Glossary

Alienated space: a narrative space that through its design, look and feel expresses some external or internal disjunction between characters and their world.

Bleached dialogue: dialogue that intentionally contains little or no dramatic meaning.

Character: character, in both life and literature, is composed of the tendencies in the motives, actions and reactions of a person. To discern such heuristic "tendencies" in a person is to discern the predictive patterns in the desires, hopes, dreams, approaches, impulses, tactics and techniques of that person.

Character arc: the clear changes in a character's tendencies (or the failure of a person to change her or his tendencies) in the face of the conflicts in the story.

Character use of music: a use of music that conveys something of the tendencies of a character in a way that informs us of her past or predicts how she will behave. It is opposed to the emotional use of music which more simply informs us of what a character is feeling or may even more simply inform us of what *we* ought to be feeling in a dramatic beat or moment.

Characterological manifold: any element in a story can have at least one and as many as six dimensions of meaning as described in the manifold.

Chronotope: a concept invented by Bakhtin and used often by narrative theorists, the chronotope is grounded in the Kantian concept

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of the space—time manifold. In this concept there is a specific form of space and time that is warped by the nature of place in ways that carry across narrative representations of such places. For example there is the chronotope of the bar, allowing us to compare bars across different narratives to discover cultural concepts embedded in such constructs. In this book we differentiate the concept of the characterological manifold from the Kantian roots of the chronotope to clarify that ours is a very different, character-based form of space.

Dantean space: a space in a narrative that empathetically expresses and embodies the internal conflicts of a character.

Dantean moment: a central emotional moment in a person's life whose power of joy and/or pain is so strong that the person's sensibility is affected and shaped by the experience. As the example of Miss Havisham shows, such moments can even freeze a person's sensibility in a specific situation and space.

Dispassionate, dramatic and Dantean: a dispassionate character is a character with an external conflict with no or a very weak and non-determinative inner conflict. A dramatic character is a character with both an external and an internal conflict. A Dantean character is a character with an internal conflict that is projected outwards and embodied in the narrative space where we find them.

Dispassionate space: a space hosting characters that have external objectives but no clear internal conflicts. Such spaces tend to use and embody spectacle, often becoming the expression of their characters' dispassionate nature.

Dramatic space: a space in a narrative where the characters have an internal conflict they are struggling with but where the backdrop does not express that conflict.

Ecstatic space: a space crafted or curated by a character that embodies an ethics of care and which heals the internal conflicts of characters. One example is the garden in the novel and film *The Secret Garden*.

Emotional use of music: a use of music that expresses and heightens the moment-to-moment emotions of a character. It can be contrasted with the Character use of music, which expresses and informs us about a character's tendencies and not simply her emotions.

Empathetic space: an empathetic space exists in a moment of a story which (1) arouses some intense level of empathy in us and in which (2) the space itself is somehow expressing that empathy by embodying the hopes and/or fears of the character. In general, the space

becomes more intensely empathetic the more it movingly expresses the emotional conflicts of a character. While empathetic space needn't express memory, both Dantean space and ecstatic space are forms of empathetic space that express a strong memory from the past.

Empathy, communal vs. compassionate: Compassionate Empathy can be triggered by feeling some compassion for a character's situation and can involve no relationships among characters. Communal Empathy on the other hand is triggered by witnessing the character build relationships, and most powerfully by seeing her do something good for someone else at some cost to herself.

Machinery of empathy: a list of identifiable story tactics, attributes and situations that are found across stories and that cause us to feel intense moments of empathy towards characters.

Rings of intimacy: a series of concentric rings of trust, rings of revealing character tendencies. One version of the rings would start with the widest ring representing people in general, then a smaller ring of neighbors and colleagues, then a smaller one of friends, then of close friends, then of family, of lovers, and perhaps finally of the beloved. Different people and societies will construe these rings in slightly different ways. Many dramas involve a large disturbance in the rings of trust.

Self-abasing space: a clearly unpleasant space that a protagonist has engineered or sought out and now treats as a kind of nest that he does not want to leave. The space is a kind of mirror of what the character feels he deserves or has become, a willingly-chosen space of self-judgement. Examples can be found in the film *Barfly* and Camus' novel *The Fall.*

Shade: a shade is a person who is absent from a story or from the main part of a story and who is so badly missed by a character that he or she cannot get over the loss. An empathetic figure of hauntology, a shade takes us inside the sensibility of a character trapped in a sense of loss. We may go inside the space of the shade as we do in many Dantean spaces: in this case many elements of the story then signify the lost future, the hopes and dreams that were torn away when the shade figure left the character's world. Unlike a ghost who can operate in the story like a character, shades do not operate directly on the actions of a story but rather through engendering a mood and presence of loss. We see only glimpses of a shade and usually never see the shaded figure's face.

Shaded space: an empathetic spatial frame of hauntology that takes us inside the sensibility of a character trapped in a sense of loss, usually because of the death of a beloved.

Showcase space: a space in a narrative where everything is new and unmarked by human touch or inhabitance, creating the eerie and alienated feeling that the characters live or work in a showcase. The tv show *Mad Men* uses showcase space to indicate deep internal disjunctions in its main characters.

Third space theory: A spatial theory by Oldenberg that divides human space into Work Space, Home space and the Third Space. The Third space is the realm of social discourse, common areas and other spaces not included in work or home. Oldenberg argues that the quantity and quality of such Third Spaces indicates the social health and power structures of a culture.

Tryst space: the location in a romantic relationship where the couple has their first scene of revealing vulnerabilities and asking for commitments from each other.

A Backwards Foreword:

Rationale: The Question of the Bed-sheet

Perhaps it's appropriate for a book that focuses on how the past lives on in the present to end with a foreword that is delayed to the end. But I wanted to look back over this path and then forwards to where any work on film theory and practice should: towards stories not yet fashioned, films not yet made, shows not yet staged and cultures not yet born.

First the look backwards. This book began in a class I think of as an exciting failure. I once was fortunate enough to build and run a large crafts conservatory in Los Angeles. Determined to build a new kind of school, I began hiring high-level professional filmmakers, many with Oscars and Oscar nominations but most of whom hadn't taught before. This required long conferences about how to create useful courses out of their experiences making films like *Easy Rider, Chinatown, Spiderman*, *What Dreams May Come, Mulholland Drive,* and many others.

Looking back, I'm honestly unsure how much I helped these luminaries in their teaching, but for me the experience became breathless on a daily basis. One experience stands out in particular. I'd started teaching while still a film student at Columbia and in my very first classes I had often described the film *Blade Runner* as a moment when seven department heads were all doing the best, most-innovative work in the field, and astonishingly all were on this film. Now as the school opened I found myself co-teaching a filmmaking course with Larry Paull, the master production designer who created the textured places and spaces of *Dirty Dancing, Back to the Future* and many other movies. Including *Blade Runner.*

Larry was wonderful to work with. He often talked about how many so-so designers "gave Great Meeting" in that they knew how to talk at great and exciting length about how a script might be realized but lacked the ability to actually make their ideas real. But he was, I realized, terrific at both, and our conversations about how the class might work were exciting.

And yet from the outset it was clear that there was a problem in our workshop class, the senior film review where we visited sets and reviewed rough cuts. Larry quickly became famous for refusing to accept arbitrarily-chosen 'props' for the dishes, bed sheets, curtains and rooms of a film but yet, true master that he is, as a first-time teacher he wasn't always

following up with clear explanations of how students could improve on their poor choices. In some cases where he could, he simply stepped in, bringing in a prop or a painting reference, but he tried hard to stand back from this role so the students could learn by doing. Sometimes Larry brilliantly discussed architecture, art history or the history of fonts. But there were many cases where he simply couldn't clearly enunciate what he expected or why. This of course happens in every honest critique, and so he and the students would then turn to me for comments.

And in these moments I felt less helpful than I'd ever felt in any role as a teacher, because now I found that teaching production design was a completely different challenge from teaching writing, directing, cinematography and producing. I found that in trying to support Larry's meticulous discussion about their films' textures and myriad choices, I tended to ask about their characters' backstories and economic situation, a discussion that usually remained trapped in the box of realism. When pushed by budding designers, I would talk about the space of the film's production design, sometimes invoking LeFebvre, Kristeva and even Bachelard. Larry was in fact fascinated by this alien landscape and its clunky vocabulary of chronotopes, acoustic mirrors, poetic materials, actants and the grotesque, but at the end of the first term we both knew the truth: we had not yet answered what I began to call the Bed-sheet Question.

The Bed-sheet Question can be put as follows: why does the bed-sheet in *Amelie*'s bedroom have a richer phantasmagorical presence than a bed-sheet in a neorealist film like, say, Ken Loach's film *I, Daniel Blake (2016),* and yet Loach's spectacle is completely right for his film? Why must an alleyway in the city of *Batman* feel more operatic, more imbued with Wagnerian malevolence and gothic grimness, than an alleyway in *Spiderman*? What determines the unity of any successful spatial spectacle with its particular characters and story? We can all see that the backgrounds in comedies are usually intentionally flatter and less interesting than those in most dramas, horror films and thrillers, but why is this? And why are the settings in dramas so different from those in most summer blockbusters?

I talked at great length in those years about the Bed-sheet Question with Larry and also with our fellow faculty Anna Thomas and Richard Sylbert, with Ellen Mirojnick and Donn Cambern, Maysie Hoy and Bill Fraker, Vicky Jensen and Rolf Boda, Thom Mount and Bob Shapiro and other studio heads, with Henry Bumstead and Harold Michelson and the other countless visiting directors, cinematographers, costume designers and sound designers who had woven my favorite films but for the

most part had never taught (or been trained) in a classroom. I remember great chats—Sylbert once talked about how hairstyles are the hardest thing he'd had to master when trying to create period, while Larry Paull laughed that off and pointed out the crucial role of fonts in creating a convincing sense of period. It seemed we always found ourselves far from the logic of film schools and theory programs and instead thrust deep into the actual methodologies and sensibilities of the masters of filmmaking, always working from examples without any need for some overall theories of meaning and practice. They'd often invoke intuition, which made their choices hard to justify to some executives. I remember Bob Shapiro, who had run Warners and overseen the production of *PeeWee's Big Adventure* (a kind of landmark in using production design in the 1980s) talking about his bewilderment when reviewing dailies and having confusing chats with the film's brilliant production design team, then finally understanding certain choices only during the final screening.

After that puzzling, invaluable experience I then went on to make three very low-budget feature films, using each as an experimental classroom for a student crew. Then I returned to the classroom to teach a mixture of theory and practice courses in film and television, but all the while I was haunted by the bed-sheet question. I continued to ransack the ever-growing literature of film theory and film craft, but to me it seemed glaringly clear that most of the richest contemporary theoretical writing about narrative space never bridges the famous gap between media makers and media theorists in which I felt I was stuck.

The problem is I think that most theory accounts are generally not grounded in the specific methodologies and techniques that narrative artists use to create such spaces and therefore have little explanatory power or pragmatic robustness, while craft accounts are little more than 'how-to' guides on the treatment of surfaces and the proper organization of prop departments, usually connected to anecdotes and admonishments to "put the story first". Neither approach answers the Bed-sheet Question: though it is now decades since LeFebvre opened the rich conversation about space, we still seem to lack a conceptual frame that can explain why certain forms of design, cinematography and overall spectacle arise around certain stories and not others. One result of this is that filmmakers cannot dialogue with narrative theorists. Another is that in both worlds we still struggle to understand the concrete specifics of how the actual core concepts of our story-forms might themselves be gendered, racist and alienating. Outside of the prosaic methods for

indicating genre and for constructing 'realism,' can we elaborate any useful general rules to help explain why certain design choices possess spectacular power and others do not? Can we define story space in ways that are useful, explanatory and productive? And if we cannot, then how can we ever begin to explain the spectacular and phantasmagorical machinery of cinema?

And so this book. This is an attempted answer to the question that Larry and I faced about Amelie's bed-sheet and Loach's teacup and Hitchcock's room and *Batman*'s alleyway and the homes of *Homeland*. The intent is to link the terms and methodology of the makers of all these narrative forms to the terminology and concerns of cultural theory. I hope to help bridge these two camps for many reasons. On the one hand I strongly believe that most theoretical readings can be deepened when grounded in the methodologies and building-codes of the working architects of narration. At the same time though, I also argue that to make new and convincing works, story-crafters must themselves understand the history and the social implications behind their range of dramatic techniques. Whether you're a novelist, filmmaker, game-designer, media theorist, reader or viewer, you pay attention to the coffee-cup and the window and the wallpaper because their connection to the main character, the genre, the plot, the backstory, and the form of spectacle this all generates is not only helping to suture us all into this story but is also shaping our conception of ourselves and others.

But finally, there is also a redemptive intention here. It's true that whenever we can deconstruct the foundations of narrative space and spectacle, we also help reveal how these spaces encode our deep convictions about the self and social relations—and are thus also deeply implicated in our social and gender alienations. And this can be a productive, generative understanding: if we can grasp the techniques then not only can we then better critique and construct such spaces but, as the conclusion of this book suggests, perhaps we can also then culture the seeds of a rich spectacular space, an under-explored ecstatic space which offers new social and aesthetic possibilities to both theorists and storytellers.

And that is the utopian conviction of this book. I believe that today's theorists do not simply want to grasp our contemporary culture nor do today's story creators simply want to build it. In my experience they also yearn to create a new, more social and less gendered culture that they can love.

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