

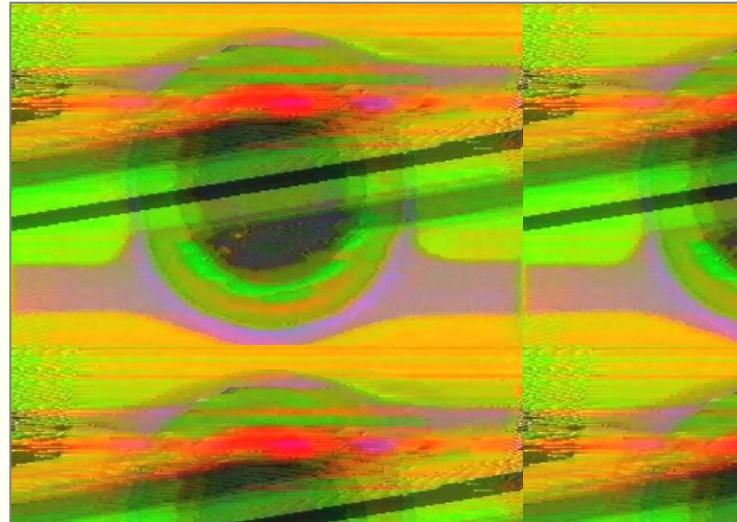
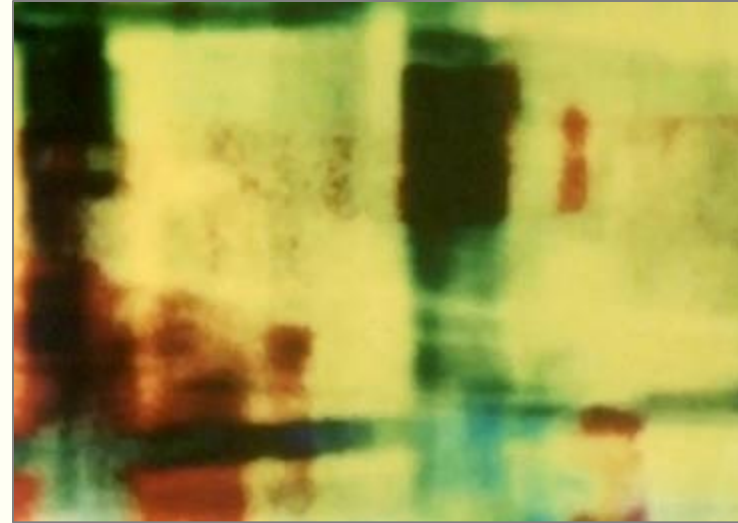
Taula de Nova Recerca, Department de Comunicació,
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THE LOW DEFINITION AESTHETICS AND MEDIA WARS. THE CASE OF BRIAN DE PALMA'S *REDACTED*

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1. Five Properties of the Low Definition

- Measurability
- Dialectic figure/background
- Central role in the media history (Mc Luhan)
- Synesthesia (St. Augustine)
- Relational quality



2. Conflict Low vs. High Definition



- Analog era: standard industry practices vs. craft practices
- Television era: celluloid vs. electronic moving images (video)
- Digital era: lo-fi vs. hi-fi digital images

3. Digital Media Formats and Typologies

- Multiplication of image typologies and formats
- A demarcation between a rich (or heavy) digital, used for special effects and post-production making, and a poor (or light) digital, which uses digital media primarily as reproductive means (handycam, smartphone, tablets and other devices) (Gianmaria Secci)
- Low-fi as a desired effect from the “high” definition, consecrated by the market (4k)



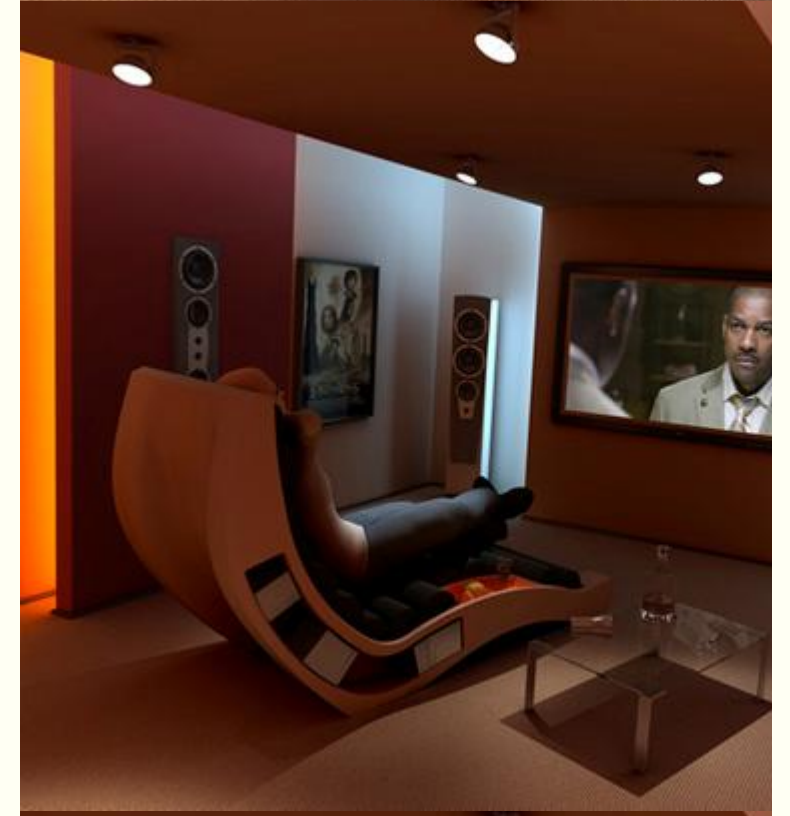
4. Low Definition and Reality



- Poor digital definition reaction to the loss of images' ontological link to reality
- Nazi newsreels and “dirty” moving images (**Sigfried Kracauer**)
- Lo-fi proves the presence of the capturing device and of the observer
- Neither LD nor HD are more realistic in absolute sense

5. The “Other Definition”

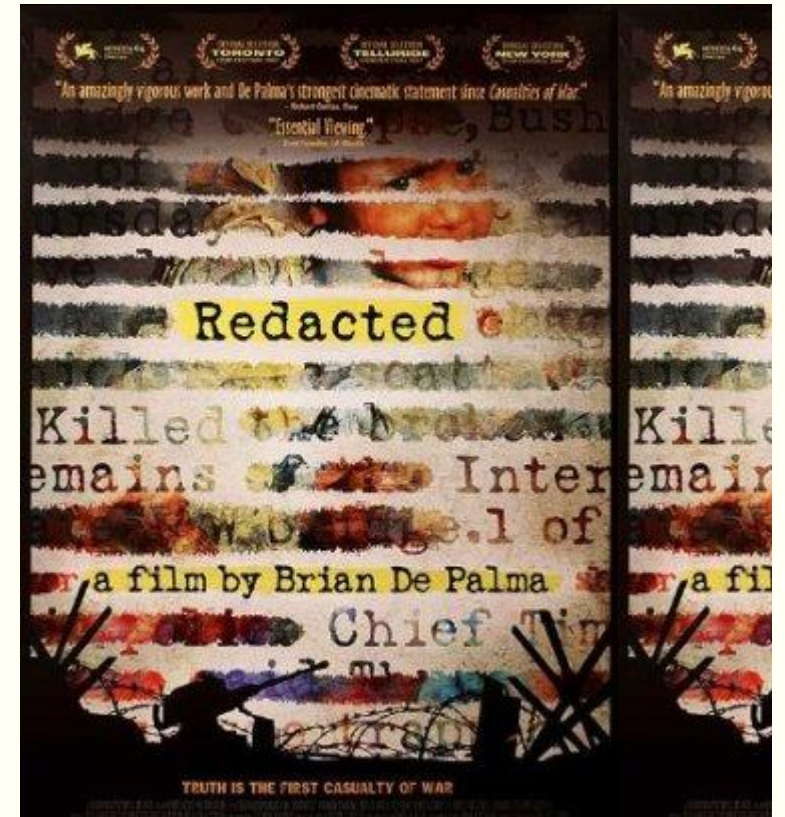
- Combination of audiovisual productions and experiences affected by high and low definition, errors, not yet developed technologies and aesthetic choices (Simone Arcagni)
- LD and HD two formal opportunities



6. *Redacted's* Several Video Sources

The visual solutions of digital media, because through them we can get closer to the historical truth:

- Youtube clips
- video diaries
- video blogs
- Al Quaeda and other terrorist groups' websites
- Skype videocalls
- a (fake) French documentary entitled *Barrage*
- surveillance cameras
- satellite all news tv pieces



All these media work with lo-fi images

7. The War and its Media

- Vietnam → from classic cinema to New American Cinema (*Apocalypse Now*, *Deer Hunter*)



- Iraq → **the short forms of digital media communication**

A society undermined by radical lacerations: embedded vs. freelance journalism; single vs. multiple points-of-view; rival political factions



8. The Paradox of Digital Videos



- Web cultural transformation: **the pervasiveness of participated digital media** and the **broad accessibility of audiovisual production**
- Paradox: the digital videos prove the events, but have to be fictionalized due to legal reasons
- The cinematic image through different media → free both from the author's single point-of-view and the unique format

9. The “Resistance of Aesthetic” and Cinema as Metamedium

- The cinema screen cannibalized by other media
- The resistance of the aesthetic (**Francesco Casetti**)
- De Palma uses video objects as narrative elements and also works as a “metamedium” reflecting upon all territories of the contemporary moving image



10. The Fictional Reconstruction

- A fake doc *Barrage* scene from an inside the car point-of-view
- Aesthetisation of several sequences
- The clean sound of surveillance cameras' image
- High definition web clips



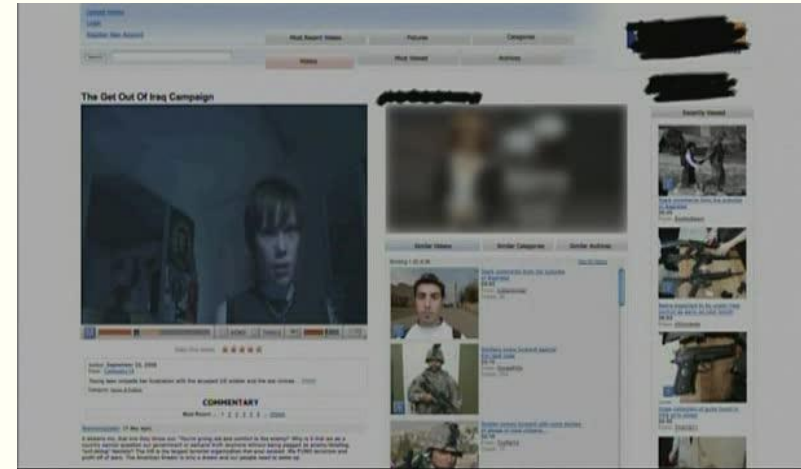
11. The Cinema Power



- No identification with characters or point of view → browsing session on the web
- Reality as set of events knowable only via telematic archives
- Synthesis realized by film: **formal principle of remediation and re-articulation of the media experience**
- Managing the excess of audiovisual data (Michel Foucault, Maurizio Ferraris, Jacques Derrida)

12. From the “point-of-view” to the “where we are”

- Derrick De Kerchove: the Web is the site of a shift **from the point of view to the point of being** - from the point of view to the **where we are** -
- This slip determines a renewed perceptive strategy, because the **images run “around” us** and no longer “in front of” us



13. Intolerability, Inexpressibility and Irreducibility

- The **process of vision** into question
- **Walter Benjamin**: atrophy of the experience because of the “excess of real” (World War I):
 - a) intolerability
 - b) inexpressibility
 - c) irreducibility



14. The Cinema Apparatus



- Cinema manages the surplus of real through his “dispositivo” (Giorgio Agamben) → in the heart of the events and distance
- But:
 - 1) the HD digital produces false, manipulated or completely synthetic images;
 - 2) documenting the reality is so easy to become impossible

15. The Hyper-realism and the Solipsism of the Digital Moving Images

- Digital fiction deprives the act of seeing of his ethics:
- 1) a **hyper-realism** that obfuscates the eye;
- 2) the **solipsism** of digital moving images
- Total crisis of the digital image as document of reality (**Francois Jost**): lo-fi and hi-fi digital clips can convey “false evidences”



16. Still Pictures, Immediacy and the Cinema

Strong Symbolic Status



- De Palma replies to unreliability of the digital moving images staging photos
- **Hypermediacy, immediacy** (Bolter & Grusin) and **still pictures**: no distance between audience, media and war atrocities
- Using a Puccini's aria from *Tosca* → cinema solid symbolic status
- Only the film contains, organizes and gives a sense to a **narrative object that goes beyond the film**

17. The Survival of Film

- Digital audiovisual media interfaces from filmic linguistic equipment (split screen, point-of-view shot, long take, etc.) (Lev Manovich)
- Film lives through the **shocking reorganizations of the mediasphere** (sound, color, tv, vcr, dvd, digital moviemaking, web ...) → re-playing them in its symbolic space and in the socio-cultural of his consumption



18. The Logistic of Perception 2.0. Multiple Screen Aesthetics

- **Paul Virilio**: “the history of battle is primary the history of radically changing fields of perception”; the **aesthetic of disappearance** (I and II World Wars)
- **Jean Baudrillard**: war distanced and cleansed by image technology to become a **purely virtual war** (First Gulf War)
- **Patricia Pisters**: “in times of media convergence (...) Iraq War films suggest that different type of screens have different aesthetic, epistemological and ethical implications. At the heart of its new logistics of perception there is a **battle of different screens that translates into a conflict of points of views**”

20. (Temporary) Conclusions



- De Palma's *Redacted* confirms cinema as the winner of this medial wars, since it is the **only medium able to bestow uniformity** to different formats and turn them into narrative and sense



Gràcies per la seva atenció
Thanks for your attention
Grazie per l'attenzione



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