

CAVELL: QUOTATIONS

- Movie performers cannot project, but are projected.
- [Movies] are of the world, in which human beings are not ontologically favored over the rest of nature . in which objects are not props but natural allies (or enemies) of the human character.
- The screen performer is essentially not an actor at all: he *is* the subject of study, and a study not his own. . . . On the screen the study is projected; on stage the actor is the projector.
- For the stage, an actor works himself into a role; for the screen, a performer takes the role onto himself.
- In a theater a real man is *there*, and in a movie no real man is there. . . Bazin meets [this difference] head on by simply denying that “the screen is incapable of putting us in the presence of the actor”; it, so to speak, relays his presence to us, as by mirrors.
- What does the silver screen screen? It screens me from the world it holds — that is, makes me invisible. And it screens that world from me — that is, screens its existence from me.
- The screen has no frame; that is, to say no border. [But] its limits are not so much the edges of a given shape as they are the limitations or capacity of a container . . . like the frame of a loom or a house. In this sense, the screen frame is a mold, or form.
- The fact that in a moving picture successive film frames are fit flush into the fixed screen frame results in a phenomenological frame that is indefinitely extendible and contractible . . . The altering frame is the image of perfect attention.
- How do movies reproduce the world magically? Not by literally presenting us with the world but by permitting us to view it unseen. . . In viewing films, the sense of invisibility is an expression of the modern sense of privacy or anonymity. It is as though the world’s projection explains our forms of unknown-ness. The explanation is not so much that the world is passing us by, as that we are displaced from our natural habitation within it, placed at a distance from it. The screen . . . makes displacement appear as our natural condition.

- The material basis of the media of movies (as paint on a flat . . . is the material basis of the media of painting) is . . . *a succession of automatic world projections*.
- The categories of succession and projection include the ones most emphasized . . . the aesthetics of film
- Narrative voyeurism is Hitchcock's way of declaring the medium of film, a condition of which is that its subjects are viewed from an invisible state.
- Voyeurism is a retracted edge of fantasy; its requirement of privacy shows its perversity.
- [In film] we do not so much look at the world as look *out at* it, from behind the self. It is our fantasies, now all but completely thwarted and out of hand, which are unseen and must be kept unseen.
- Viewing a movie . . . takes the responsibility for it out of our hands. Hence movies seem more natural than reality. Not because they are escapes into fantasy, but because they are reliefs from private fantasy and its responsibilities; from the fact that the world is *already* drawn by fantasy.
- Film takes our very distance and powerlessness over the world as the condition of the world's natural appearance.
- We are at the mercy of what the medium captures of us, and of what it chooses, or refuses, to hold for us. The comedy of self-reference satirizes the effort to escape the self by viewing it, the thought that there is a position from which to [be] assured, once and for all, [about] the truth of our views.
- The camera is outside its subject as I am outside my language.
- The protagonist's point of view is not the same as the placement and angle of the camera which records it.
- The camera must . . . in candor acknowledge not its being present in the world but its being outside its world. . . That we now feel this as a loss of connection, as staying *away*, underlies the camera's efforts to engulf its subjects — by widening its reach, by staying close enough to them to hold their scent (as a blinded man might), by freezing them in their tracks or slowing them down as if to glimpse them before they vanish.