Foreword:

Notes on the Dream Factory

A distinctive example of the connection between the dream and the cinema is the American Dream. This is made up of two aspects: individual happiness—reflected in the cliché "from dishwasher to millionaire"—and a society modeled on this principle. The first aspect in particular seems especially suited to the cinema, for the American Dream is similar to the fairy tale of "Hans in Luck." Both are based on the principle of middle-class economy, with the difference, perhaps, that the American Hans (at least, according to legend), has to work very hard for his luck ("washing dishes"), while the European Hans (of brothers Grimm fame) is made a fool of by everyone else, losing, in the blink of an eye, all of the money he has earned in seven years—and yet he still considers himself the luckiest person in the world.

Now, the American Dream is essentially based on economic success, which is accompanied by an elevation in social status. This is especially easy to portray in the cinema, since the cinema seems to be made precisely "to realize" and nurture this dream: one takes an actor and has him start out playing a poor dishwasher, and then finally equips him with all of the accoutrements of wealth and success. Therefore, form is given to the American Dream through cinematic means—sets, acting, filming, editing. (This form can also be just as easily shown in reverse, as the presentation of a character's downfall.)

As a rule, therefore, the notion of the American Dream in the cinema is limited to the question of aesthetic games. The "self-made man"—and this is perhaps the cinema's lesson—is not "self-made" in the sense that his own economic activity (his dishwashing) turns him into a millionaire. This remains, in fact, wishful thinking. The cinema's self-made man is self-made in the sense that he comes from the imagination and skill of a film crew, or from a director's "dream." The economic activity is in the actor's embodiment, or, better, in the aesthetic possibilities behind "what if." This game of Hollywood's is just as frequently silent about the fact that (American) society is not based on the principle of achievement alone, on rewarding only the capable—and this can be seen in its portrayals (outside of the dream) of principles underlying the social organizations of powerful gangster cartels and mob syndicates.

The model of the American Dream is only one example of the still-valid connection between the social dream and the cinema. Film theorists have described this relationship very differently. As early as 1911, Georg Lukács celebrated the visual culture of film as the liberation from causality. In the cinema, everything seems possible, just as it does in a dream. In 1921 Hugo von Hofmannsthal placed the cinema in the context of a

critique of language and logocentric order. For him, it was the silence of the film image that linked it to the dream. In addition, he cherished the hope that the cinema would be able to compensate for the subject's experience of alienation. In 1931 Ilya Ehrenburg described the film industry as a dream factory. And in 1936 Walter Benjamin saw film as a way to access an optical unconscious, which he associated with the compulsive unconscious of psychoanalysis. In 1958 Edgar Morin compared the perception of film with magical forms of perception. He compared the technological progress of the airplane and the ensuing colonization of the skies to heaven (the imaginary sky of the cinema). Siegfried Kracauer, in 1960, described the cinematic experience as a semi-alert state of reduced consciousness, to which the audience member dreamily adds his own mental images; Kracauer thus implied a social horizon, in which his theory of film ends in a chapter on the *Family of Man*. In the nineteen-seventies Jean-Louis Baudry examined not only the spatial and psychic organization of the cinema as dispositive, but also a way of thought schooled in Foucauldian terminology, which explored the cinema as part of a constellation of social forces.

These various references are directed toward cultural-historical changes—in both perception and production—and focus more than simple analogies of dream and film perception. If we formulate it like the title of this book, then we can describe two socially relevant perspectives. The first one has to do with the cinema. Here, the phrase "the cinema dreams" describes something the cinema does, and it means "the cinema shows films." These films have a specific character: they are illusionary or dreamlike. This is the classic way of thinking about the dream and the cinema together. The second perspective deals primarily with dreaming itself. In this case, the cinema is the visual translation of human activity. In this second sense, the sentence means "the people are dreaming"—and in order to dream, they have built complex apparatuses such as the cinema. If we formulate it like that, then the purpose is not to examine the dreamlike films of the cinema. Instead, one wants to learn more about the people of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and their films.

This book employs the second perspective to provide a new accent to a theme that has already been dealt with frequently. Kathrin Peters takes Walter Benjamin's phrase "optical unconscious" and examines its theoretical branches in the writings of Roland Barthes, Rosalind Krauss, and Jacques Rancière. Matthias Brütsch surveys the history of the different film/dream analogies. He concludes with a discussion of how the cinema can portray particular human dreams. Laura Rascaroli's topic is the various theoretical concepts of the cinema—for one, the cinema as an apparatus for reflecting reality, and for another, the cinema as an instrument of the forces of dreamlike imagination. Using Jonathan

Caouette's filmed self-portrait, TARNATION (2003), as her example, she shows that there is a connection between these theoretical conceptions. Karl Sierek explores the cinema in China today. He begins with the flying objects and people, or the free-floating views that characterize Chinese cinema and turn it into a specific dream space. Through D.W. Griffith's HEARTS OF THE WORLD (1918) Paul Young investigates the notions of realism in the cinema and asserts that this is ultimately based on nothing but a fantasy—or a dream. With Christian Metz, Rembert Hüser considers the opening credits of a film as a *passage rituelle*. Using the opening credits of Blake Edwards's BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY'S (1961) he undertakes an exemplary exploration of the relationship between dream and opening credits—and also proves that Freud—despite his protests to the contrary—was a cinematic thinker. Philippe-Alain Michaud observes the relationship between film and dream, starting with the advent of the soundtrack in films in the early nineteen-thirties. In his opinion, the connection between dream and film was lost with the coming of the soundtrack, and that it is only on the peripheries—in the experimental film, the scientific film—that the dreamlike dimension is maintained. Mechthild Zeul presents the cinema from the perspective of psychoanalytical practice and research, as the "Cave where Dreams Dwell". Her example of this specific metaphor of dream and cinema is the film VOLVER (2006) by Pedro Almodóvar. Kristina Jaspers turns to the "Stuff Which Dreams are Made Of," and investigates the work involving the visualization of dreams through set designers, cinematographers, and special effects in the films GEHEIMNISSE EINER SEELE, (G.W. Pabst, 1926), SPELLBOUND (Alfred Hitchcock, 1945), and LA SCIENCE DES REVÊS (The Science of Sleep, Michel Gondry, 2006). Finally, Dietmar Kammerer explores the dream journeys and stories of Lars von Trier through his "Europa" trilogy, and in the process, honors the winner of the tenth Bremen Film Prize (2008) for his achievements in European film.

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