

For over a hundred years film art has been constantly developing despite the predicted and even announced "death of cinema"<sup>1</sup>, which numerous scholars, critics and even film makers<sup>2</sup> have been predicting since the 1970s. The cinema<sup>3</sup> – audience arrangement, apart from complex internal relations, has been subject to continuous changes due to the influence of the surrounding reality. The emergence of new media – television, video, and computers – has determined the evolution of audience attitudes. Starting with the behaviour of the first cinema viewers and ending with today's interactive "games", the predilections of viewers have had a considerable impact on the cinema, its form and contents as well as the way a completed work of art is presented. New models have emerged that relate to the mutual interaction between the film and the viewer and that are present in currently widespread interactive perceptual structures.

<sup>1</sup> The discussion about the "death of cinema" has continued. In order to present two opposing attitudes I shall quote statements by Polish researchers who consider the issue. Wiesław Godzic defines "the death of cinema" as a kind of model of audiovisual communication (in this case it is not a "complete death": cinema of a different dimension and of a different viewer returns, reaching its sources), idem, *Widz filmowy w poszukiwaniu medium*, [in:] *Od fotografii do rzeczywistości wirtualnej*, M. Hopfinger (ed.), Warsaw 1997, p. 107. Andrzej Gwóźdź claims, however, that "numerous predictions – especially those from the beginning of the eighties – concerning the early (sometimes even immediate) death of the 'old' film have not come true": see: *Nowe obrazy – nowy film – elektroniczne kino...*, [in:] *Kultura i sztuka u progu XX wieku*, S. Krzemień-Ojak (ed.), Białystok 1997, p. 161; More about this disputable theory, see: K. Banaszekiewicz, *Człowiek racjonalny i człowiek po – racjonalny a kryzys wizualności*, [in:] *Panoramy i zbliżenia. Problemy wiedzy o filmie. Antologia prac śląskich filmoznawców*, A. Gwóźdź (ed.), Katowice 1999, pp. 37–41; A. Friedberg, *Koniec kina – multimedia i zmiana technologiczna*, *Kwartalnik Filmowy* 2001, No. 35–36, pp. 42–54; M. Giżycki, *Koniec kina czy koniec kultury?*, ibidem, pp. 356–361.

<sup>2</sup> "The death of cinema" was predicted in the eighties by Francis Ford Coppola, inter alia; from: A. Gwóźdź, *New pictures...*, p. 161.

<sup>3</sup> I exclude from the scope of this term the avant-garde and experimental cinema as this part of film has always been closer in its search to works of art than to traditional film works; see also: T. Elsaesser, *Kino cyfrowe: nośnik, wydarzenie, czas*, *Kwartalnik Filmowy* 2001, No. 35–36, pp. 58–59.

The search for symptoms of the cinema transformation process from the traditional to an interactive one<sup>4</sup> should begin with the genesis of film. First, "cinema was created and developed in the epoch of the printed word culture which means that this type of culture was a real context for creating film language and cinema pragmatics"<sup>5</sup>. Therefore for many years the viewer wanted mainly to experience a new film story. Moreover, motion pictures, like photographs, were not subject to changes under the direct influence of the viewer. They registered reality and a moment later they turned into documents. With the first short scenes of the Lumière brothers they also started to create a new world, corresponding with the real one. Despite morphological relations linking cinema with "performance" arts like theatre, opera or fair shows, it did not take over from them the somewhat interactive relation between the creator, performer and viewer. For many years, cinema remained a medium the form of which the viewer did not want to and could not change. The time and space difference between the creation of the work and its reception as well as the contemplative nature of watching explain the absence of interactive behaviour on the part of the viewer

<sup>4</sup> The emergence in new dictionaries of the term "interactive cinema" demonstrates the increasing importance of this phenomenon; see: M. Hendrykowski, *Słownik terminów filmowych*, Poznań 1994, pp. 126–127; see also: G. Weinbren, *Kino interaktywne czyli podróż zastępcza*, trans. K. Wirkowski, *Cinema*, 1999, No. 5, pp. 12–14.

<sup>5</sup> M. Hopfinger, *Kultura audiowizualna u progu XXI wieku*, Warszawa, 1997, p. 14. That is why inventions preceding cinema and setting pictures in motion did not become generally accepted: "It is puzzling how they (19<sup>th</sup>-century interactive inventions, including traumatropes, phenakistoscopes, choreutoscopes, zoetropes – note by M.K.) were totally defeated, forgotten and marginalised almost immediately after the invention of the cinematograph. Does this mean that the 19<sup>th</sup>-century personality was not stimulated by these inventions, did not discover the need for manipulation in them having been satisfied with the reception of pictures from a cinematograph that almost totally stopped the development of interactive media for the next three quarters of the century?" P. Krajewski, *Mediacja – medializacja*, *Kwartalnik Filmowy* 2001, No. 35–36, p. 216.





1. Presentation of Lumière's film

except for leaving the cinema or destroying a film or a projector which can hardly be considered in such a way<sup>6</sup>.

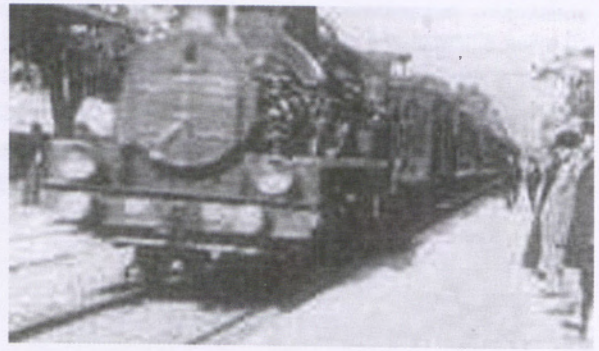
Beginning with the very first film forms cinema creators, according to the contemporary one-way nature of this medium, wanted to affect the viewer. During the first public film showing that took place on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1895 in the Indian Salon of the Grand Café basement in Paris, the Lumière brothers screened *Arrival of a train at La Ciotat Station*<sup>7</sup>. The scene showing the approaching locomotive frightened the viewers to such an extent that some of them started to run out from the hall. The effect was not intended by the authors who wanted to astound the viewer with the realism of motion pictures. The recipient not ready for encountering the new medium decoded the film illusion mistakenly, not knowing how to distinguish it from reality<sup>8</sup>. The viewer gradually became accustomed to the nature of the cinematic message. The reception of the silent film was made more enjoyable to the viewer with live music. Then the sound film<sup>9</sup> was invented in order to meet the audiovisual needs of the viewer. During the development of

<sup>6</sup> It was possible already from the perspective of a new multimedia reality to compare leaving the cinema to a form of the viewer's interactivity: "At the Hollywood show we encounter a phenomenon that probably has not been examined sufficiently (it is not the critic but the sociologist who should analyse it), namely something that corresponds to TV zapping: I think about a situation in which you have 40 channels at your disposal and using a remote control you are constantly changing the channels thinking that maybe channel 17 or channel 27 will screen something interesting; then you watch it for two minutes and find nothing interesting so you just change the channel again. So an equivalent of this phenomenon at the cinema is obviously leaving the cinema". J. Płażewski, *Perspektywy kina autorskiego*, [in:] *Od fotografii...*, p. 93.

<sup>7</sup> J. Toeplitz, *Historia sztuki filmowej*, vol. 1 (1895–1918), Warsaw 1955, pp. 16–18.

<sup>8</sup> D. Shipman, *Historia kina. Pierwsze stulecie*, trans. I. Siwiński, London 1993, p. 12.

<sup>9</sup> The first sound film titled *The Jazzband singer* made by Alan Crosland was screened in 1927, W. Szymaniak, *Kino jako medium masowe*, *Studia*



2. Lumière's film

the 10<sup>th</sup> muse, numerous means of expression were being invented in order to constantly intrigue the viewer. The task of the traditional cinema was to "tell" a story to the viewer, at the same time not depriving the audience of the illusion in any way. Together with film education and the growth of reception consciousness on the part of the viewer, this linear narration ceased to be enough. Directors connected with the "New Wave" stream initiated the widespread use of new non-linear narration forms.

The next sign of forthcoming changes involved the use of a device already exploited earlier, namely the actor looking at the viewer from the screen<sup>10</sup>. However, this time, using this "trick", film makers wanted to make the viewer aware of the fact that film is an illusion of reality. This device, which broke a traditional film convention, was intended to make the recipient aware of the viewer's fondness for peeping and of the passive nature of this behaviour, with no possibility of influencing the film structure. Concurrently with the emergence of postmodernism, the film industry created productions visualising the oldest desire of the viewer to be inside the film reality among actors, to take part in the action and to be able to influence it. Woody Allen in *The Purple of Cairo* (1984) or Wojciech Marczewski in *Ucieczka z kina wolność* [*Escape from the 'Freedom' cinema*] (1990) 'enabled' the recipient of the film in the film to take advantage of an optimum interaction model<sup>11</sup>. Gradually, more and more postmodernist directors started to use intertextual games<sup>12</sup> requiring from the viewer cul-

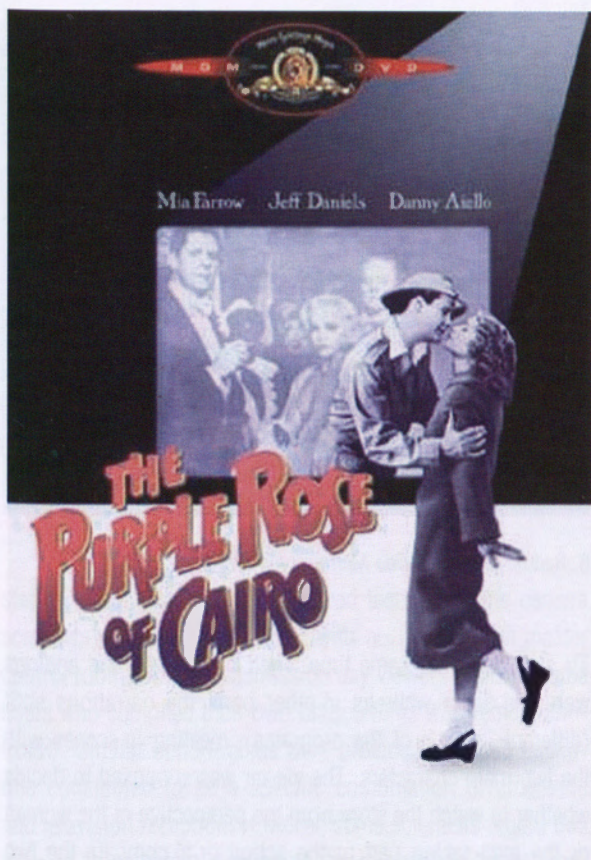
z teorii komunikowania masowego, B. Dobek-Ostrowska (ed.), Wrocław 1999, p. 46.

<sup>10</sup> M. Hendrykowski, *Słownik terminów...*, pp. 276–277.

<sup>11</sup> W. Godzic, *Oglądanie i inne przyjemności kultury popularnej*, Kraków 1996, p. 166; K. Majewska, *Intertekstualność w filmie – odmiany i egzemplifikacje*, *Studia Filmoznawcze* 1998, No.19, p. 80.

<sup>12</sup> Intertextuality in film production manifests itself in e.g. using quotes, quasi-quotes (e.g. pseudo diaries), allusions (e.g. the appearance of the director himself in the film, such as Woody Allen who played main character





3. The poster of Woody Allen's *The Purple Rose of Cairo*

tural "decoders" and the ability to read film conventions. Ali-na Brodzka described such a reception practice as an interactive one:

A certain type of interaction has already existed between the author and the recipient: I would say that this is an agreement concluded ad hoc – so you can watch *Pulp Fiction* while being aware of the elaborated film refinement; there is no blunder in its construction as it is actually a well-made film about blunders. You can, or even should – but employing a different method – watch *Szepty i krzyki* [*Cries and whispers/Viskningar Och Rop*], pose your own questions to the film and its author and conduct your own discussions with it<sup>13</sup>.

roles in the most of his films) or using a motto in the film introduction, see: T. Miczka, *Wielkie żarcie i POSTmodernizm. O grach intertekstualnych w kinie współczesnym*, Katowice 1992; K. Majewska, *Intertekstualność w filmie – odmiany i egzemplifikacje*, Studia Filmoznawcze 1998, No.19, pp. 77–93; E. Ostrowska, *Kino i nierzeczywistość. O praktykach intertekstualnych we współczesnym filmie*, Acta Universitatis Lodzianae Folia Scientiae Artium et Litterarum, 1995, book 5, pp. 135–151; *Postmodernizm w kinie*, Film na Świecie 2000, No. 401.

<sup>13</sup> A. Brodzka, *Spółczesna rola autora filmowego*, [in:] *Od fotografii...*, p. 90.



II. 4. Part of the *The Purple Rose of Cairo*

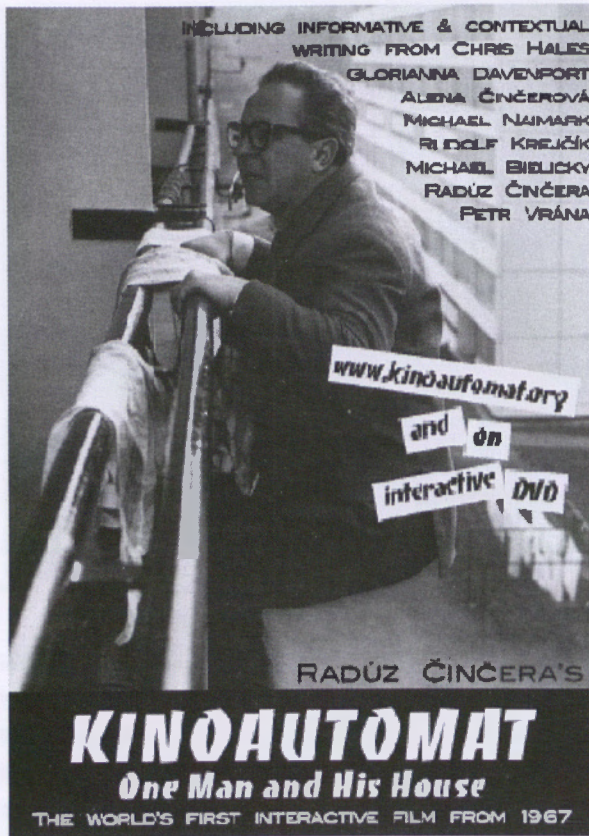
And such a form of reception was sufficient for the generation of "analogue"<sup>14</sup> viewers. When in 1967 the Kino-Automat was displayed for the first time at the Expo in Montreal it interested neither the film circle nor the audience. It featured Radosz Cincera's *One Man and his World* that was stopped five times to give the audience a chance to decide how the film should continue. Each viewer could press one of two buttons (red or green ones) and trace the choice on the frame-surrounding the screen on which numbers assigned to individual viewers were displayed in red or green. The next episode was chosen on the basis of the majority of votes. The process of making the decision was assisted by Mr. Novak himself – the main character, i.e. an actor playing the role took part in the screening and related events in the film<sup>15</sup>. The fact that this idea was ignored by cinematographers at that time proves that the audience did not need such a type of interaction at cinema. It preferred the physical reception of a film focused on contemplation. The situation changed with the emergence and popularisation of new media.

The need for interaction developed for the viewer gradually during the transformations of the 20<sup>th</sup> century multimedia culture. An important impact on the viewer's perception was attributed to the developing popularity of television and

<sup>14</sup> The "analogue viewer" is a recipient educated with traditional media, including literature, photography, and cinema, see: W. Godzic, *Cyfrowy film i analogowy widz*, Kino 1998, No. 12, pp. 42–45.

<sup>15</sup> B. Welberg, *Beyond Interactive Cinema*, 08/2002, from: <http://www.keyframe.org/bxt/Interact/> (13<sup>th</sup> March 2004); <http://nald.spsr.ucla.edu/expo67/map-docs/cinema.htm> (website address as of 5<sup>th</sup> May 2004).





5. The poster of Radúz Činčera's *One Man and his World*

the form of communication created by the new medium<sup>16</sup>. The invention of the remote control that can actually operate a TV set with access to a large number of channels at the same time (cable and then satellite television) induced the behaviour relating to interactivity for the viewer, i.e. so-called zapping<sup>17</sup>. For several years, film makers in cooperation with TV stations tried to take advantage of this form of interaction. One of the first attempts was a German TV production of 1991, *Mörderische Entscheidung*, a detective story by Olivier Hirschbiegel<sup>18</sup>. The project involved a combination of two film productions, one shot from the standpoint of a woman and the other of a man. The two versions were screened simultaneously by two

<sup>16</sup> W. Godzic, *Widz filmowy...*, pp. 114–116; about attempts to use the interactive television, see: <http://www.ralf-hecht.de/magister/cmc/5.html> (22.06.2004).

<sup>17</sup> The "zapping" term refers to an activity performed by the viewer while watching TV and consisting in changing (with a remote control) channels, most often after a short few-second break for recognising a program broadcast by a given station. If the viewer is not interested in the program at the moment he/she changes the channel. For more information about zapping, see: D. Chateau, *Efekt zappingu*, trans. I. Ostaszewska, [in:] *Pejzaże audyowizualne. Telewizja, wideo, komputer, selection, introduction and study* A. Gwóźdź, Kraków 1997, pp. 153–164; A. Friedberg, *Koniec kina...*, p. 49.

<sup>18</sup> B. Welberg, *Beyond Interactive...*



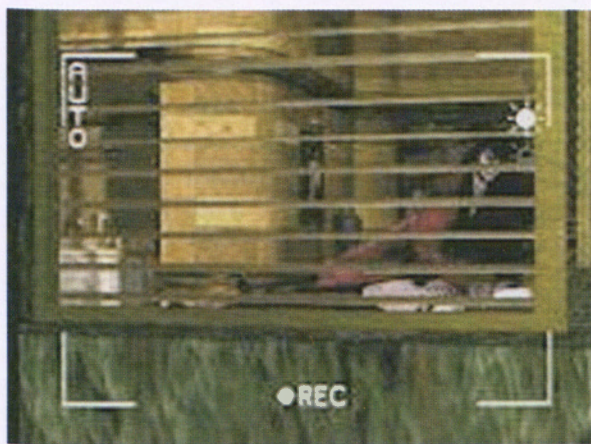
6. Radúz Činčera's *One Man and his World*

TV stations at the same time. Their beginnings and endings were the same whereas in other parts the narrations split (different in each of the programs), meeting in scenes with the two main characters. The viewer was supposed to decide whether to watch the story from the perspective of the woman or the man taking part in the action or to compare the two versions at any moment. Taking into consideration those recipients who chose the second option, the film makers presented information important to understanding the story on the two channels. They also tried to manipulate the viewers and to draw their attention towards one channel by reducing the amount of information given on the other channel. In the case of showing the same scene from two different points of view (on two different channels), by zapping it was possible to achieve an interactive reverse-angle-shot modelling<sup>19</sup>.

Another example of a similar film concept conducted on a broader scale was a project set up by Dogme 95 entitled *D-Dag* and co-broadcast on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2000 by seven Danish TV stations. On the preceding eve of the new millennium four directors, namely Thomas Vinterberg, Lars von Thier, Soren Kragh-Jackobsen and Kristian Levring shot four co-nected real-time films (each production took 70 minutes) that were screened synchronously on the first day of the New Year on four TV channels. The fifth channel showed all the films on split screen and the other two channels presented the behind-the-scene events relating to the productions. The directors did not take part in the productions directly as they directed their actors with intercoms and the film crews followed the actors

<sup>19</sup> For the narrative trick used in the film for presenting a dialogue and reactions of talking people, see: M. Hendrykowski, *Słownik terminów...*, p. 237.



7. Game *Voyeur*, David Riordan

step by step. Owing to the advanced technology the camera screen preview was transmitted with no delay to the master control room. On the transmission day viewers could become users who compiled their own unique films with remote controls<sup>20</sup>. Similar opportunities were provided by video technique considered to be a specific combination of cinematic and television reception. However, some scientists regard this view as an oversimplification of the role played by this medium in modern audiovisual culture<sup>21</sup>. The possibility to influence the process of tape replaying such as forwarding, pausing, using stop frame (which makes it possible to analyse the picture) and recording chosen picture fragments gives the viewer the chance to create new quality based on interaction. It is possible to create a variation on a given work or a specific film collage<sup>22</sup>. The video technique does not offer full possibilities of using alternative episodes as they are recorded in linear sequence and the search for particular fragments disturbs viewing. A much greater impact on the recipient's interactivity is attributed to video games<sup>23</sup>; however, the biggest changes in the transition process from "the external recipient to the internal one, from the passive viewer to the user co-creating communication actively"<sup>24</sup> result from the use of com-

<sup>20</sup> [http://www.geocities.com/lars\\_von\\_trier2000/d-dag.htm](http://www.geocities.com/lars_von_trier2000/d-dag.htm) (18.03.2004), B. Welberg, *Beyond Interactive...*; about the interactive television, see: A. Hirszfeld, *Telewizja na życzenie*, Film & Tv Kamera 1998, No. 3, pp. 56–58.

<sup>21</sup> W. Godzic presented a short history of this medium and its impact on the change in the viewer's perception, id., *Oglądanie i inne przyjemności kultury popularnej*, Kraków 1996, pp. 132–139; D. Antin, *Wideo – znamienne cechy medium*, trans. A. Piskorz, [in:] *Pejzaże audiowizualne...*, pp. 235–260.

<sup>22</sup> W. Godzic, *Cyfrowy film...*, p. 45.

<sup>23</sup> The modern viewer educated with interactive video games wants to exercise control also over the viewed film, *ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> The wording used in the review of M. Hopfinger's book titled *Kultura audiowizualna u progu XXI wieku*, Warszawa, 1997, quote from: K. Loska, *Kultura i media audiowizualne*, Cinema 1998, No. 1, p. 57.

8. Game *Voyeur*, David Riordan

puters<sup>25</sup>. The main reason for these changes results from the interactive nature of a computer-user arrangement "requiring partner relations, mutual information exchange and bilateral communication activity. Here you are the addresser and the addressee alternately. There is no possibility of passive reception in this arrangement. It results in a specific change of the recipient category into the user one"<sup>26</sup>. Thus a traditional division into the addresser and the addressee is violated as a computer message involves a constant change of roles. Moreover, the digital viewer takes advantage of numerous "new forms of culture popularisation granted by computers: a CD-ROM and a DVD-ROM, websites, computer games, hypertexts and hypermedia applications"<sup>27</sup>. At present the biggest impact on the popularisation and development of techniques of reception is related to computer games. Originally, game creators used experiences achieved by other domains of culture, especially those gained by cinema and television. The situation was subject to gradual change and the newest games and films influence each other in the scope of both narration construction and visual effect production<sup>28</sup>. Quite often productions are difficult to ascribe to a particular domain of audiovisual culture. Wiesław Godzic describes them in the following way:

games of which it is difficult to say what they are: multimedia, interactive cinema, New Hollywood? They form a completely new form of entertainment transmitted with a cable, a compact disc or cartridge. All these carriers include a program of interactive cinema with synthetic actors, with the possibility of exercising full control over their actions and of entering virtu-

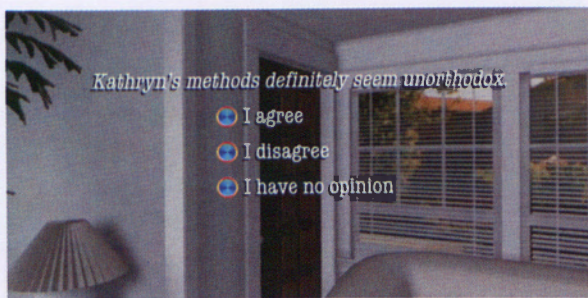
<sup>25</sup> L. Manovich, *Awangarda jako software*, Kwartalnik Filmowy 1998, No. 35/36, pp. 323–336.

<sup>26</sup> M. Hopfinger, *Kultura audiowizualna...*, p. 27.

<sup>27</sup> L. Manovich, *Awangarda jako...*, p. 323.

<sup>28</sup> M. Bielawski, *Fabula czy interakcja?*, Film&TV Kamera 2002, No. 4, pp. 103–106.



9. Interactive film *Tender Loving Care*

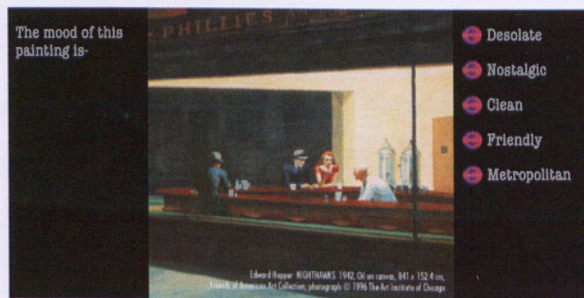
al reality in which they are actors. One of the novelties is a proposal called *Voyeur*, a kind of interactive cinema for adults, a product of the "3 DO" company. *Voyeur*, i.e. a well-known institution of "peeping Tom", consists in presenting a complex crime story to be investigated that additionally involves stars of the Hollywood cinema. A real film is shown but the players fully control actions of characters on the screen. Now you can really choose the right door or a loaded gun and you can arrange a meeting between the protagonist and a platinum blonde. Undoubtedly, it is not the same "film noir" any longer but it certainly satisfies the desires always created by our cinema; however, when it came to responding to them cinema appealed to the imagination. It was not the end of visual imagination but without a doubt it was the end of this particular type<sup>29</sup>.

Due to the expansive development of computer games the highest hope for the evolution of new film forms originates from the potentials of cyberspace (constructed by computer networks and the Internet, among others) that increases the amount and quality of interactions among numerous recipients. Also virtual reality is perceived as the main environment for future film quests. Together with the emergence of advanced devices for "creating" this reality (e.g. a helmet with miniature screens, gloves or overalls equipped with sensors) the user plunges more intensely and for a longer time into the digital world<sup>30</sup>. The modern audiovisual culture involves both analogue and digital viewers. In order to facilitate the introduction of the first group of recipients to new interactive techniques related to computers special applications are created, so-called "agents"<sup>31</sup>. They lead an inexperienced user through a given

<sup>29</sup> W. Godzic, *Widz filmowy...*, pp. 123–124; *Voyeur* and other productions at the junction of interactive cinema and computer games, incl. *Night Trap*, *Phantasmagoria* see: <http://anthonylarme.tripod.com/gc/gcrgames.html> (4.06.2004).

<sup>30</sup> W. Godzic, *Oglądanie i inne przyjemności...*, pp. 156–157.

<sup>31</sup> M. Składanek, *Inteligentny agent – teoria i perspektywy*, Kwartalnik Filmowy 2001, No. 35/36, pp. 248–258.

10. Interactive film *Tender Loving Care*

program, a game or an interactive film, often taking the shape of an animal or a human character "inhabiting" cyberspace or virtual reality.

As a result of technical potentials related to the digital medium, CD-ROM<sup>32</sup> (e.g. CD Video format) and DVD<sup>33</sup> technologies also create new forms of film reception. The latter technology also offers great opportunities for the interactive reception of motion pictures. In 1998 Petra Epperlein and Michael Tucker made a DVD-film titled *The Last Cowboy*, the narration of which was split into three parallel video-essays about the myth of America. Thus the viewer could optionally mix images of memory, imagination and reality creating a new quality<sup>34</sup>.

One of the first full-length interactive feature movies on DVD was *Tender Loving Care*<sup>35</sup> of 1997 produced by Aftermath Media. The authors of this "psychological thriller" include David Wheeler, a screenwriter and director and Rob Landeros, a producer. The production has determined a new direction in the development of cinema, taking advantage of the newest achievements of computer technology. The movie was shot with a digital camera, using for the most part natural lightning. During the postproduction process an interactive site of the project was designed enabling the recipient to construct the plot with episodes – "blocks" prepared by the movie

<sup>32</sup> A. Friedberg, *Koniec kina...*, p. 48; D. Sokołowski, *Filmy interaktywne*, January 1998, <http://www.cyber.com.pl/archiwum/9/14.shtml> (11.03.2004).

<sup>33</sup> A. Friedberg, *Koniec kina...*, p. 48; D. Sokołowski, *Filmy interaktywne...*; W. Godzic, *Cyfrowy film...*, p. 44.

<sup>34</sup> B. Welberg, *Beyond Interactive...*

<sup>35</sup> On the official site of this film the makers noted that, contrary to other so-called interactive films, *Tender Loving Care* is the first real interactive film created explicitly for DVD, which takes into account the creative potentials of the viewer, see: <http://www.aftermathmedia.com/tlc/about.htm> (13.03.2004); As for technical aspects, a team of specialists took advantage creatively of differences between DVD-ROM and DVD – VIDEO. The players have a cyberspace of film segments recreated in 3D whereas the viewers can exercise control over the narration and move in the film space using a remote control. <http://www.aftermedia.com/press/differentiators.htm> (website address as of 4.07.2004).



11. Interactive film *Tender Loving Care*

makers. The viewer moves in a network of alternate narrations creating an individual version but everything still takes place in the environment prepared by the creators and is controlled by them to a large degree which is possible due to the complex interface. Another production of this company, the cooperating DVD International and the authors of *Tender Loving Care* was the *Point of View*<sup>36</sup> movie made in the same way in 2000. The plot interweaves four basic elements: obsession, eroticism, art and murder. The movie narration is created by the viewer on the basis of test questions that are posed at the end of each scene. The choice of particular answers determines the plot change. The film is made for both cinemas and DVD and it is also available online over the Internet.

Constantly new technical inventions broadening the perception of the viewer have been created: "stereoscopes, holographic stereograms, 3D slides and films, non-computer projection systems, IMAX and OMNIMAX and the first attempts to generate virtual reality – STAIU (Stereoscopic Television Apparatus for Individual Use)"<sup>37</sup>. The heterogeneity of the modern multimedia culture and the interaction of numerous technologies have resulted in a difficulty in assigning a given production to a particular category. The modern recipient is used to hybrid "film" forms.

The change in the recipient must entail a change in the institution of the cinema. It will no longer be a traditional cinema hall for several dozen or several hundred people but a set of rooms – capsules forming a new model of interactive cinema. An individual viewer in a separate "room" will be free to edit the screened film or to combine chosen films into a new quality. Owing to the use of digital techniques the choice of subsequent episodes will be made smoothly and the "immersion" of the viewer in the film reality will not be distur-

12. Interactive film *Point of View*

bed. In the ongoing transitory period cinema experts endeavour to follow the changes taking place in the field of audiovisual culture. These are attempts to modernise traditional cinematic projection, however, they are still far from the aforementioned futuristic vision. The combination of video, computer and also cinematic technologies was involved in the first screening of a so-called interactive movie – *Mr. Payback* made in 1995. The short film (the viewer watched twenty minutes out of one hundred and fifteen minutes of the shot material) of unambitious contents was created taking advantage of the InterFilm<sup>38</sup> system used for watching it (incl. 100 joysticks, a projection room, four linked videodiscs, a PC with the 486 processor) and all this to enable the viewers to vote for one of three options of a given sequence<sup>39</sup>. The experiment conducted in over forty cinemas did not revolutionise cinematic practice, mostly because the "interactive" viewer wants to exercise full control over the film – even while being manipulated with film makers – and as such rejects the version chosen by a majority vote.

Another experiment was performed by the Taiwanese director, Ko Yi-cheng in his film *Lan yue* of 1997<sup>40</sup>. He divided a story into 5 segments and devoted each to a twenty-minute episode presenting a single event happening to three characters. The reels could be screened in any sequence during subsequent projections which increased the number of potential film versions to 120 possibilities. The viewer did not interfere directly in the substance of the film and the interaction consisted in the viewer putting together casually screened episodes in a new story<sup>41</sup>.

<sup>38</sup> The description of the system and the film, see: J. Berardinelli, *Mr. Payback: An Interactive Movie* (1995), 1995 [http://us.imdb.com/Reviews/33/3313\\_](http://us.imdb.com/Reviews/33/3313_) (13.03.2004); R. Ebert, *Mr. Payback*, 1995 [http://www.suntimes.com/ebert/ebert\\_reviews/1995/02/966121.html](http://www.suntimes.com/ebert/ebert_reviews/1995/02/966121.html) (30.03.2004).

<sup>39</sup> D. Sokołowski, *Filmy Interaktywne...*

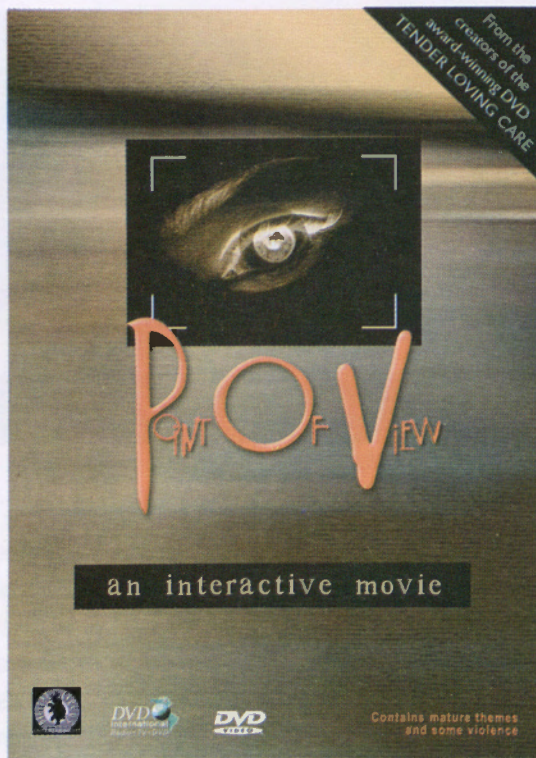
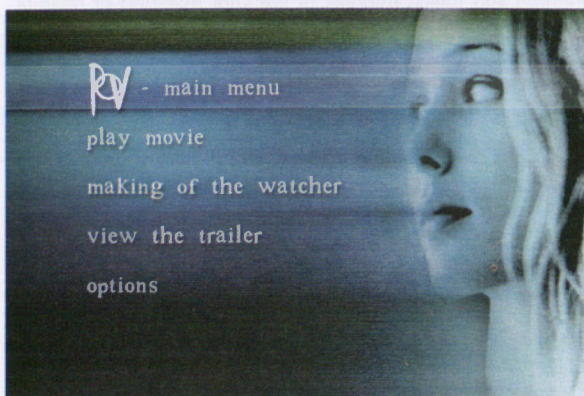
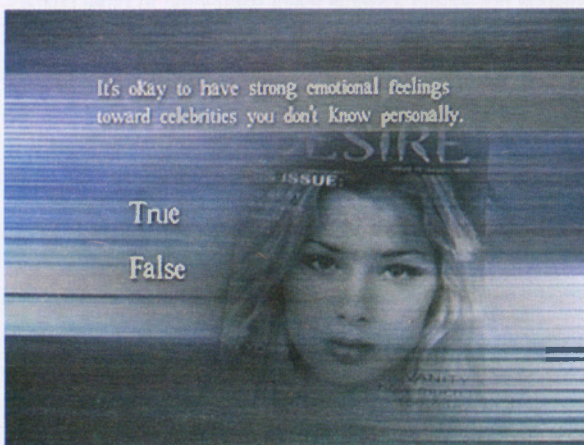
<sup>40</sup> B. Welberg, *Beyond Interactive...*

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.aftermathmedia.com/pov/buzz.htm> (13.03.2004).

<sup>37</sup> W. Godzic, *Widz filmowy...*, p. 121.



13. Interactive film *Point of View*14. Interactive film *Point of View*15. Interactive film *Point of View*

A new form of interaction between the medium and its audience was used by the director, Mike Figgis when making *Timecode*<sup>42</sup> in 2000. The film was shown e.g. at the Camerimage 2003 festival in Łódź. The pictures were shot by three cameramen and Figgis himself. The production comprised four parallel intertwined plots creating an “uncomplicated story from the Hollywood dream factory about love, betrayal, ambition, acting and artistry”<sup>43</sup>. The author divided the screen into four parts<sup>44</sup>

each of the screens presents continuously one of the plots, usually relating to one of the characters but with no strict rigour as characters often pass from one screen to another according to the story. Everything takes place in real time, simultaneously; four plots are recorded on one tape so the director playing a role of a projectionist cannot interfere separately with the picture on one screen only but he can stop the tape, rewind it and repeat a given part of the movie. He has four soundtracks at his disposal. In general he reproduces only one of them that relates to the screen with a dialogue (or with the most important dialogue). However, when something important is being said on two screens at the same time, Figgis repeats the visual shot but reproduces the soundtrack from the other screen. Rarely but still he reproduces two soundtracks synchronously which obviously make listening to dialogues very difficult. To a certain extent it is an announcement of interaction cinema<sup>45</sup>, in which the viewer will be able to influence the reception of the addresser's message<sup>46</sup>.

– this is the way in which the Łódź projection was described by Jerzy Płażewski.

The popularity of interactive movies is growing; the film circle is also growing accustomed to new potentials of cinema. At this year's Berlinale a five-day workshop were conducted on *Interactive Cinema*<sup>47</sup> for European Film Makers using the

<sup>42</sup> An interview with the director regarding the film making, see: *Digital Plays With Form*, the interview conducted by Jason Silverman <http://www.wired.com/news/culture/0,1284,35098,00.html> (15.03.2004).

<sup>43</sup> J. Płażewski, *Camerimage 2003. Dobry obraz w dobrym filmie*, Kino 2004, No. 2, p. 31.

<sup>44</sup> M. Bielawski, *Czas uchwycyony. 'Nowa książka' by Zbigniew Rybczyński and 'Timecode' by Mike Figgis – comparison*, *Film&TV Kamera* 2004, No. 1, pp. 33–34.

<sup>45</sup> The quoted fragment employs the term of 'interaction' that was used by Andy Warhol for describing his two-screen projections, including "The Chelsea Girls" film. In this particular case the author probably meant interactivity, at least the production is described in such a way – J. Płażewski, *Camerimage 2003...*, p. 31.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>47</sup> K. Maurer, <nettime-ann> [call] *Interactive Film at the Berlinale!*, 2004, <http://amsterdam.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-nl-0401/msg00001.html> (13.03.2004).



Korsakow system<sup>48</sup>. Interactive productions have already been used in advertisements over the Internet. The first advertisement was *Mercedes – Benz Launches Interactive Film* made by the German Schotz & Volkmer advertising agency<sup>49</sup>. There are also educational interactive movies created. The Human-Computer Interaction Group of Cornell University recorded with a video camera material that was subsequently processed using a computer. They created a melodrama pastiche similar to a soap opera, *El Avion*, for use in Spanish language practice<sup>50</sup>. The complex interface<sup>51</sup> enables the viewer to change the order of episodes and thus to influence the shape of the production.

While observing the diversity of forms taking advantage of interactive film, its further development and popularisation can be assumed to be taking place quite promptly. The cinema has changed under the influence of the most recent technologies and the modern viewer. According to Wiesław Godzic one of the most basic "features of the new viewer is related to interactivity as basic pleasure, next to and together with exercising control. The viewers want to contact and to communicate in the way they wanted to identify with film characters, the camera and the institution of cinema. In this sense, the viewer leaves the theatre and proves the end of the old type of audiovisual communication"<sup>52</sup>. Scientists consider interaction to be the major impulse for the emergence of the "new cinema"<sup>53</sup>, a form of which we can only predict in futuristic visions originating from virtual reality. The speed and variety of changes affecting modern cinema is visible when comparing predictions from the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present status, e.g. a hypothesis formulated several years ago by Ryszard W. Kluszczyński that:

in the nearest future there will be a split in the cinema evolution process uniform so far (with its internal diversity) and at

<sup>48</sup> G. Lindsay, *The Korsakow System*, 2003, <http://korsakow.mediamatic.net/cwolk/view/17716> (13.03.2004) <http://korsakow.mediamatic.net/cwolk/view/18401> (18.07.2004).

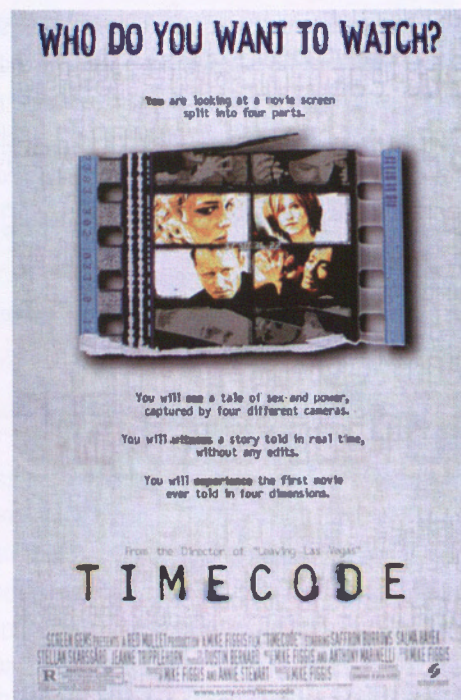
<sup>49</sup> The film is available at the following address: <http://www.mercedes-benz.com/com/e/home/passion/entertainment/games/index.html> (13.03.2004); see.: M. Zavagno, *Mercedes-Benz Launches Interactive Film*, September 2003, [http://www.marketingwonk.com/archives/200.../mercedesbenz\\_launches\\_interactive\\_film](http://www.marketingwonk.com/archives/200.../mercedesbenz_launches_interactive_film) (13.03.2004).

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.ascusc.org/jcmc/vol5/issue4/link1.html> (website address as of 13.03.2004).

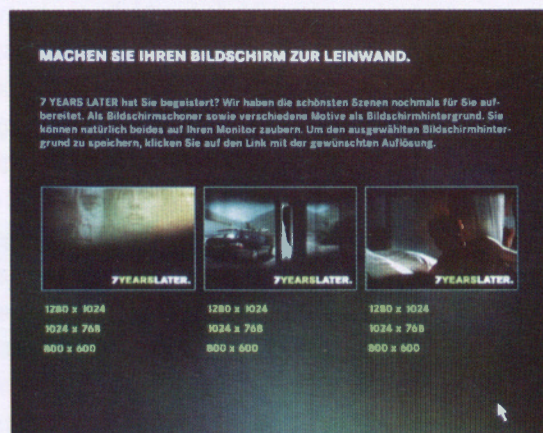
<sup>51</sup> J. Lubiak, *Interfejs – człowiek versus maszyna*, Kwartalnik Filmowy 2001, No. 35/36, pp. 189–190; A. Gwóźdź, *Obrazy filmowe w epoce interfejsów*, [in:] *Panorama i zbliżenia...*, pp. 471–479.

<sup>52</sup> W. Godzic, *Widz filmowy...*, p. 133.

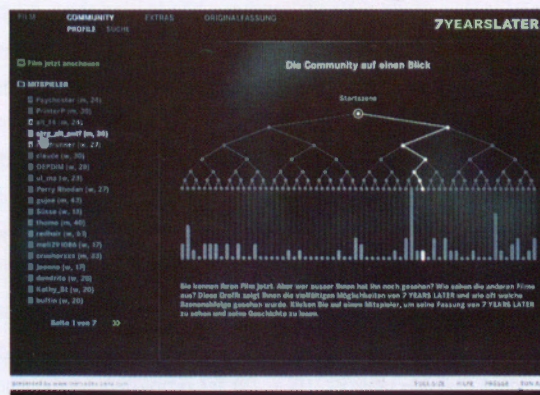
<sup>53</sup> "There is no doubt that the pleasure of physical influence on human perception system will result mostly from the new 'cinema'. The 'cinema' close to interactive understanding of human bond with the surrounding audiovisual world and communicating with the world mainly through interactivity". W. Godzic, *Oglądanie i Inne przyjemności...*, p. 221.



16. The poster for Mike Figgis' *Timecode*



17. Mercedes – Benz Launches Interactive Film



18. Mercedes – Benz Launches Interactive Film



least two separate streams will emerge: the first one striving for the continuation of its hitherto existing principles and forms (new technologies are to be used only to diversify and refresh already existing conventions) and the other, i.e. interactive cinema destroying existing conventions and offering a completely different type of reception experience<sup>54</sup>.

<sup>54</sup> R. W. Kluszczyński, *Film, wideo, multimedia. Sztuka ruchomego obrazu w erze elektronicznej*, Warszawa 1999, p. 18.

At present numerous quests have proceeded in order to find new film forms and to expand the potentials of the old ones and in the nearest future it will be clear whether any of them will be remembered by viewers and scientists as non-recurrent experiments.