THE HUMANIST VISION IN NEOREALIST FILMS: THE CIRCULARITY OF INFLUENCES IN WORLD CINEMA

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ABSTRACT

When we observe the influence of neorealism, in the first instance we need to consider its humanist vision which implies that we cannot rely on elements and aspects of the narrative but we have to rely on extratextual information – i.e., information which surpasses the narrative text. I will discuss examples of world cinema that have appropriated the humanist vision of neorealism and the ways in which this vision affects the structuring of the fabula. This can be seen most prominently in Chinese, Iranian, Indian, African, Mexican and Taiwanese films (especially the films of Hou Hsiao Hsien).

The point of departure (and I am following Mieke Bal here) is that the fabula, even more generally than the syuzhet makes describable a segment of reality that is broader than that of narrative texts only. Fabulas always make describable segments of reality that are broader than that of narrative texts only, but in the case of neorealist films this is more pronounced. The specificity of the fabula in neorealist films is its reliance on extratextual information as well as its reliance on the focalized world view.

The relation between the subject that perceives and that which is perceived invests the story with subjectivity. By the same token focalization cannot take place without the act of narrating. Considering that the narrational process presupposes a text, or rather a medium such as film through which the story is narrated, it is impossible that the viewers perceive the narrated content directly. That content is subjectivized, represented, framed, filtered through a specific vision. In this concrete text we can speak of the humanist vision.

KEY WORDS

CLASSIFICATION

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INTRODUCTION

In contemporary cinema there is an intensification of intercultural influences, of the circularity of agents, subjectivity, style, and genre. An increasing number of films generate intercultural, discursive, and analytical spaces which need to be explored. At stake is the continuous displacement of filmic styles, which inspires us to create new ideas about filmic worlds, about ourselves, and about others. The emphasis is placed on stylistic specificities, iconography, and narrative representation. This enables us to recognize a double or even triple exchange between different film cultures, traditions, and national cinemas. When it comes to circularity of influences, the film movement that proves to be the most influential is Italian neorealism. Here I will discuss the notion of "world cinema", providing examples of world cinema that have appropriated the humanist vision of neorealism and the ways in which this vision affects the structuring of the fabula. It is important to note that this essay is an interdisciplinary endevour, it involves both filmology and narratology.

THE FILM'S FABULA AND THE HUMANIST VISION

When we observe the influence of neorealism, in the first instance we need to consider its humanist vision, which implies that we cannot rely only on elements and aspects of the narrative, but that we have to rely on extratextual information – that is, on information that surpasses the narrative text. The point of departure (and I am following Mieke Bal here) is that the fabula, even more generally than the syuzhet, makes describable a segment of reality that is broader than that of narrative texts [1]. This segment of reality applies especially to neorealist films – the aesthetic-moral agenda of neorealism includes a political engagement, a social conscience, and most importantly, a humanist vision. Themes such as post-war unemployment were part of what made neorealism a "realist" cinema, while the fact that it did not use professional actors but faces from the crowd made it a "poetic" cinema as well [2]. Fabulas always make describable segments of reality that are broader than that of narrative texts only, but in the case of neorealist films this is more pronounced.

The essence of original neorealism is typically presented through the work of Vittorio De Sica and Cesare Zavattini. Zavattini believed that the most important achievement of neorealism was the fact that it brought the lives of ordinary people to the cinema screen. According to Zavattini, the aim of neorealism is to discover the "everydayness" of human lives. Here we can recognize the influence of Zavattini's humanist vision on De Sica's films. Zavattini's ideal film was one that lasts 90 minutes and revolved around life of one man to whom nothing happens. For Zavattini, this was neorealism. This also means that the preferred narrative mode was realistic in the sense that fictional events are treated as real and without dramatization that would draw attention to their fictional character. The use of existing light resulted in naturalistic photography, implying that neorealist films can be compared to documentaries rather than to films produced in the studio. Film critic and theorist Andrė Bazin praised the neorealist movement based on the films of Rossellini – he praised the eliptic narrative structure, the discarding of plot, the emphasis of details, the unpredictability of characters' motivations, the use of long takes, the preference of medium shots, and the avoidance of close ups [3].

EXTERNAL FOCALIZATION

What is relevant here is the concept of focalization, particularly external focalization. Bal states that focalization has implications which surpass the field of vision limited only to the characters. She emphasizes the relation between the vision of the external focalizor and the particular world view which prevails in the story [4].

A specificity, then, of the fabula in neorealist films is its reliance on extratextual information and segments of reality that are broader than that of narrative texts, as well as its reliance on the focalized world view. In this paper I will discuss examples of world cinema that have appropriated the humanist vision of neorealism and the ways in which this vision affects the structuring of the fabula. I will also consider the influence of narrative form and the fact that neorealist films tend to loosen up narrative relations. This can be noticed in the films of other cultures, most prominently in Chinese, Iranian, Indian, African, Mexican and Taiwanese cinema (especially the films of Hou Hsiao Hsien).

Apart from internal and intermedial focalization, what is crucial for the critical narratological approach is external focalization, which is on a higher level than internal focalization because it does not condition identification through the characters alone, but through a certain world view, as well. External focalization is relevant for the examples of films I have mentioned, because it urges us in the first place to identify with a concrete world view. Just as the subject has an advantage over the object, and the one who is the external focalizor has an additional advantage, the external focalizor is always the one that remains hidden and has a greater advantage. In the narratological sense, this is a question of narrational authority, a narrational instance which is hierarchically on a higher level, higher than the narrational instances which function as internal focalizors. In principle, the events are represented by the vision of the world that pertains to the external focalizor; in other words, a certain world is represented through this vision. This vision encompasses all other visions. The vision at stake here is the humanist vision.

WORLD CINEMA

First of all, it is useful to consider the implications of the notion "world cinema"; if we consider the existing studies of "world cinema", we will see that there are three approaches in question. In the first instance, world cinema refers to "third-world" and postcolonial cinema, which was previously called "third film"; at the same time, this means that Hollywood film can be taken as the first cinema, and European films fit into the category of "second cinema".

Some critics, such as Roy Armes, define the cinema of the third world in a wider sense, as a group of films produced in the countries of the third world. Paul Willeman talks about the films of the third world as an ideological project − films that relate to a concrete political and aesthetic program [5], regardless of whether they were produced in third-world countries. This film current emerges directly out of the Cuban revolution, Peronism in Argentina, and film movements such as *cinema novo* in Brazil. Third-world films and third cinema deal with politically colored cultural practice. In the late 1960s and the 1970s, which is marked by the victory of Vietnam over the French, the Cuban revolution, and the establishment of Algerian independence, the ideology of third-world films is crystalized in a wave of militant essays; Rocha spoke of the hungry cinema of sad and ugly films, Solanas-Getino focused on militant guerilla documentaries, and Espinoza called for imperfect films inspired by "low" forms of popular culture [6]. If on one level, the new cinemas of the third world overlapped with the new European movements, their politics were more left-oriented. The authors of third cinema valued alternative independent anti-imperialist films focused more on provocations and militantism than on authorial expression and viewer pleasure. New films were juxtaposed not only with Hollywood films but also with commercial traditions that were thought of as bourgeois, alien, or colonized. Just as the authors of the French new wave rebelled against *le cinéma de papa*, Brazilian directors of the *cinema novo* movement, for example, rejected *chanchadas* oriented toward entertainment or epic films in the style of Hollywood costume dramas such as *Vera Cruz*. The young Egyptian authors rejected the "Hollywood on the Nile" tradition, while the directors of new Indian cinema, such as Satyajit Ray, rejected the

Hollywood and commercial tradition of Bombay musicals, choosing instead the European art cinema model, especially neorealism.

With the help of new media, national borders can be transgressed, and this enables the people to acquire information and ideas which were formerly suppressed by those who had power in national societies. The production of subjectivity becomes dependent on the development of communication networks, new technologies, and the movement of globalization. Discursive borders of different societies that constitute a non-Western world are constantly broadening, and the notion of "third world" has entered a new stage in which cultural and political critique develops in alternative ways. Concretely, a trajectory can be seen from anticolonialism to postcoloniality; inside this theoretical frame, the emphasis is on deterritorialization rather than on territorial aspirations and the artificial and constructed nature of nationalism and national borders. Cultural contradictions and syncretisms that are generated by the global circulation of people and cultural goods in the mediatized and globalized world have changed the status of the notion "third world." There are two more books on world cinema that need to be taken into consideration. One, *The Oxford History of World Cinema* [7], includes Hollywood Cinema and non-Hollywood cinemas, the latter implying national cinemas of the entire world. These are most often grouped together in relation to their political and cultural similarities. The premise of another book that deals with world cinema, *A World Cinema: Critical Approaches* [8.] is that American cinema enjoys a dominant position in film studies, and therefore, the editors direct their study of world cinema toward non-Hollywood cinemas. This orientation is twofold: the non-Holywood films in question include those produced geographically outside of Hollywood, as well as films which took a different aesthetic model from the one that rules in Hollywood. Different approaches to world cinema confirm the instability of this term – the way this term will be defined depends on the historical conditions, but it depends also on personal vision and one's subject position. In the West (implying North America and Europe), world cinema refers to films produced outside of Hollywood and Europe. In Hong Kong, for example, the term "world cinema" is used for films which are neither Hollywood films nor Chinese. Therefore, if we are browsing through the films in famous shops such as His Master's Voice or Hong Kong Records, the term "world" includes for example, Iranian, but also French, German, Spanish, Italian, or other European films. According to my own experience, Hong Kong students begin to show personal interest in the movements of world cinemas, which in this case refers to German expressionism, Italian neorealism, or the French new wave, at the moment when they can position themselves on the cultural map of the "world." This concretely implies that a discussion on *Nosferatu,* for example, begins with a discussion about vampires in Hong Kong films, whose specificity is that the vampires do not walk but hop and jump instead.

WORLD CINEMA AND ITALIAN NEOREALISM

Each of the national cinemas I address here as examples of world cinema comparable to Italian neorealism, and in the first instance, this concerns the film's fabula; Bal emphasizes the interdependency between the fabulas of narrative texts and the critical issues, norms, and laws that come from the outer world. This also works for films: the way a storytelling subject is expressed in the filmic text is closely related to the way in which the story is told, but the subject is also connected with a certain understanding of the world. It is important to keep in mind the connection between the formal aspects of the filmic image in the process of narration, and the film's fabula. An examination of the relations between filmic signifiers and the structuring of the narrative text discloses a type of character and implicitly the subject that is generated in filmic narrative texts.

BICYCLE THIEF

One film that is extremely relevant is De Sica's *Bicycle Thief* (*Ladri di biciclette*, 1948); the main character is unemployed, and to get a job he needs a bicycle. He acquires a bicycle, but it is stolen, and this has tragic consequences. He searches for his stolen bike without success; in the end, he tries to steal a bicycle but is caught and humiliated. Our main preoccupation again is poverty, unemployment, and specific historical conditions. This is the segment of reality that is broader than that of the diegetic world. *Beijing Bicycle* (*Shiqi sui de dan che, Wang Xiao Shuai,* 2001) is a film that dovetails with *Ladri di biciclette*. In *Ladri di biciclette,* after a long search, Antonio Ricci finally gets a long-awaited job, but for this job he needs a bicycle – he cannot execute his tasks if he doesn't own a bicycle. He has a bicycle, but he has pawned it, and in order to retrieve it, his wife has to pawn their sheets, even the sheets they sleep on. When he acquires the bicycle, he happily goes to work; his task is to put up billboards particularly billboards that advertise films. While he is pasting a billboard, he has to get off his bicycle and put it on the side, and as expected, something happens that has tragic consequences for Ricci – his bicycle is stolen. *The Bicycle Thief* is a typical example of Italian neorealism, which in this particular case presupposes dealing with everyday events and a story in which the theft of a bicycle has tragic consequences. It means the loss of a job and the endangered existence of a family. Regardless of the actual hardship of the postwar era, Italian neorealism was closely related with the striving of its initiators (the most prominent of whom was Zavattini, the scriptwriter of De Sica's films) to show the world in a different way, possibly completely different from the world offered by Hollywood. In her analysis of this film, Kristin Thompson insists that the film relies on the devices of the classical Hollywood style; she mentions the scene from the pawnshop in which a crane shot is used and the camera descends across piles of bedding revealing the state of things: the fact that a great number of unfortunate people like Antonio and his wife had to pawn their sheets [9]. Regardless of the fact that neorealism in principle relies on realistic spaces, back projection is used in *The Bicycle Thief,* which means that the action is played out in the studio in front of a projection of a concrete space. Another device is the tracking of the camera, a typical device of the classical Hollywood style. In addition, the voice of the main character was dubbed, and the voice of an actor was used. Thompson also mentions narrative elements such as ironic quotations or last-moment appointments.

BEIJING BICYCLE

For Wang Xiao Shuai, the independent director of the Sixth Generation, a bicycle means freedom and social progress. Guei, the main character in the film, is a young man who has come to Beijing from a village. He finds a job, but just as Antonio in *The Bicycle Thief*, he needs to have a bicycle. In this case, the company secures a bicycle, a super modern mountain bike. Guei's happiness doesn't last long; after exiting the bath house where he had to make a delivery, Guei realizes his bicycle has been stolen. Just as Antonio in *The Bicycle Thief*, Guei is desperate and immediately goes in search of the bicycle. Poverty and unemployment are again at the center of our interest – this is the segment of reality that is broader than that of the diegetic world. The fabula is again very simple – the boy acquires a bicycle, but it is stolen, and for him this has tragic consequences. He searches for the bicycle, and he steals back his own bike. In the Chinese film, just as in *The Bicycle Thief,* the humanist vision is at work. In *The Bicycle Thief,* the child is the witness of his father's search for the bicycle and his ultimate shame, Figure 1. There is no child in the Chinese film, but the film refers to Italian neorealism, which in this case implies engaging with everyday events and that kind of fabula in which the disappearance of the bicycle has tragic consequences. For both Antonio Ricci and Guei, the disappearance of the bicycle means losing a much-needed job.

Figure 1. Vittorio de Sica, *The Bicycle Thief* (*Ladri di Biciclette,* 1948).

In *Beijing Bicycle,* another narrative line is opened up. A schoolboy named Jian secretly takes his father's money and buys the stolen bike. Jian is in love with a girl with whom he rides to school every day, while Guei becomes interested in a girl who lives nearby and who works as a maid. No one knows this because she wears the dresses and shoes of her employer. This is the part where *Bicycle Thief* and *Beijing Bicycle* differ: Guei is juxtaposed with Jian; to both of them, the bicycle is the most important thing in the world. Guei recognizes his bike and steals it from Jian. In *Ladri di biciclette,* Antonio's theft presents the move of a desperate man; he is immediately caught and slapped in front of his own son, Bruno. The relationship between father and son becomes central and confirms the tragic dimension of this story. Regardless of the horror and shame related to the theft of the bicycle, the boy forgives his father; this is confirmed with a simple gesture: walking alongside his father, he takes his hand, and both of them have tears in their eyes.

Jian hangs out with a gang of guys who perform wild exhibitions on their bikes; they take Jian's side and attack Guei for stealing his bike back. They abuse Guei and take his bicycle. Guei is desperate, he throws himself on the bike and his body becomes the body of the bicycle, he is completely immersed in the bike. A solution is found for Jian and Guei: they will share the bicycle. Finally, Jian and Guei become friends and Jian tells Guei he can keep the bike. The bicycle gang does not accept this and decides to destroy the bike. In the end, Guei walks the streets of Beijing carrying his bike, which he cannot ride any more. Both films have an open ending, as is typical of art films.

Filmmakers such as Vittorio De Sica, the author of the films *The Bicycle Thief*, *Umberto D*, and *Shoe Shine*, tried to make humanist films full of sensitivity and realism. In a world that is tortured with fear and hate, in which no one likes reality for itself, Italian cinema is the only cinema that portrays revolutionary humanism. In film, all the characters' lives are truthful. We recognize their humanity. According to André Bazin, the humanism of Italian neorealism is its greatest value. We recognize De Sica's pessimism, which is related to the notion that a person does what he or she can, as evidence of his or her humanity.

NEOREALISM AND AFRICAN FILM

Ousmane Sembene directed the satire *Mandabi* in 1968. The majority of early African films were produced in the traditional mode of social realism, inspired partly by the aesthetic mode and political concerns of Soviet social realism, but it can also be compared to Italian neorealism – Sembene relied on Italian neorealism especially in *Mandabi* (Money Order). *Mandabi* seems almost like a documentary or an ethnographic film. It is about a man who receives a money order from his nephew who lives in Paris, but he cannot confirm his identity, which would enable him to claim the money at the post office. Again, we are faced

with poverty and unemployment. His two wives know that he has received a money order, so they buy rice with a promise to the merchant to pay when the money order arrives. The two wives act as servants to their husband while he eats and communicates, according to the local customs. At the post office, a man whose job is to read to the illiterate reads the nephew's letter. Here, we recognize the oral tradition: off screen, the nephew tells us about his life in Paris and how much he misses his home in Africa. The recipient of the money order encounters problems: he needs to have his picture taken in order to acquire his identity card, and there are constantly people approaching him who ask him to give them or lend them money.

In his earlier films, Sembene dealt with exploitation of the colonizers, but when Senegal won its independence, he turned to the postcolonial African leaders who abused their power. *Xala* is an adaptation of Sembene's novel. The central character is El Hadji, a successful businessman, a father and husband who already has two wives. In order to celebrate his new position in the chamber of commerce, he decides to marry for the third time. On the first night with his new wife, he discovers that someone has cursed him with *xala*, the curse of impotence. He does all he can to remove the curse but without success. Sembene uses this curse as a metaphor for incapable African leaders. El Hadji criticizes African tradition, but he says that polygamy is part of his tradition.

SHOE SHINE AND SALAAM BOMBAY

In the Indian film *Salaam Bombay*, directed by Mira Nair (1988), most of the children are actual children from the streets, which gives authenticity to this film. This is emphasized by real locations. The emphasis on the children who live in poverty and are fighting for their existence enables us to draw a connection between *Slumdog Millionaire* and *Salaam Bombay*. Mira Nair dedicates this film to the children that live on the streets of Bombay, today's Mumbai.

The main character in the film is Krishna, a boy who first works for a circus. When the circus leaves, he is left with nothing and no one and buys a train ticket to the closest large city, which is Bombay, Figure 2. He finds a job delivering tea with the aim to save 500 rupees, which he has to pay back to his brother because only then can he return home.

Krishna lives in the red-light district, and is friends with a little girl named Manju, the daughter of a prostitute and Babu, a pimp and drug dealer. Krishna is in love with an older girl, Sola Saal, who was bought by the brothel with the intention of selling her virginity. One evening, when they are coming home from work, the police pick up Krishna and Manju and take them to an orphanage.

Manju's mother comes to the orphanage to claim Manju, but she cannot take her home because she is a prostitute, so the girl has to stay in the orphanage. Krishna runs away from the orphanage and returns to the red-light district, where he asks Sola Saal to run away with him. She refuses to do this because she is attracted to Baba and not Krishna. A client takes away Sola Saal, and the enraged Krishna kills Baba.

The film reminds us of neorealist films, which are also filmed on authentic locations, and especially because of the presence of children who live on the streets. Such is the film *Shoe Shine* (Sciuscia), directed by Vittorio De Sica in 1946, Figure 3. In this film, two friends, Giuseppe and Pasquale, earn their living shining shoes on the streets of Rome. A dream of the main character in the Indian film is to earn enough money to return to his family. The boys in *Shoe Shine* are obsessed with the idea of buying a horse, but for this they need an amount of money that they cannot earn by shining shoes. Poverty and children who take care of themselves are the main concerns of this film. Here too, a humanist vision is at work. In the

aesthetic sense "realism" in the neorealist movement consisted of a dedication to the representation of human reality.

In most of the film *Slumdog Millionaire*, the main protagonists are children who are on their own, who live in great poverty, and whose lives are endangered in every moment. The first episode with the main character Jamal is a situation in which he ends up stuck in an improvised toilet. In order to get out of the toilet and get an autograph from his beloved actor Amitabh Bachchan, he had to jump into the hole of the toilet, that is into the faeces, Figure 4. The memory of that event contains the answer to a question in a game show (Jamal participates in) regarding the famous actor. The fact that the lives of the children are endangered in every moment is most clearly confirmed in the episode in which despotic

Figure 2. *Salaam Bombay* (Mira Nair, 1988).

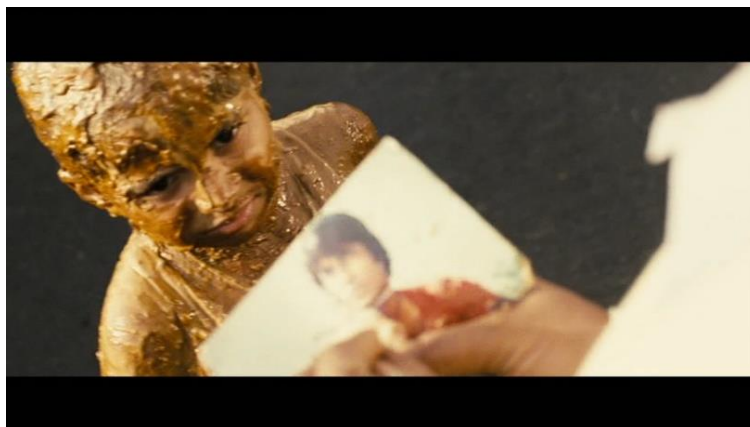**Figure 3.** *Shoe Shine* (Sciu Scia) Vittorio De Sica, 1946.

Figure 4. *Slumdog Millionaire* (Danny Boyle, 2008).

characters are blinding children so they can use them as blind singers. Aware of what awaits Jamal, his brother Salim saves him from the criminals.

NEW NEOREALISM AS NEW ORIENTALISM

When it comes to Iranian cinema, as in the films of Majid Majidi, that object is constructed as innocent, wonderous, simple. Iranian new wave can be compared to a certain extent to European art film, and this is another cinema which can be compared to Italian neorealism. Iranian films have a documentary immediacy, an authentic mise-en-scene. They engage non-professional actors and very often they deal with children. When we speak of Iranian cinema and the circularity of influences, in the first instance there are films in which children play the main role. One of the most famous films in which children are in focus is the film *Children of Heaven* by Majid Majidi, Figure 5.

Figure 5. Majid Majidi, *Children of Heaven*, Bacheha-Ye aseman, 1997.

This is another fabula where there is a preoccupation with poverty, and that enables a construction of the "human" story and relations among the characters whose intensity is comparable to the films of Italian neorealism. The important difference is that, in the new context, new neorealism becomes new orientalism.

The fact that the West plays an important role here, that the West indirectly conditions the ways the "East" will be represented, inevitably evokes a discourse about orientalism. In short, the discussion on orientalism is founded on the relations of power and domination between the one who sees (i.e., subject) and the one who is seen (i.e., object). This notion includes a series of images and classifications which constructed the East/Orient as an object as it is viewed by the West (which primarily refers to the European colonizers). The West could keep the desired image of itself if the images that come from the East (in its first definition, all that is not Europe) offer an appropriate counter-balance to Western modernism, rationalism, and pragmatism. In the new, allegedly postcolonial world order, the West continues to control the global cultural market, but unlike the colonial era, we are confronted with a new kind of orientalism – today the subject is offering itself to the eyes of the West as an object. The East is constructing an image of itself – exotic and bewildering, and by the same token primitive and cruel – exactly opposite to the image that the West is promoting about itself. In this film, too, the humanist vision is at work, and this is a vision from the outside. Earlier, I mentioned external focalization – the children are in focus, the fabula is seen from their point of view, and this is what makes this vision humanist and related to Italian neorealism – poverty is the segment of reality that surpasses the diegetic world.

HOU HSIAO HSIEN AND ROSSELLINI

In the film *The Boys from Fengkuei*, directed by Ho Hsiao Hsien, the boys think they have bought tickets for a movie, but they find themselves in an unfinished building from which they have a view of the city, Figure 6. This view reminds us of Roberto Rossellini's film *Germany, Year Zero*, Figure 7, which relates the films of Ho Hsia Hsien with Italian neorealism [10].

Figure 6. Hou Hsiao Hsien, *The Boys from Fengkuei* (Feng gui lai de ren, 1983).

Figure 7. Roberto Rossellini, *Germany, Year Zero* (Germania anno zero, 1947).

NEOREALISM AND MEXICAN CINEMA

The introductory scene of the film *The Pearl*, La Perla, 1947) directed by Emilio Fernández, is definitively related to the modus of art cinema. We find ourselves on a spacious beach, a series of shots of waves and women with their backs turned toward the camera follow; the women are covered with long scarves. The women appear stylized: in the first moment it is not clear that we are looking at women; they appear to be high, undefined objects. They constitute a part of art cinema landscape; they seem to have been on the beach for so long that they have become part of it, Figure 8. *The Pearl* is an adaptation of the short story by John Steinbeck of the same title, and it reminds us more of Italian neorealism than of the modus of classical cinema. The main character is a little boy named Juanito, who is the son of the fisherman Quino and his wife Juana. Juanito is stung by a scorpio, and they take him to a doctor, who refuses to help them because they have no money.

The next day, while diving, Quino finds a beautiful pearl, and he believes his luck has finally changed. He is no longer poor anymore, and this gives him new opportunities. The people in the village celebrate this happy event: they organize a festival with music and dancing. The doctor now wants to help Juanito because he is interested in the pearl. Everyone wants to see

the pearl, and Quino is soon confronted with many problems. His wife, Juana, believes the pearl has brought them misfortune, and she asks Quino to get rid of it. She even tries to toss the pearl into the sea, but Quino prevents this. Their lives are in danger, and they leave their home. They wander the woods and desolate landscapes. Juana's feet are bleeding; she does not have the strength to go on. Two men who have been following them get closer, and one of them kills Juanito. In the end, Quino and Juana decide to throw the pearl into the sea. They have nothing except each other. Their poverty and the tragic ending are reminiscent of Italian neorealism.

Figure 8. Emilio Fernández, *The Pearl* (La Perla, 1947).

CONCLUSION

While Gerard Genette limits focalization to the level of the syuzhet, in the diegetic world, Bal insists that focalization has implications which surpass the visual field, which is limited only to the characters. She asserts that, in a text with external focalization, characters are also focalized, but they are focalized from the outside. Bal emphasizes the relation between the vision of the external focalizor and a specific world view which prevails in the story [3]. At stake is the narrational authority, a narrational instance that works as the internal focalizor. This presupposes that focalization has implications that reach further than the visual field of

the characters. When external focalization is in question, the character is still at the center of our interest, but the development of that character is seen only from the outside. In the critical narratological sense, there is no unfocalized narration. Even when production practice and technology have supremacy (as is the case with classical Hollywood cinema), we need to be aware that, behind the "unfocalized" content, there is always a certain world view.

The difference between the subjectivized first person and the so-called objective third person includes different levels of narration because, in the technical sense, the "invisible" external narrator delegates narration to the characters, or rather to the internal narrators. The structuring of the levels of focalization is closely connected with the structuring of subjectivity, and thereby with the structuring of the narrative text. This works in the opposite case as well: the structuring of the narrative text conditions the dynamics between the characters. The signifiers that constitute the text are specifically filmic, as well as narrative. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind the connection between the formal aspects of the filmic image, the organization of the film itself (in the narrational process), and the fabula. The questioning of the relation between filmic signifiers and the structuring of the narrational representation of the fabula discloses the type of character and implicitly the subject which is generated in filmic narrational texts.

The relation between the subject that perceives and that which is perceived invests the story with subjectivity. By the same token, focalization cannot take place without the act of narrating. Considering that the narrational process presupposes a text, or rather a medium such as film through which the story is narrated, it is impossible that the viewers perceive the narrated content directly. That content is subjectivized, represented, framed, filtered through a specific vision. In this concrete case, we can speak of the humanist vision.

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