

# Cult Film



## or Cinephilia by Any Other Name

by Elena Gorfinkel

**How movie love and movie madness intersect  
in the always changing dynamic of cult film**

Which came first, the cinephile or the cultist? This simple question of generation or periodization opens out onto rather murky waters. These two forms of film love seem, at first glance, to be strange bedfellows: the former defined by a tradition of ciné-clubs, demitasse cups, art houses, little film magazines, and modernist tastes, the latter by midnight screenings, excessive bodies, ruptured decorum, talking at the screen and subterranean circulation. But are these superficial differences that conceal points of convergence within a history of living in and with the cinema? One is left with a nagging sense that these seemingly distinct forms of cinematic feeling and connoisseurship are in many ways actually one and the same.

In his recent collection *Sleaze Artists*, Jeffrey Sconce connects the genealogy of these two uniquely obsessive forms of reception, using Pauline Kael's essay "Trash, Art and the Movies" to suggest that cinephiles are joined together in their adulation and pre-occupations: not with the "good" but with the "bad movie." Sconce's apt regard for these two forms of movie love takes their linkage as self-evident. Tracking these idiosyncratic modes of devotion, we might see a set of intersections between the B-movie and the French New Wave, the Surrealist shock tactic and the Troma schlock repertoire. If my account here prioritizes a connection between the French and the American contexts of the "ciné-maudit" and the "film freak," it is not to disqualify other

national or global networks of filmic engagement, but only to trace a set of tendencies that find apt pairing in the exaltation of French cinephilic traditions and their cross-pollination with cultism in the contexts of American film culture.

Connections between cinephiles and cultists are buried deep within the history of cinema. As J. Hoberman and Jonathan Rosenbaum note in their seminal book *Midnight Movies*, the American film critic Harry Alan Potamkin, referring to the developing cinemania around silent comedians Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton, was the first to identify the presence of the film cult in 1932. He also recognized the European antecedent to the American slapstick cult in French film culture of the 1920s, where other popular American films, some of which Potamkin thought beneath contemplation, were valued as forms of art. The French staging grounds for cultism, obliquely linked by Potamkin to Surrealism, bridged the distance between American and French artistic and popular traditions, and contravened the border between high and low forms. Resonating with Potamkin's observations from across the pond, Salvador Dalí would in 1932 proclaim the Marx Brothers' *Animal Crackers*, a triumph of "concrete irrationality," stating that such films "mark an authentic route to poetry." And late Surrealist Ado Kyrrou famously quipped that it was the "worst films" that were the truly sublime, fusing the esthetic appeals of the exalted and the debased, the pornographic and the redemptive. That *Un chien andalou* would find its way into cult fanzines and video catalogs fifty years later would probably not have ruffled the Surrealists. Their pleasure-taking in the dregs of cinema established some of the terms that would embolden the rise of the cult film as a distinct category of cinematic experience. That cultism glories in the "magnificent failures" of film history, and in shock, horror, surprise, and varieties of generic deformation, returns us to the basic principles of Surrealism and the faith in the powers of the cinema to transform our perceived reality.

In another strand of French cinephilia, from Jean Epstein to André Bazin, we see a cultlike critical tradition studded with a salvaging, found art ethos, one that Paul Willeman has called a "discourse of revelation." Epstein's critical concept of *photogénie* privileged the ineffable materiality of the film image and the spectator's encounter with it. *Photogénie* exemplified a kind of cinephilic rapture, a sensibility which highlighted that "what is being seen is in excess of what is being shown." This model of discernment required a working *on* cinema, a traversal of and within the film frame, a seizing of a previously unnoticed "cinephiliac moment" for exegesis and criticism, even if the detail often appeared unexpectedly, evaded sufficiently rational language, and settled instead into the realm of the ritual and the sublime.



Under the tutelage of André Bazin, the French cinephilic approach matured in the writings of the *Cahiers du cinéma* critics in the 1950s and '60s. Their *auteurism* rescued the beauty and mastery of overlooked Hollywood films and directors—Ray, Fuller, Hawks, Hitchcock. We can see cultism operating within this logic of reclamation and resuscitation, although cult in its approach appears more cynical, *using yet refusing* the parameters of artistic value and the idea of the hallowed masterpiece. Instead, the audiences and critics of cult seem to favor the ugly, the distasteful and the shocking as a mode of feeling, mounting this anticanon as a mark of subversion. The beautiful and the ugly, the traditional poles of esthetic value, are troubled by the emergence of the cult film and its audiences. Such recalibration, seen in the emergence of cult film as a nameable, more broadly recognizable phenomenon, occurred a decade after the battle for considering film as a legitimate art form had in the United States been won.

The 1960s still stands as the much mourned and nostalgized period of a popularized cinephilia, a decade when Bergman, Godard, Fellini, and Antonioni splashed on American art-house screens. Film became art both through its broadening international circulation and as a product of the critical and popular discourses around modernist *auteurs*, New Waves, and film undergrounds, particularly in the writings of public intellectuals and cinephiles and *cinéastes* Andrew Sarris, Susan Sontag, and Jonas Mekas. The growth of film festivals, cinéclubs and campus film societies provided locations for the roiling energies of movie-mad culture to flourish. In addition, the French attentiveness and revaluation of American film history, through multiple acts of displacement, adaptation, and appropriation, allowed American cultists a measure of revelation as well, able to see their own films anew—be they *film noir* or Jerry Lewis romps, the Hollywood musical as seen through the shimmering confections of Jacques Demy or the science-fiction movie viewed through the abstract architectures of Jean-Luc Godard's *Alphaville*.

But the 1960s was also the period of the cross-fertilization of art house and grindhouse—in which the underbelly of mainstream (read Hollywood) cinema's capital investment was exposed and openly questioned by vanguards as well as independents. The long-ranging impact of the 1948 Paramount decree, which had divested the Hollywood studios of their holdings in exhibition, as well as the rise of television and the winnowing of the mass audience for movies, allowed independent theaters in the 1950s and 1960s to thrive. The art house, while championing continental esthetics and highbrow tastes, also gained a tacitly prurient appeal, a place where, according to exploitation producer David Friedman, "the cold beer and greasburger gang" could rub

shoulders with the "white wine and canapés crowd," in the interests of seeing exposed female flesh. Through a set of geographical overlaps between the sure-seater and the nudie house, Roger Vadim's Bardot could touch base with Russ Meyer's *Lorna*. As the gap between high and low narrowed, their attendant taste publics began to intermingle.

Before cult film became a phenomenon associated with trawling the lower, sometimes libidinal, depths of film history through time-shifting technologies like video, the cultist sensibility was piecing together a set of relations to the fragments of Hollywood's fading past. This fertile period saw the change of focus from the film star as cult object towards the understanding of films as products of director-creators, of recognizable generic formulae, and of distinct modes of production. Gloria Swanson's swan song in *Sunset Boulevard* and

Joan Crawford and Bette Davis' showcasing of the grotesque horrors of aging beauty in *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?*, highlighted these industrial and spectatorial transformations: the decline of studio product seen through the allegory of the star body's deterioration. New modes of film practice also became visible through Hollywood's temporary declension in the 1960s, bringing an awareness of different horizons of film experience, of different kinds of movies, and of variant ways to make them and to view them.

The pop avant-garde of Andy Warhol, Kenneth Anger, Jack Smith, and the Kuchar brothers was in fact turning cultism into a project of filmic authorship. Greg Taylor has detailed this fascinating history, observing how the critical legacy of postwar film critics Manny Farber and Parker Tyler diffused into practices of filmmaking and the production of an alternative esthetic. Employing cult ritual and camp irony, the New York underground filmmakers transposed their own cine-cultist spectatorship into their films. Smith manufactured the star cult of the unknown B-movie actress Maria Montez in the pages of *Film Culture* and in the frames of *Flaming Creatures*, and Mike Kuchar gave earnestly kitsch homage to comic strips and creaky science-fiction movies in *Sins of the Fleshapoids*. These and other underground films fused the cinephile and the cult, breathing life into seemingly degraded mass cultural forms and bestowing camp playfulness to the rattling ghosts of the filmic past.

As the underground film waned by the late 1960s, the baton of authorship seemed to get passed to those unforeseen rebels in the theater seats. Underground film screenings in the 1960s were already tenaciously hectic affairs, often likened to Happenings, and they set the terms for broader appropriation and dispersion. Camp had been outed by Susan Sontag as a sensibility and penchant for the outdated and the malformed, and was quickly seized on by the press and by the youth cultural affinities of the decade's popular culture. Parker Tyler who had in many ways introduced this mode of "erotic spectatorship" in his own books of the 1940s began decrying its massification. His 1958 essay "On the Cult of Displaced Laughter" presaged the rise of an esthetic disdain that still permeates our cultural present. Tyler wrote regarding a moviegoing nostalgia on the part of both cinephiles and middlebrows that produced, out of the pathos of the tragic and the preposterousness of the fantastic, the brute comedy of anachronism: "maybe it is chthonic laughter to which the cult leaders and art albums of the film world invite us: the cthonic laughter that belongs to Hades and the grave as well as to the womb-from-which-all-things-come...." Predicting the arrival of the midnight movie by about fifteen years and the championing of "bad taste" for its own sake



**They were cult before cult was cool:**  
Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton  
(photos courtesy of Photofest).





Please, dance in the aisles: Audience members for a screening of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* are dressed for the part(s) and ready to perform along with the cult film.

somewhat later, Tyler's investment in esthetic value and discernment was itself becoming outdated.

The efflorescence of the midnight-movie circuit in the early 1970s, in urban locales like the Elgin Theater in New York's Chelsea neighborhood as well as in college towns, seemed to shift the field, from the "death of the author," to the (re)birth of the audience. The performative collectivity of the 1970s midnight movie made the experience of the cult film a spectacle of postcountercultural protest—engendered in repetition and reenactment, a badge of much vaunted ritual and refusal. The high period of midnight movie cultism needed cinema's new alibi of esthetic value in order

to thwart it, just as John Waters' queer gross-out cinema needed liberal bourgeois propriety so as to mock it—with Divine tenderizing a filet mignon between her meaty

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legs. In the context of the acquisition of cinema's mantle of high art, the cult film could reconstruct the oppositions between high- and lowbrow tastes with the exceeding forcefulness of its outré images, its messy bodies, and its unruly fans. If cinephilia rep-

resented an idealist view of the cinema in terms of the plumbing of its esthetic capacities for a quasireligious experience, the cult film of the 1970s retorted with an equally ritualistic antiesthetic, taking the principle of failure—on visual, cultural and political grounds—as its guiding logic.

Perhaps the midnight movie directed a retroactive gaze onto one of film history's founding myths: the audiences of the first public film screening at the Grand Café in Paris, where spectators of the Lumière brothers' film *Arrival of a Train at the Station* purportedly thrilled and chilled to the projected sight of an onrushing train. *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* seemed to wishfully reenact the fantasy of those past





**Robot Monster (1953)** tells the old familiar story of a space alien who resembles a gorilla in a modified diving helmet who follows orders to destroy everyone on Earth, and, while trying to eliminate the last six people, falls in love with a young woman (photo courtesy of Photofest).

shocks and pleasures, precisely as performance. The *Rocky Horror* experience exhibited a desire to feel the cinema as if violently new again, but also mobilized a notion of it as the living dead. No matter how the myth of cinema's earliest audiences has been debunked, the "chthonic" energies of cult restaged an encounter with the imagined spectator of the filmic past, an uneasy balancing act between naiveté and world-weariness. Cult film reception signaled a need for the feeling of being rended from customary modes of perception—while tacitly acknowledging that everything, every flourish, stylistic technique, and esthetic innovation had to date been exhausted and done.

Even if cultism in its accepted guises today follows the path of specific genres or trash *auteurs*—the raggedy exploitation film, the Italian Giallo film, the corporeal grotesques of John Waters or Takashi Miike's films—its driving momentum as an esthetic sensibility still derives from an historical insistence on cinema as an art of shocks, arousals, attractions, and repulsions, an experience "beyond all reason" but also reanimated from beyond the grave. The affective pulls of cinephilia have been affiliated with a necrophilic longing, while the hyperbolic styles and subjects of the cult film mapped this appeal through a fixation on the body torn asunder and brought back to life, evoking Renata Adler's observation in 1968 that "the more serious a film cult is, the more likely it is to be preoccupied in all types of ways with death." It is clear why the horror genre became one of the holy provinces of the cult film specialist; the undead and the uncanny could offer rich allegories of both contemporary postindustrial capitalism and of the melancholia that pervaded the history

of cinema. Cinephilia perambulated around the undead body of film history in an abstract way, on the level of form and ontology (vis a vis Bazin's "mummy complex"). Cult film spectatorship as it was expressed in the 1970s and 1980s made these underpinnings of cinephile obsession an overt drama of chaotic, aggressive content, of a battle between that which could be seen in the frame, and those excesses which hovered beyond and outside it.

The 1980s saw cult film practice veer towards a revival of the cinephile "little film magazine" in the more subterranean form of fanzine culture. The DIY, punk-rock

esthetic of the fanzine was also aided and abetted by the rise of video as an affordable means of home viewing. The actual artisanal poverty of Sixties underground filmmakers like Smith and the Kuchars had transmuted into an ideological investment in impoverishment as a formal *raison d'être*, a criteria for cult adequacy. The mythos of the low-budget film *artiste* became the constitutive backbone of many cultists' antiesthetics. Fanzines and enthusiast guidebooks like *Psychotronic Film*, *Shock Cinema*, *RE:Search*, *Incredibly Strange Films* and *Fangoria* redistributed the cultural capital of the misaligned *auteur*, establishing a revisionist film historical canon including the miss-understood Ed Wood and the quasianonymous labors of exploitation's many minor geniuses: Herschell Gordon Lewis, Larry Buchanan, and Doris Wishman, among many others. The midnight movie, on the wane by the late 1970s, persisted as cult cinema's origin narrative, allowing cult fans to hold on to the idea of cinema as communal place and resistant space of sensual disorientation, rather than as site of quotidian commodity consumption.

Rather than seeing the cinema through a deranged fragment, cultism chose the fragmentary as a model for the whole film, replacing the idealistic totality of cinephile feeling with the pleasures of the cult movie's intrinsic structural dissolution. As Sconce has elsewhere suggested, the "bad movie," readily acknowledged as a product of budgeting exigencies and limited means, could be celebrated by the cultist sensibility, seen to challenge the continuity styles and "codes of verisimilitude" of a dominant, capital-intensive cinema. Hollywood had by this time remonopolized film exhibition with the boom of minimall theaters and multiplexes. Thus, the preference for shoddily made films with aspirational integrity—Wood's *Plan 9*

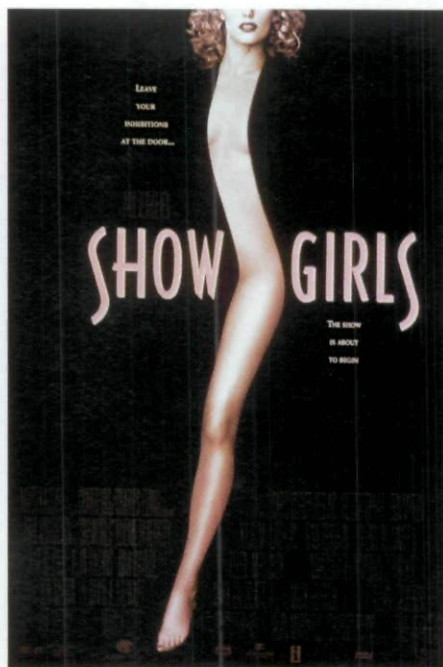


Space aliens attempt to conquer Earth by recruiting an army of zombies in Ed Wood's classically awful, riotously funny *Plan 9 from Outer Space* (1959) (photo courtesy of Photofest).





John Waters' gross-out cult classic, *Pink Flamingos* (1972) (photo courtesy of Photofest).



Paul Verhoeven's *Showgirls* (1995) didn't aim to be a cult film (photo courtesy of Photofest).



A demonic rabbit stars in Richard Kelly's *Donnie Darko* (2001) (photo courtesy of Photofest).

from *Outer Space*, or Arch Hall Sr.'s *Eegah!*, for example—reconnected with the Surrealist cinephiles' model of free-association and antirationalism, but also with a critique of a one-size-fits-all model of PG rated mass culture. Rather than a sense-defying interpretive or artistic strategy, the ready-made, cruddy antiformalist form of the trash film became the basic skeleton on which cult aficionados could structure their pursuit of cinema's elusive, ineffable meanings—in theory resembling the labors of their cinephile contemporaries and predecessors, in practice seizing on radically opposed objects for similar effect.

Instead of the ambivalences resident in the finely crafted art cinema of a Resnais or an Antonioni, the cultist sensibility located ambivalence in film history itself, in the haphazardly crafted relics made by obsolete independent filmmakers. Nevertheless, cultism and cinephilia continued to be implicitly linked by a kind of marginal status, especially as Hollywood cinema continued to maintain its global economic dominance. In practice, we can see cultists and cinephiles sharing many touchstone films in common. Cinephiles embraced the work of Jesus Franco or Radley Metzger due to these director's affinities with European modernism, and cultists long relied on *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* or *Eyes Without a Face* for their doses of highbrow horror. The durational challenges of Tarkovsky's *Stalker* could provide a formalist palliative to the die-hard science-fiction fan.

Many have noted that fetishism, intrinsic

to both cinephilia's esthetic predilections and cult connoisseurship's literal fixations on the erotic and the violated body, reached its apotheosis through the video as a commodity form. Film became a collectible, something that could be owned, replayed, rewound, paused, and duped, entering a new sphere of privatization and domestication. The screen shrank but the networks of perceived esthetic influence, generic

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hybridization, and alternative circuits of exchange grew, exponentially. A new generation of exploiteers and cultists began another form of appropriation, that of bootlegging and amateur historicization. Trader networks in the back pages of these cultist magazines proliferated, and one-man entrepreneurships were started on two VCR decks and a feverish dream of cult acquisition. The video store collected eddies, flows, and divergent tributaries of a panoply of films: the marginal (driving safety films), the trashy (*Valley of the Dolls*, *Myra Breckinridge*), the epic failure (*Heaven's Gate*), the cult turned "classic" (*Freaks*, *Casablanca*). The layout of the video store placed in spatial proximity films that, in a celluloid-only era, might never have crossed paths in the same theater. In the prevideo period, the

convergence of disparate films occurred as a product of cinephile creativity. Such esthetic collisions might have been engineered by pioneering film programmers like Amos Vogel at Cinema 16 or Henri Langlois at the *Cinematèque française*, who once screened D.W. Griffith and Andy Warhol over the course of one night. They might have been connected abstractly in the writings of intrepid cinephile critics like Tyler, or coupled by the flash of montage found footage in the films of the underground. The vagaries of theatrical distribution and the proliferation of the video retail market radically transformed the potentials of cine-cultist collage, leaving the organization of films into series, canons, styles, movements, and dissonant counter-canon in the hands of a purportedly democratized viewing public.

The stop, fast forward, and rewind buttons of new technologies have further reconstructed the boundaries between film, viewer, and author through the disruption of theatrical exhibition's temporal and immersive flow. Today, what video started—in its reconfiguration of conditions of films' access, scarcity and its experience of evanescence—digital formats, DVD, Blu-ray, Netflix, YouTube, and the iPhone have considerably magnified. The migration of film cultures, amateur film criticism and cinephile publics online, discussed in a recent issue of *Cineaste*, has made visible the linkages between cinephilia and cultism as shared forms of film love. Mid-century distinctions of taste and of the boundaries



between art and trash have become largely permeable, if not entirely irrelevant, at least within the realm of cinema. To use one prominent example, The Criterion Collection, the digital successor of the mid-century art-house distributor Janus Films, has its own line of Cult Films in its DVD catalog, appealing to the cultist that resides within every cinephile. Gray-market traders in bootlegged videos (often dubbed onto DVD-Rs from multiple generation VHS copies) on various auction sites specialize in the "rare" film, a broad category that spans avant-garde films by Warhol and Yoko Ono to no-name early '70s exploitation films and classical Hollywood obscurities that have yet to wend their way onto commercial DVD or Turner Classic Movies. Vast bodies of marginal cinema have migrated to online video sites, the public domain site Archive.org being one worthy example, which has broadened access to films from the history of nontheatrical 16mm exhibition. And one of the bastions of fanzine era cultism, Michael Weldon's *Psychotronic Video*, has recently ended its print magazine operations due to rising expenses and the wide availability of trash film reviews on the Internet.

As a result, the perceived divide between cinephile and cultist also becomes much more porous and at times illegible, since it is no longer oriented around the project of film as art and definitions of connoisseurship that rely on exclusivity and rarity. Media industries have embedded connoisseurship into online merchandising, for example, in the "Users like you enjoyed..." recommendation feature of Amazon, Netflix, and YouTube. New media formats have also widened the reach of cult's use as a critical category, perhaps making itself meaningful only as a signpost of cinema's past—a history that, through commentary tracks and bonus features, has itself become a licensable commodity.

Yet the mark of gritty authenticity, transgression, and nonconformity associated with the idea of cult film persists, even if these characteristics may shift registers for different audiences and microreception spheres. If *Donnie Darko*, *Bad Girls Go To Hell*, *Robot Monster*, *Johnny Guitar*, *El Topo*, *Fight Club*, *Salo*, and *The Big Lebowski* are all cult films, then what does cult film really mean as a framework of analysis? If I choose to be cynical, I might say that the new divide, rather than between high and low, or art and commercial exploitation, is the horizon line that separates those films that are available through digital, wireless means,



Dr. Frank-N-Furter (Tim Curry), the "sweet transvestite from transexual Transylvania, is the gender-blending star of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975) (photo courtesy of Photofest).

and those that are not. Cultism may have been more attuned to and defined by the shift to video than cinephilia, which still sustained the prestige of the art cinema and international festival circuit to anchor it in specific locations and to the primacy of theatrical exhibition, and implicitly to an argument regarding medium specificity.

This survey has suggested that cinephilia as a broader category did indeed predate the emergence of cultism, against which cult trends and sensibilities reacted. It seems that the cultist and the cinephile have in the present become indistinguishable from each other, through the overlaps between their broadening span of tastes and the ways that technological, rather than geographical, spaces have afforded or delimited such widening. The present situation however, threatens the absorption of the cinephile in the now larger, because commercially redefined, category of cult. Every media consumer is in some sense a ready-made cult viewer—that is, if we accept the identities that media franchises construct for us in advance and use technologies in the ways they are intended.

To present a counterargument, I see more value in using cult as a shifting historical category, placing it against the development and reorientation of film tastes, genres, and modes of production. When I teach an undergraduate seminar on cult film, I open the class with the question, "When was film cult?" To this I should now add, "Where was film cult?" Maybe this erosion of boundaries will produce new dialogs and

new film histories that will emerge from the hypermediated contact zones of blogs, online journals, and discussion forums. Or it may push cinephiles and cultists to redefine themselves, yet again, perhaps more closely this time in relation to each other and in relation to the narrowing territory of their prized cinematic love objects, both sacred and profane. ■

## End Notes:

- 1 Jeffrey Sconce, "Introduction," *Sleaze Artists: Cinema at the Margins of Taste, Style, Politics*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.) 1-18.
- 2 J. Hoberman and Jonathan Rosenbaum, *Midnight Movies*. NY: DaCapo, 1983, 1991. See also Harry Alan Potamkin, "Film Cults," *The Compound Cinema*. NY: Teacher's College Press, 1977.
- 3 Salvador Dali, "Abstract of a Critical History of the Cinema," and Ado Kyrrou, "The Marvellous is Popular," in Paul Hammond, ed. *The Shadow and Its Shadow: Surrealist Writings on the Cinema*. (3rd Ed.) San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2000.
- 4 For a detailed discussion of the connections between cult horror cinema and avant-garde and art-house practices, see Joan Hawkins, *Cutting Edge: Art Horror and the Horrific Avant-Garde*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.
- 5 Paul Willemen, "Through a Glass Darkly: Cinephilia Reconsidered," *Looks and Frictions*. London: BFI, 1994. 236-7.
- 6 Greg Taylor, *Artists in the Audience: Cults, Camp and American Film Criticism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.
- 7 Parker Tyler, "On the Cult of Displaced Laughter," *The Three Faces of the Film: The Art, the Dream, the Cult*. NY: AS Barnes, 1960. 133. (Originally published in 1958 in *The Kenyon Review*.)
- 8 On the discourse of failure within contemporary film criticism and film culture, see Sconce, "Movies: A Century of Failure," in *Sleaze Artists*. 273-310.
- 9 Renata Adler, "Our Monuments to How it Was," *The New York Times*. January 14, 1968. D1.
- 10 David Bordwell, "Games Cinephiles Play," *Observations on film art and FILM ART*. (August 3, 2008.) <<http://www.davidbordwell.net/blog/?p=2662>> (Accessed September 5, 2008.)
- 11 Jeffrey Sconce, "Trashing the Academy: Taste Excess and an Emerging Politics of Cinematic Style," *Screen*. Vol 36. (1995).
- 12 Thomas Elsaesser, "Cinephilia or the Uses of Disenchantment," Marijke de Valck and Malte Hagener, eds. *Cinephilia: Movies, Love & Memory*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005. 27-44.
- 13 Vincent Canby, "Confessions of a VCR Recruit," *The New York Times*. November 24, 1985. H. 21.
- 14 The comprehensive new collection *The Cult Film Reader* attempts to programmatically address this question. Ernest Mathijs, and Xavier Mendik, eds. *The Cult Film Reader*. NY: McGraw Hill, 2008.
- 15 I am indebted for this insight regarding the widening of the use of cult to apply to popular viewers to Michael Newman's media studies blog, Zigzagger. Newman, "Notes on Cult Film and New Media Technology," Zigzagger. (August 8, 2008) <<http://zigzagger.blogspot.com/2008/08/notes-on-cult-films-and-new-media.html>> (Accessed August 15, 2008.)