Foreword:

On the Political and Aesthetic Dimensions of the Public Enemy

The *public enemy* is a central figure in film history. It served as the basis for a genre all its own, the gangster film. The gangster film became established during the Great Depression in the US, and coincides with the invention of sound film. Actors like James Cagney (THE PUBLIC ENEMY [William A. Wellman, 1931]), Edward G. Robinson (LITTLE CAESAR [Mervyn LeRoy, 1931]) or Paul Muni (SCARFACE [Howard Hawks, 1932]) had a voice of their own, and it came from the streets. In the early 1930s, they played public enemies modeled on real gangster figures from the Chicago underworld like Al Capone.

The new and striking thing about the gangster films of the 1930s was that they showed for the first time gangsters from the point of view of the criminals and included their social surroundings. Ever since then, the genre has been about processes of negotiation in which the interests of various social groups collide. To put this in somewhat exaggerated terms, in the figure of the film gangster the Italian, Irish, Polish, and (other) immigrants raised a claim to big business and participation in the culture of an immigrant society.

Film as a medium takes on a special importance in this context. On the one hand, historical gangsters such as John Dillinger—as they themselves said—oriented themselves along cinema models and gestures. On the other hand, film itself was the medium in which social processes of negotiation could take place. In the eyes of the spectators, the films themselves were ambivalent. They reflected the need to exclude the ethically abject (evil) and already in the 1930s brought the scenario of the state of emergency on the agenda. These same films, however, also shaped the aesthetic of the cinema and provided images for positive identification and possible social advancement linked to reflections on social integration through education. They depicted an imaginary city and an economic system in which one is condemned to succeed, come what may. This spectrum of motifs is still familiar to us today.

Beyond the genre of the gangster film, the term "public enemy" came in the course of time to be applied in highly varied realms. Public enemies were and are still today bandits, spies, communists, Nazis, terrorists, but also aliens, bacteria, and flu viruses. They serve to mark the other and the foreign in real and imaginary worlds. At least attributes are linked to marking: an imperative one—public enemies have to be fought to protect the existing order—and an aesthetic-cultural experience. The public enemy demands that a social promise is kept and recalls the limits of the existing order. For this, he is the source of admiration. The lasting impact of the

genre and its continuing effects show the link between these contradictory attributes. But also the use of the figure in pop art (for example, Andy Warhol) or in popular music (Public Enemy) points in this direction. And finally, the term returns in political discourse for labeling international terrorists, for example in the Clinton administration's personification of "rogue states," which continued during the Bush years.

In contemporary film productions that portray historical gangsters or terrorists, the link between social policy and aesthetics is also reflected. In some films, it is actually placed at the forefront. In his current film CARLOS (2010), Olivier Assayas captures the zeitgeist of the 1970s and the 1980s. He films the biography of the internationally active terrorist in colorful cinemascope and dynamic images. This enemy of the state (Carlos) speaks several languages. He is a vital man who oscillates among the roles of lover, revolutionary, and small-time entrepreneur on the world political stage.

Michael Mann once again staged the historical figure of John Dillinger in his film PUBLIC ENEMIES (2009), and in so doing transfers a prototype of the American gangster to the aesthetics of digital film. On first glance, the film undertakes a (more or less) exact historical reconstruction of the case history, and thus makes a link to the classical genre of the 1930s. PUBLIC ENEMIES describes the founding of the FBI and the emergence of the police state with its methods of surveillance and control. The special characteristic of Mann's film lies on the aesthetic level. At issue here is no longer an aesthetic of sound film that makes the voices of immigrants audible in the sense of a politics of identity. The innovation of the film develops rather in the use of a digital image that provides the gangster figure with a second life: a second life and a second death under digital conditions.

While old public enemies used the media as self-confidently as cars and machine guns, this contemporary restaging is structured self-reflexively and points once more to the link between politics and aesthetics. This is shown in a central scene from the film in which Johnny Depp / John Dillinger is sitting in a cinema watching a film with Clark Gable—and the faces of the two meet in close ups. But in this scene, it is not the two contemporaries who meet meet (Gable and Dillinger) but the old Hollywood gangster and the new digital gangster, which produce two specific visual forms and two historical faces using two aesthetic techniques (sound film and digital cinema).

This book intends to examine not only the aesthetics and history of the gangster film, but also aspects of identity formation and control along various gangster figures and will take a look at their transference. Both aspects are especially tied to film's aesthetics and history as a whole. This is quite evident in the founding films of the gangster genre. The

central question of the genre cinema was whether and how the needs of the individual could be harmonized with the demands of society. In the gangster film, the answer is negative. In the gangster figures, this relationship proves to be an irresolvable contradiction. They are depicted as tragic heroes (Dabiel Illger). The images respectively embodied by Cagney, Robinson, or Muni as Tom Powers, Rico Bandello, or Tony Camonte therefore left such a deep imprint in the cultural memory of the Western world, with effects that continue today. Numerous remakes, adaptations, and citations attest to this.

Female embodiments of the public enemy in film are rather rare. As an equivalent of the male public enemies from the 1930s, at best we could mention Greta Garbo as Mata Hari in the film of the same name (George Fitzmaurice, 1931) or Marlene Dietrich in DISHONORED (Joseph von Sternberg, 1932). In both, agent activity is linked to the moral turpitude of the prostitute or the dancer. This was not always the case. In the time before the gangster film, there were clear examples of female gangster figures such as Musidora as Irma Vep in Louis Feuillades LES VAMPIRES (1915). Their historical significance, however, remained rather peripheral for having a lasting impact on the filmic figure of the public enemy, and later largely disappeared (Annette Förster). In comparison, the history of the black gangster took a different course. It also stretches back to the early cinema, but only starts to develop in the course of the 1930s in various cycles: the so-called race films of the 1930s/40s, the Blaxploitation films of the 1970s, and in the "hood" films of the 1990s (Jonathan Munby).

Beyond concrete film figures, the articulation of identity formation and control is also evident in the cinema arrangement itself (Winfried Pauleit). The registering gaze of the film camera in the first Lumière films already reveals the superimposition of both aspects. In an early Western by Edwin S. Porter (THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY, 1903), ultimately the public enemy stands opposite the camera and thus shoots at the cinema audience. This shot stages the opposition of cinema public and film figure as a duel: public versus enemy. In this duel between the bandit and the cinema audience, ultimately two different spheres are placed opposite one another: one of aesthetic play and one of the political shaping of publicity. In the course of history, the attempt was repeatedly made to use film and its aesthetic means for the political shaping of publicity. This includes all kinds of propaganda film, but also the so-called social guidance films of the Cold War, with titles such as THE FIGHT AGAINST COMMUNISM (1950) or PRACTICING DEMOCRACY IN THE CLASSROOM (1952). The scene of these educational films is the human body, where personified brain cells battle against dangerous thoughts that appear as ideological foreign bodies (Ramón Reichert).

A new critical counterpart could be found in the propaganda and control scenarios in the cinema of the New Hollywood, for example, the

paradigmatic surveillance film THE CONVERSATION (1974) by Francis Ford Coppola. This film is also the first to introduce video surveillance to the cinema. Later, the representation of video surveillance became its very own image type, marked by a graininess and a specific perspective. The images of video surveillance are not only attributed a control principle, but also an index of reality, similar to photography. This new visual type has become a standard in film aesthetics ever since the 1990s, now used quite banally to guarantee the authenticity of what is represented. But it can also become a trademark shot of the film. In the films of Christian Petzold for example, it is used to stage phantom images that make an existential insecurity palpable. This insecurity on the part of the spectator is so profound in Petzold's films because it is not about a simple strategy of authentification. Neither is the status of the surveillance images definitively declared in the narratives of these films, nor is it formally embedded by counter-shots or in a sequence. In this way, they raise fundamental questions of the invisible other (Daniel Eschkötter). The aesthetic use of video surveillance images cannot be limited to certain shots. Anaesthetics of surveillance can also structure an entire film, such as Michael Haneke's CACHÉ (2005). In this film, film shots and shots from a surveillance camera are formally indistinguishable. The surveillance images are no longer distinguished from the remaining shots of the film by a grainy quality. In this way, the narrative of the film itself becomes part of the surveillance, it becomes a surveillant narrative (Thomas Y. Levin).

In the societies of control, strategies of surveillance dominate that are no longer interested in individual faces, but rather in profiles, patterns, and group characteristics. Surveillance as a political strategy presumes the public enemy as an existing image; and to get its hands on this enemy, surveillance takes recourse to several aesthetic strategies. One of these is the controlling gaze, which reduces the individuals to their identifiability. The Japanese director Kinji Fukasaku has created in his film BATTLE ROYALE (2000) an exemplary image of the control society that stages in particular the form of violence linked to it (Kentaro Kawashima).

Contemporary surveillance certainly lies within the tradition of the nineteenth century photographic definition of the criminal, which in turn picks up from the bourgeois portrait. But its new characteristic is the systematic creation of archives on the basis of video surveillance, iris scans, and complex data profiles. The individual figure of the public enemy with its concrete register of crimes is thus overlaid with phantom images that combine profile characteristics and moments of suspicion. That the moment in which the person is depicted is not only outfitted with the dignities of representation but also subject to a controlling act of capture is, however, a shocking recognition from the very start for the bourgeois subject (Dietmar Kammerer). It becomes clear that the depiction of the public enemy not only generates a portrait of the other but it is part of

a control strategy that always already stages the basic figures of its own ideology. It is against this backdrop that we should understand the production of American B-movies that stage the invasion of the aliens by a simple doubling of the human, for example in INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS (1956, Don Siegel) or IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE (Jack Arnold, 1953) (Charles Tesson). In this doubling, the good citizens can no longer be distinguished from the evil intruders on the visual level.

Fundamental shifts in subject formation can be diagnosed as part of this scenario. They are evident in para-social subject constitutions, where the radical variants are mass killers, zombies, and the undead. Especially the undead of the 1970s and their successors threaten the public order in a way that makes the classical gangster still seem like a typical individual of the Western world, but from which they nonetheless genealogically descend. In so doing, the threat of the undead lies less in their criminal actions, but rather in their challenge to our Western understanding of the subject (Georg Seeßlen / Markus Metz). Subject constitution and its displacements still continue today. We can find them for example in the 1970s, when Andreas Baader and Ulrike Meinhof were first declared to be public enemies and then were later stylized in various films. In part, this still holds today, for example for the top terrorist Osama bin Laden. But they also shape our documentary approach to Nazi perpetrators and neo-Nazis (Judith Keilbach).

This book is divided into three sections. The first part of the book is concerned with various facets of the aesthetics and history of the gangster film (Illger, Förster, Munby, Pauleit). They all have in common the fact that they look at the development of social history and aesthetics and in so doing explore specific instantiations of the figure of the public enemy. The second part focuses on methods of visual practice that serve the purpose of control and their mirrorings and appropriations in contemporary film aesthetics. This starts with the simple enemy constructions in 1950s US instructional film (Reichert) and stretches to studies of contemporary German, French, and Japanese film that trace out the specific formations of the control society (Levin, Eschkötter, Kawashima). The third part looks at the constructions of the self and the other developed in this context. In so doing, specific changes in subject formation are in particular taken into view and discussed along the figures of the alien (Tesson), the zombie (Seeßlen/Metz) and the Nazi or neo-Nazi (Keilbach). They are reflected against the backdrop of an aesthetic practice of the new media (Kammerer). All three parts of the book refer to the social, political, and aesthetic dimension of the figure of the public enemy and mark it as a point of crystallization within modernism. Not only identity processes and needs for control meet in this figure, spheres of the political and the aesthetic overlap as well.

Winfried Pauleit