

CALL FOR PAPERS

Special issue:

**“Nothing is more practical than a good theory.” Gérard Genette and film theories**

**« Il n’y a rien de plus pratique qu’une bonne théorie ». Gérard Genette et les théories du cinéma**  
(vol. XII, no. 18, Spring 2012)

**Deadline for Abstracts : October 15, 2011**

This special issue of *Cinéma & Cie* seeks to revisit from the perspective of film and media studies the less known works of Gérard Genette.

At first glance, the attention that film studies has dedicated to the work of Genette seems to be profound yet fragmentary in nature. Focusing on the relationships between Genette’s research and film studies, what immediately comes to mind is *Figures III* (1972), mainly because of its key role in defining a method of film analysis based on Structuralism. Nowadays, almost every book on film analysis uses some of the categories proposed by Genette, and seeks to discuss them in light of some particular features of film narrative dynamics (which however have never ceased to be questioned).

In consideration of the above, it is rather surprising that due consideration has not been given to the clarifications and developments of the model proposed by Genette in *Nouveau discours du récit* (1983) and *Fiction et diction* (1991) and, more generally, to the whole series (that is to say, the general theoretical project) in which *Figures III* is placed; in fact, the first volumes (*Figures*, 1966 and *Figures II*, 1969) of the *Figures* series, as well as the last (*Figures IV*, 1999 and *Figures V*, 2002), are far less known in film studies.

It is rather on the works between *Figures III* and *Seuils* (1987) that film studies has focused, even if with some exceptions and distortions. For instance, *Introduction à l’architexte* (1979), despite the enduring interest of film studies in the issue of *genre*, seems to have been almost entirely obscured by *Palimpsestes* (1982). Furthermore, we can hardly find in film studies any reference to *Mimologiques: voyage en Cratylie* (1976). Thus, it is essentially on *Figures III*, *Palimpsestes* and *Seuils* that film studies has focused: clearly, these works have been able to connect the research in the field of literary theory to the research that is being carried out in the field of film studies, and thus to draw on already existing widespread interests and to foster new research areas.

After *Seuils*, Genette’s work is far less known in the film studies field. Apart from the case of *Fiction et diction*, *Figures IV* and *Figures V*, which we have already mentioned, it is the publication of the two volumes *L’Œuvre de l’art (Immanence et transcendance*, 1994; *La relation esthétique*, 1997) which seems to pass almost unnoticed. Although the two volumes have had a great impact on the field of Aesthetics, not even the ambiguous exclusion of cinema from a wide survey concerning the whole domain of arts, from photography to sculpture, from music to architecture, has aroused the interest of film scholars. What is more, it is in *L’Œuvre de l’art* that Genette’s research about the concept of transcendence (developed since the end of the 1970s, and mainly in the 1980s, with *Palimpsestes* and *Seuils*) seems to be fully theorized.

Finally, we have to mention *Métalepse: De la figure à la fiction* (2004); while developing a category already proposed in *Figures III*, and widely discussing it within the field of cinema, it has scarcely been taken into account by film studies.

**This special issue of *Cinéma & Cie* will investigate primarily:**

- In what ways Genette’s less known works on Poetics and Aesthetics address cinema – or the audiovisual field; how his theoretical proposals about cinema provide us with specific skills for

understanding cinema in its relationships with other forms of expression; how cinema, through the specific theoretical problems it can pose, offers a contribution to Genette's reflections.

- In which ways Genette's less known works, may offer a significant contribution to film and media theories, even if they don't directly address cinema; in which ways could cinema – or the audiovisual field – contribute to problematize and improve Genette's theoretical proposals.

- In which ways Genette's less known work may help us to better understand, problematize and also revisit Genette's categories and studies which are far better known within the field of film studies.

**Some possible themes include but are not limited to:**

- The *Figures* series: middle without beginning or end. From the long-forgotten beginnings (*Figures I, II*), to the overlooked last contributions (*Figures IV, V*).

- From *Figures III* to *Métalepse*: the issue of narrative levels.

- The role of Borges' "theoretical tales" in Genette's studies, and their relationship with film and media theories (metalepsis, anachronism, Pierre Menard). More generally, the possible role played by a "theory of cinema" (that is to say, the ability of films to pose and discuss theoretical issues) besides that of a "theory of literature."

- The issues of *genre* (from *Introduction à l'architexte* and *Figures*, to the studies about paratextuality and Aesthetics) and of style (from *Palimpsestes* to *Fiction et diction*).

- Cinema: regimes of immanence and modes of transcendence.

- The issue of transcendence from *Introduction à l'architexte* to *L'Œuvre de l'art*.

- Aesthetics and reception theories (from *Seuils* and *L'Œuvre de l'art*, to *Figures IV* and *V*).

- The role of Nelson Goodman's studies in the research developed by Genette, and possible implications for film and media studies.

- Anachronism and the idea of "retrospective influence."

**Submission details**

Please send by 15 October 2011 your abstract (300-500 words, in English or French) and a short bio to Valentina Re – Cinéma & Cie editorial staff, [valentina.re@unive.it](mailto:valentina.re@unive.it).

All notifications of acceptance will be emailed no later than 22 October 2011.

If accepted, full papers will then be required for peer review by 15 December 2011. The articles should be written in English or French and should be around 25,000-30,000 keystrokes (including footnotes).