precisely aims to render invisible in order to maximise the spectator's immersion in the world of the film – is very different from that resulting from the presence of the lecturer, who intervenes between the audio-spectator and the representation.

   The typology I propose is organised according to the different relations that are likely to be established between the three poles of the dispositive. With re-gard to the axis of horizontal relations (spectator-machinery) that I want to highlight here – as the link with the representation is more often addressed, I shall not envisage it as such – we may distinguish the following parameters:

Type of source
– Voice of a speaker visible in the hall and speaking live.
– Voice of a speaker visible in the hall, transmitted by technical means (mega-phone, microphone and amplifier or electric modulator, etc.).
– Voice of a hidden speaker.
– Voice on phonograph or mechanically produced, with the device visible.

The device may be activated by the spectator (Kinetophone, talking-doll phono-graph), the showman (phonographic spectacles) or mechanically (synchronisa-tion systems).
– Use both voice of speaker and voice on phonograph, either simultaneously or alternating.
– Voice on phonograph with the device hidden.

Spatial location of the vocal source
– Space where image originates from.
– Spectators' space.
– Scenic space set out in the hall.
– Space behind the screen.

– Space that cannot be pinned down because of the acousmatisation (in the sense that Michel Chion gives to the term), multiple secondary spaces (an *encompassing* dispositive).

Mode of access to the visibility of the source
– The speaker or equipment is permanently visible.
– The speaker or equipment is temporarily visible (prologue, interlude).
– There is progressive adaptation to what is being (audiovisually) shown with the source being effaced.
– The source remains hidden.

It is obvious that privileged links are created between some of these aspects. For example, the dissimulation of the speaker, aiming to conjure up illusion, tends to favour the space behind the screen, as the support of the images 'makes a screen' and captures all the spectator's attention. Regarding the anchoring of the voice in the representation, the degree that the live vocal source is exhibited is therefore inversely proportional to the subordination of the sound to the image on the screen.[20] The mode of *presence* of the speakers is a decisive factor: when they actually appear, the way in which they present themselves in front of the audience's eyes – and look at the audience – is vital. Moreover, the lecturer's presence could be highlighted by visual elements. G.M. Coissac, for example, recommended that the people giving the explanations should stand in a commanding, raised position, such that they might be seen by all the spectators.[21]

In addition, the opposition between the human and the machine (at very least the projector) that is inherent to the dispositive may be embodied in the way the speaker's actual performance unfolds – varied technological means might be used, such as the 'noise machines' that some lecturers habitually used, according to Jean A. Keim[22]. The most basic of these instruments was probably the megaphone, used in wide-open spaces. It was mainly used in the circus but also in spectacles that arose with the emergence of mass culture (such as Bill Codi's *Wild West Show* begun in 1883), to which cinema also belongs.

The criterion of 'alternating' between live speech and the recorded voice also implies considering the opposite situation, that of 'simultaneity'. The possibility of covering the live voice by a recorded voice (or vice-versa) was above all a theoretical one – it is hard to imagine what advantages this situation could provide in the framework of the traditional conception of a representation using sound, as it leads to a loss of intelligibility, especially when the text produced by both voices is not the same. However, one cannot theoretically exclude like phenomena of overlapping such as are found in works belonging to cinematographic 'modernity' (in particular with Jean-Luc Godard). Outside the cinema-

tographic institution, one finds this type of superposition used by charlatan mediums as a means of authenticating. When Conan Doyle described a spiritism séance, one of the initiated stated that it is preferable that the medium speaks at the same time as the voice of the spirits so that the participants are convinced that there is no ventriloquist.[23] This certifying function is represented in E.T.A. Hoffmann's fictional story, *Automata*, whose two protagonists remove all suspicions of ventriloquism when the artist, who is to present a 'speaking Turk', speaks to the people present at the same time as the machine.[24] One may imagine that a similar role of testifying also fell to the showman's voice in the first presentations of the phonograph, the sounds of which could be perceived as being supernatural manifestations because of their acousmatic nature. Indeed, the presence of an individual who does not speak next to the device caused even well-informed observers to have doubts.[25]

With the exception of these marginal cases, other live spectacles can be cacophonous because of the superposition of different voices. In contemporary art, cacophony is exploited for an aesthetic end in performances on stage or in installations. When the same voice and text are spoken by two different channels, the result is an effect of *delinking* that destabilises spectators.

Exhibiting the mechanical nature of the phonograph implies envisaging the possibility of a physical link between the spectator and the sound dispositive. A distinction can be made between a system such as Berthon, Dussaud & Jaubert's Phonorama (1898), where each spectator had to place an ear against a telephone to hear the sounds accompanying the projected image, and Clément-Maurice's Phono-Cinema-Theatre (1900), whose sound came from a cylinder phonograph in the orchestral pit, with its receiver only working inside the 'production space' to link the phonograph to the projection booth (where the operator synchronised live). The Phonorama thus combined an encompassing visual dispositive (the audience in front of a screen) with an individual sound dispositive, whereas another device, Edison's Kinetophone (the 1895 model), gave the spectator individual access to the two components. Individual control of the device is a particularly important factor, as it entails not just turning on the machine, but allows the sound to be turned down or off at any time while the image is being shown. In a traditional cinema hall, the sound volume is virtually identical for all spectators, and the sound cannot not be heard as one cannot shut one's ears, whereas it is simple to shut one's eyes.

It is difficult to conceive of the positioning of the source of sound independently from its effects on the audiovisual representation. Right from the first attempts to link a phonograph and a cinematographic projector, the choice of locating the phonograph(s) behind (or along) the screen became the rule – despite the numerous practical advantages that could have been derived from having the two devices near to each other – since, in the words of Harry Ge-

duld, 'this arrangement was considered necessary because it seemed unnatural for the audience to listen to the sound coming from behind their seats while they were facing the picture'.[26] The unicity of the audiovisual representation – guaranteeing diegetic completeness – thus took precedence over the manageability of the machinery. To a similar end, Léon Gaumont experimented with a technique consisting of manually moving the phonographs behind the screen to correspond to the visible movements on the screen.[27] This adaptation of the sound machinery to the screen space and consequently (and problematically) the diegetic space makes up a 'material' equivalent to later stereophonic technologies. Moreover, the placing of the sound source behind the screen was perpetuated with the generalisation of the talkie. As Rick Altman has noted, as soon as the voice became the 'raw material' of sound in the cinema around 1930, technicians added a second frontal loudspeaker above the screen, with the orchestral-pit speaker being reserved for the music.[28]

I shall finish my typology outline by examining in particular the voice and looking at the following 'vertical' parameters:

Vertical relations on the machinery level

Types of projection and sound source
– Fixed images / animated images / combination of fixed and animated images.
– Sound-producing device / technique of sound production / human voice agency.

Location of the sound source in relation to the projector
– Unique sound-image system.
– Interdependent sound-image systems (physically apart but linked mechanically or electrically).
– Independent sound-image system: human operator to run the (production or reproduction) device / human voice agency.

Type of synchronisation[29]
– Temporary absence of image or sound.
– Human synchronisation: lecturer speaking of something different from the film / speaking of the film as film (presentation) / speaking of the context of the world of the film (historical, scientific, economic, etc.) / describing the world of the film / relaying what the characters say in direct discourse / dubbing the characters (synchronism).
– Human synchronisation assisted mechanically, realised thanks to 'chronometric prostheses' such as were proposed by some inventors and pioneers of

the 'silent' period to orchestral conductors performing in cinema halls, for example with the Visiophone, *Ciné-pupitre* or Cineorama systems.[30]
– Phonographic synchronisation: movement of a cylinder or disc (also for some digital techniques) matching the movements of the image (or vice-versa).
– Cinematographic synchronisation: simultaneous reading of optical sound and image tracks on the film.

Vertical relations on the representation level
– Voice produced by the visual representation itself (automata, visual dimension of the lecturer's performance).
– 'Synchronous' voice (resulting from human, part mechanical or mechanical synchronisation).
– Voice *delinking* (breakdown or temporary perturbation of synchronism)
– Voice off.
– Voice-over: the degree of dissociation between the image and voice depends on the way that the presumed speaker is visualised during other parts of the film.

The internal relations of the audiovisual representation are traditionally examined in analyses that stay centred on the film itself. However, it is fruitful to include them in an analysis of all of the parameters considered in the typology of the properties of dispositives. It is thus possible to integrate the question of the film session beyond the unit of the film itself (as is required in such practices as lettrist cinema), and to pay attention to the reappearance of orality in certain films that portray an intermediary figure who, in some respects, may have a connection with the lecturer of early cinema.[31]

The lecturer, an agency of mediation integrated in the dispositive of spoken 'cinema'

> This cinema you know, it's in a neighbourhood where only workers live. And most of them don't know how to read the titles. During the projections you must stand behind the screen and explain to the audience what's happening in each scene. Do you understand? You must speak loudly and distinctly and then in such a way as to interest the audience …[32]

The Polish Jewish writer Isroel Rabon has the joint owner of a cinema provide this explanation. This character has abruptly taken on the novel's recently demobilized narrator – who is wandering, penniless and lonely in the town of

Lodz. Like all discourses dealing with projections commented on by a lecturer, this commentary presupposes certain characteristics that establish a specific dispositive. Even if the events here are probably fictional, the author (born in 1900) was able to draw on his memories to compose this plot set at the end of the 1910s. The working-class audience's illiteracy is what stimulates the presence of the live human voice taking the place of the titles, with the lecturer intervening like a kind of 'translator'[33] – with all the latitude belonging to spoken discourse, as the reader discovers later when a film about the French Revolution is shown, an adaptation of *Orphans of the Storm*[34] – i.e. explicitly as a mediator between screen and audience whose attention he must capture. The instructions given by the cinema owner signify that the screening will happen in a particular way – the lecturing will be done from the wings at the same time that the film is shown, with the lecturer hidden from the audience's sight (for which the young, inexperienced man is very thankful: 'Thank heavens, I said to myself, while I speak the audience won't see my face').[35]

The choice of not seeing the source of the voice corresponds to one modality among others, as the dispositive of the cinema with lecturer can only be conceived as a plurality. When commenting on two different sources, Albera and Gaudreault remark as follows:

> One can note […] contradictory assertions regarding the dispositive that he [the lecturer] belongs to – here he is visible and even 'burdensome', a kind of orchestral conductor (he organises the projection and dominates the music), while there he is hidden from the audience and uses a table and a dark lantern.[36]

By examining the ways in which different cinema operators *disposed* the agencies that make up the production space (we have here a literal meaning of the term *dispositive*) during projections with lecturers mentioned in some testimonies, one can examine the consequences a particular characteristic has on the communication process set up by the spectacle. This type of observation echoes the concerns of operators and speakers from early times, who were confronted with the concrete problem of how to arrange the space of the hall. Hence, certain unusual systems were favoured as they allowed the projection device to be placed behind the screen – such as the *Dactylographe* (a process that worked in a lit hall with a translucent screen showing an image that was reflected several times), whose advantages were summed up as follows in 1909 by a chronicler:

> The speaker and lantern-operator came closer, making it easier for them to communicate while working, which is out of the question when the audience separates the two. All the work is done outside the audience and not in front or behind it.[37]

The respective positioning of the different poles and agencies of the dispositive are consequently thought out in relation to the effect produced on the audience

– here the production space is totally neglected. Such considerations often led commentators at the time to mention the link between the source of the images and the speaker. For example, one finds in the manual discussing the magic lantern lecture, published by the New York company producing and distributing York & Son plates, the recommendation 'not to adopt the too common mode of signalling to the operator by at one time rapping with the pointer, at another giving directions with the voice'.[38] It was thus a matter of removing the 'redundancy' of the signals and all references to the vertical relation between the speaker and projectionist as, according to the authors, such a reference would influence the horizontal relation with the spectator. In a text where Coissac advocated adopting a projection system by light shining through the screen (see fig. 1),[39] he underlined the disadvantage of traditional projection with the projector situated behind (or among) the spectators, which resides in the fact that 'the operator is generally surrounded by a large number of spectators whose curiosity is awoken by the least little details of the manipulations; they thus take away the attention demanded by the professor or speaker.[40] The showing of the projection is considered by Coissac – in the pedagogical context that concerned him – as an element curbing proper transmission of the spoken information (but not as a brake on the spectator's immersion in the world represented visually – which was secondary for him). His remark indicates that the very functioning of the projector could constitute an 'attraction' vying with that of the speaker – moreover like other elements in the production space (including sound sources).[41]

Figure 1
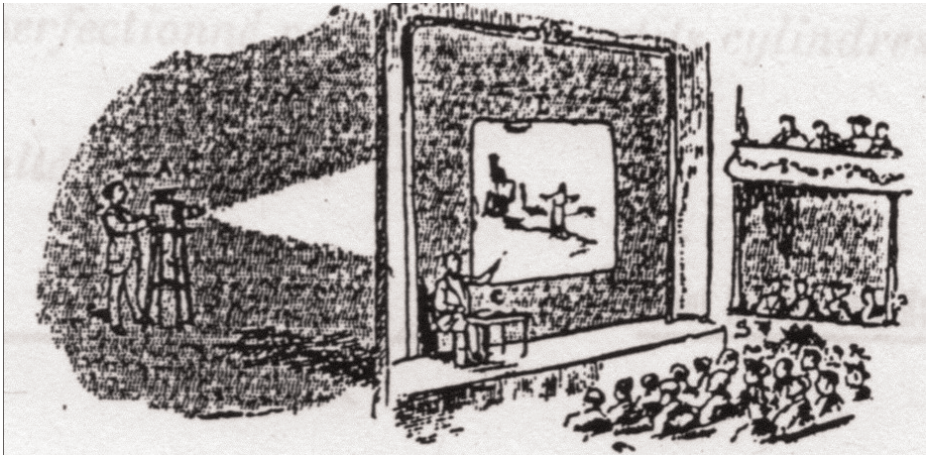
The 'production space' also exhibits itself when the speaker uses a baton – a physical extension of himself (and thus 'technical', at a minimum level) – in the physical space of the screen. Such a 'prosthesis'-like object is generally associated with the pedagogical projection because it implies that the image is subordinated to the voice – Coissac advises the speaker to use one[42] – one cannot however rule out that the cinema lecturer also used it, if only to give himself the appearance of a speaker giving a 'real' lecture. Following the example of Jean Keim, who mentions the lecturer's 'long baton',[43] R.M. Arlaud recalls a lecturer who was employed by the director of a fairground, whose activities he describes in the following way:

> He was directly descended from the old image showman. He even had his baton. He commented what everyone could see, striking the screen, getting more worked up than the actors. […] The baton pointed at Paul. 'She spots him!'. The baton stressed how frightened Juliette was. 'She turns round!'[44]

This accessory allows the lecturer to explicate and visualise the co-reference of word and image, while underlining the presence of a human agency. Its explicative function is not only concerned with the visual reference but with the reading that should be made of it, thus orienting where spectators look. Moreover, André Gaudreault has linked the lecturer with the 'admonisher' of certain pictorial works which generally indicate the central element of the composition by means of a pointing finger.[45]

In order to define a given projection dispositive complete with lecturer, it is vital to examine what the spectator is authorised to see of the equipment and the origin of production of the discourse. Hiding or exhibiting the source is a key factor for defining the horizontal relation, in that it involves the illusionist nature of the representation. However, over and above the physical location of the elements belonging to the three poles of the dispositive, one must add the question of how time is managed – activating simultaneously or in turn these different agencies. In a report entitled 'Organising a lecture' and published in 1905 in *Le Fascinateur*, the Abbot of Fouchécour commented on three methods of fixed-image projection. The first involved lecturing without images and with the lights on – the lights were then put out and all the plates shown. In the second, the speaker spoke in the dark at the same time as the images were shown. The final one is a combination of the first two, when the speaker interrupts his talk with visual illustrations each time he has finished part of his lecture.[46] Comments such as those of Fouchécour always include remarks about the audience which must be *disposed* to listen to the lecture. Dark or lit hall, platform or hiding-place behind the screen, baton or removal of the lecturer's body – all these elements, set out in a large number of combinations, allow us to ad-

dress the figure of the lecturer via the different dispositives that he helps us to define.

The use of the dispositive notion does have an impact on the way one conceives of the place of the voice in early cinema – instead of stating, with Tom Gunning, that 'the lecturer […] reveals a fissure within the cinema as an apparatus',[47] we have here envisaged this practice as an element that fully belongs to the projection of images. And although this human agency occupies a variable position in the three-pole system that we have adopted, the voice is more or less strongly captured in the orbit of one of the three poles (space of the production/representation/audio-spectator) and contributes to configuring the relations between the three of them.

Despite the plurality of dispositives whose traces can be discovered in documents of different types, it can be said that theoretically speaking – and beyond the diversity of practices – the presence of a lecturer leads to a specific dispositive that I propose to call "*spoken* 'cinema'". While the *talking* cinema refers to an institutionalised practice of subjugating the spoken element to the world of the film – people speak *in* the film – the category of *spoken* 'cinema' covers a series of heterogeneous practices that concern live spectacles where the film – spoken – is considered as an *object* within a dispositive which, taken as a whole, is a speaking one. In the *spoken* films one speaks *of* the film. As the words of the *spoken* 'cinema' are materially outside the filmic diegesis, they can only be productively envisaged as an element of this 'cinema' dispositive whose outlines I have in part attempted to sketch here together with illustrations of some of the forms in which it has been realised.

Notes

1. Many people commenting on the first films lamented the absence of sound and called for the addition of a sound dimension. In this context, Daniel Banda and José Moure point out in the early cinema section of their anthology that 'the cinematographic idea is identified with total representation of reality', the cinema being 'conceived with sound – like an extension of the phonograph' (*Le Cinéma : naissance d'un art, 1895-1920*, Paris: Flammarion, 2008, p. 35). On this subject see Tom Gunning, 'Doing for the Eye What the Phonograph Does for the Ear', in R. Abel & R. Altman (eds.), *The Sounds of Early Cinema*, Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001.

2. The inverted commas here indicate an entity considered at the very beginning of its possible developments and that had not yet been defined by fixed media properties. In my view, the protean nature of the techniques and practices of the time forbids one from conceiving of them within a monolithic and unifying framework.

3. The first results of research into this question were published in number 22 of the review *Iris* (autumn 1996) edited by André Gaudreault and Germain Lacasse. See also Germain Lacasse, *Le Bonimenteur de vues animées. Le cinéma « muet » entre tradition et modernité*, Quebec/Paris: Nota Bene/Méridiens Klincksieck, 2000.

4. The terminology has been examined and the object of study legitimated in the article by François Albera and André Gaudreault entitled 'Apparition, disparition et escamotage du bonimenteur dans l'historiographie française du cinéma', in Giusy Pisano & Valérie Pozner (eds.), *Le Muet a la parole. Cinéma et performance à l'aube du XXe siècle*, Paris: AFRHC, 2005.

5. Here I use the expression suggested by Rick Altman in a text where he argued in favour of taking into account the heterogeneity of sound phenomena during the 'silent' era ('General Introduction: Cinema as Event', in R. Altman (ed.), *Sound Theory, Sound Practice*, New York/London: Routledge, 1992).

6. The article is a reworked version of part of a chapter of *Du bonimenteur à la voix-over. Voix-attraction et voix-narration au cinéma*, Lausanne: Antipodes, 2007, pp. 39-61.

7. The practice was actually continued well after this period – in France, for example, at least up to the beginning of the Great War, while in Japan, the *benshi* continued until the second half of the 1930s.

8. By using this neologism, I would like to underline my intention of contesting the pre-eminence traditionally given to the visual dimension in cinema theory. In 1903, G.-M. Coissac, who wrote a large number of texts looking at the practice of lecturing, referred to the receiver of the audiovisual message in the following way: 'To keep the audience – I mean the auditor-spectators – on tenterhooks, it is not enough to project excellent images on the screen […]' ('Méthode à suivre dans les séances de projection', *Le Fascinateur*, No. 12, 1 December 1903; all the references to the two periodicals, *Le Fascinateur* and *Ciné-journal*, in the present article are taken from the 'Fonds de recherche de Monsieur Pierre Veronneau', Cinémathèque québécoise, winter 2004, document put together by Marlène Landry). One can clearly see just how his remarks follow the paradigm of what Albera & Gaudreault ('Apparition, disparition et escamotage du bonimenteur …', op. cit., pp. 171-172) propose to name the 'lecture-with-projection' (as opposed to the 'projection-with-lecture'), where the image is so strongly subordinated to the word that, in the passage quoted, Coissac was duty bound to refer to the fact that the audience is also composed of spectators. Today, while cinema has been legitimized as an 'art of the image', it is the vocal dimension that needs to be brought back into the limelight, following an approach begun in particular by Michel Chion.

9. François Albera & Maria Tortajada, '*L'Epistémè* "1900"', in André Gaudreault, Catherine Russell & Pierre Véronneau (ed.), *Le Cinématographe, nouvelle technologie du XXe siècle*, Lausanne: Payot, 2004.

10. To avoid any ambiguity, a distinction is made between *synchronisation*, an operation whereby visual and audio co-occurrences are adjusted by associating elements included in the production space, and *synchronism*, which refers to the level of representation, and more particularly a certain state of the film such as established by the audio-spectator – not according to the technique used but by the effect produced.

11. R.-M. Arlaud, *Cinéma-Bouffe. Le Cinéma et ses Gens*, Paris: Editions Jacques Melot, 1945, p. 69.

12. Leaving aside sung interludes, lecturers seem not to have used the phonograph very frequently to reproduce a voice, as the recording doubtless competed too strongly with their own performance. However, the Edison phonograph is sometimes mentioned in passing (see note 26 of 'On the singular status of the human voice. *Eve of the Future Eden* and the cultural series of talking machines' in the present volume). In the Phonograph and Cinematograph section of his manual, G.-Michel Coissac nonetheless advises those responsible for explaining fixed views to use such recordings: '[…] many lecturers will double the interest they arouse if animated views from the cinematograph are added to ordinary projections or if there is a discerning choice of a number of phonograph cylinders or discs'. (*Manuel pratique du conférencier-projectionniste*, Paris: La Bonne Presse, 1908, p. 202). The movement of the image and the production of recorded sounds are similarly considered as sporadic additions aiming to reinforce the attractive nature of the spectacle.

13. See Giusy Pisano, *Une archéologie du cinéma sonore*, Paris: CNRS, 2004, pp. 159-163.

14. See François Albera, 'Le cinéma "projeté" et les périodisations de l'histoire technique du cinéma', in Enrico Biasin (ed.), *Le età del cinema / The Ages of Cinema*, Udine: Forum, 2008, pp. 393-400.

15. Alan Williams, 'Is Sound Recording Like a Language?', *Yale French Studies, No.* 60, 1980.

16. Rick Altman, 'The Material Heterogeneity of Recorded Sound', in R. Altman (ed.), *Sound Theory, Sound Practice*, op. cit., p. 29.

17. G.-M. Coissac, *Manuel …*, op. cit., p. 179.

18. André Gaudreault, *Du littéraire au filmique,* Quebec/Paris: Nota Bene /Armand Colin, 1999 (1988), p. 153.

19. M.A. Doane, 'The Voice in the Cinema: The Articulation of Body and Space', in R. Altman (ed.), *Yale French Studies*, No. 60, 1980, p. 35.

20. In addition to examining the characteristics of the actual spatial organisation of the hall, one must analyse linguistically the utterances produced, since the speaker may refer in various ways to the *hic et nunc* of the spectacle.

21. G.-M. Coissac, *Manuel …*, op. cit., p. 175.

22. Jean A. Keim, *Un nouvel art. Le Cinéma sonore*, Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1947, p. 41.

23. Arthur Conan Doyle, *Histoire du spiritisme*, Paris: Editions du Rocher, 1981 [original English edition: *The History of Spiritualism*, London: Cassell, 1926], p. 310.

24. E.T.A. Hoffmann, 'Die Automate', in *Die Serapions-Brüder*, tome 1, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1968 [1st edition 1813], pp. 329-330.

25. Thus, the chronicler of *L'Illustration* of 23 March 1878 proposed the following description: 'Moreover, the operator is always there with his instrument. He never opens his mouth while the voice of the echo is being produced. These circumstances give rise to doubts in the minds of several physicians. During the first moments, the operator was accused of being a skilled ventriloquist.' (quoted by G. Pisano, *Une archéologie …*, op. cit., p. 151).

26. Harry M. Geduld, *The Birth of the Talkies. From Edison to Jolson*, Bloomington, London, Indiana University Press, 1975, p. 44.

27. Ibid., p. 57.

28. Rick Altman, *Silent Film Sound*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2004, p. 47.

29. It should be noted that the setting up of synchronisation points is not only valid for the dominant model of voice-lip synchronism, but that there are other modes of synchronisation relating to the element chosen in the image (gestures, movements of and in the image, joins in the montage, etc.).

30. See Emmanuelle Toulet & Christian Belaygue, *Musique d'écran. L'accompagnement musical du cinéma muet en France 1918-1995*, Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1994, pp. 76-77.

31. One may observe a specific audiovisual dispositive present in the filmic diegesis (or, more precisely, at its margins) in such different films as LOLA MONTÈS (Max Ophüls, 1955), THE EYE OF THE DEVIL (Ingmar Bergman, 1960), THE TRIAL (Orson Welles, 1962) or DOLLS (Takeshi Kitano, 2002), or in the prologues of OUR TOWN (Sam Wood, 1940) and MAN ABOUT TOWN (René Clair, 1947, the American version of *Silence est d'or*, moreover one of the rare films to present an early cinema lecturer). With regard to how orality is shown in talking films, see my articles entitled 'La perpétuation de l'oralité du "muet" dans quelques incipit filmiques des premières années du parlant' (forthcoming in the review *Cinémas*) and 'D'une résurgence sous forme fixée de la pratique bonimentorielle. La voix-over du *Roman d'un tricheur* et sa postérité chez Resnais (*Providence*)' (forthcoming).

32. Isroel Rabon, *La Rue*, Paris: Juillard, 1992 (1928), p. 126.

33. See the links that I suggest at different levels between translation and lecturing in *Du Bonimenteur à la voix-over,* op. cit., pp. 124-129.

34. Rabon attributes this film to a certain Moretti (p. 150), but it is probably the 1910 version directed by Albert Capellani. The passage of the book describing the projection of this film when the audience of workers takes control of the screening is better known in French-speaking countries as it is quoted by Jérôme Prieur (*Le Spectateur nocturne. Les écrivains au cinéma*, Paris: Editions de l'Etoile/Cahiers du cinéma, 1993, pp. 88-92). Rabon's novel depicts an urban milieu where the circus and the crowd play an important role, with a large number of situations of orality that are similar to the cinema of attractions.

35. Isroel Rabon, op. cit., p. 151. Later in the novel, we learn that when the lecturer is not there, an orchestra plays along with the films (ibid., p. 190).

36. F. Albera & A. Gaudreault, 'Apparition, disparition et escamotage du bonimenteur …', op. cit., p. 182.

37. Hy Viel, 'Projections Dactylographiques (procédés de F. Mare)', *Ciné-Journal*, No. 37, 29 April-May 1909.

38. 'Preliminary Hints to Amateur Lecturers' (circa 1880), quoted by Richard Crangle, 'Next Slide Please : The Lantern Lecture in Britain, 1890-1910', in R. Abel & R. Altman (eds.), *The Sounds of Early Cinema*, Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001, p. 45.

39. Illustration used in G.-M. Coissac's article entitled 'Projections par réflexion et projections par transparence', *Le Fascinateur*, 1 April 1903, p. 111.

40. G.-M. Coissac, *Manuel …*, op. cit., pp. 198-199.

41. … as is illustrated by the following advice given by the lecturer Georges Dalbe in 1911 to his fellow-lecturers: '[…] he [the lecturer] must above all be good-tempered and maintain excellent relations with the musicians, who can cause considerable problems – they only have to play loudly and the lecturer is massacred' (*Le Courrier*

cinématographique, 14 October 1911, quoted in the second annex of André Gau-
dreault's article entitled 'Le retour du [bonimenteur] refoulé …', *Iris*, No. 22, p. 32).

42. G.-M. Coissac, *Manuel …*, op. cit., pp. 182-183.

43. Jean A. Keim, op. cit., p. 41.

44. R.-M. Arlaud, op. cit., p. 101.

45. André Gaudreault (in collaboration with Germain Lacasse), 'Fonctions et origines
du bonimenteur du cinéma des premiers temps', *Cinémas*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 1993, p. 139.

46. 'Organisation d'une conférence', *Le Fascinateur*, No. 27, 1 March 1905, pp. 107-108.

47. Tom Gunning, 'The Scene of Speaking: Two Decades of Discovering the Film Lec-
turer', *Iris* 27, 1999, p. 78.