Within the framework of architectural practice as well as the academy, media supported worldwide *interdependence* and *transient cultural waves* are essential forces activating the current globalization phenomenon. Schools that have always engaged themselves in international dialogue, are now increasingly immersed in the rapidly developing media arena and global information networks.

In this paper I propose a theoretical and pedagogical framework in which the concept of *migration* provides a useful model with which to investigate the transitory natures permeating cultures. These involve not only the literal moving from one physical world into another, but also the more abstract - from that of the so called "real" world into that of the "virtual." Through what I call *re-presentations* an experimental studio was conducted at the Universidad Nacional del Litoral in Santa Fe, Argentina involving multi-cultures (the USA and Argentina) and multi-disciplines (film/video and architecture). The conclusion suggests however, that such *re-presentations* posit paradoxical questions.

RE- PRESENTATIONS: MEDIA INQUIRIES REGARDING ARCHITECTURE

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Re-presentaciones:interrogantes de los medios de comunicacion con respecto a la arquitectura

Dentro del ámbito de la práctica de la arquitectura al igual que en lo académico, los medios de comunicación han apoyado la interdependencia mundial y las corrientes tendencias culturales son fuerzas activantes del fenómeno de globalización actual. Las escuelas se han incorporado siempre al diálogo internacional. Estas están ahora internándose aún más en la escena del desarrollo de la conección global de la información.

En este papel propongo un acercamiento teórico y pedagógico en el cual el concepto de migración provee un modelo con el cual investigar la naturaleza transitoria penetrando a las culturas. Esto incluye no sólo el moverse de un mundo físico a otro, sino también el movimiento abstracto desde el llamado mundo *real* al *virtual*. Desde lo que yo llamo re-presentaciones se condujo un experimento en la Universidad Nacional del Litoral de Santa Fé, en Argentina, involucrando culturas múltiples (de EE.UU y Argentina) y disciplinas múltiples (cine/video y arquitectura). Las conclusiones sugieren sin embargo que tales re-presentaciones proponen preguntas paradójicas.

Re- presentations: media inquiries regarding architecture

It is a well known fact that we are engaged in a globalization phenomenon of unprecedented circumstance. Two conditions have contributed to this situation - namely (1) *interdependence*, in which economic and political forces driving the process necessitate business and social stability and dependability; and (2) *transient cultural waves* created to fuel and guarantee the consumption cycles of the consumer driven marketplace. [1] As we previously observed, the " two characteristics of globalization are totally dependent on the power of media to (1) support the immediate and continuous communication flows necessary to run the unfathomably complex political-economic networks and (2) create enough cultural homogeneity to assure product consumption regardless of place. Telecommunication technology is the one ultimate source and force behind contemporary global civilization. **Media is the new vehicle of power**. " [2]

A concern, therefore might be raised regarding the relationship between this newly emerging power as a cultural force and that regarding the profession of architecture as well as the academy. On the one hand we are engaged in the so called "real" world - namely that of multifaceted realities. Confronting "nature's elements" we are forced to deal with the realities of climate, topography, geography and culture. On the other hand we are faced with changing cultures, as well as technologies engaging newly emerging "virtual realities" that further impact our *learning experiences* as well as our lived ones. Consequently, what is our charge as academicians in this rapidly developing world? To what do we present our students moving into the new millennium with, in learning to live within such a shifting milieu?

In a previous paper, I and my colleague addressed what we called a **pedagogy of migration**. [3]

In this paper I wish to expand on this notion further, by emphasizing the theoretical as well as the pragmatic framework in which I situated my studies as part of an experimental studio that I conducted at the Universidad Nacional del Litoral in Santa Fe, Argentina this past autumn (spring in the USA). The studio provided an opportunity for cross cultural migration to occur at two levels.

Firstly, that which was experienced by myself, from the USA, within the environment of Argentina in teaching students outside of my own culture. Secondly, within the studio setting I wished to address a second migration, namely that between disciplines involving architecture and media - in this scenario film/video that utilized the computer for both production and editing purposes.

This agenda required addressing the notion of *re-presentation*. *Re-presentation* provides a moving away from the immediacy of things and experiences by entering another world. In a sense we are alienated from one existence in order to establish a new awareness of that existence through its re-presentation. Consequently, re-presentation [4] provides a kind of migration. *Migration*, likewise, involves moving from one place or condition into another. Existentially, this means an unstable crossing, a "bridging" (Heidegger) [5] that suggests a moving from an anchored condition or culture to a new and potentially destabilizing position.
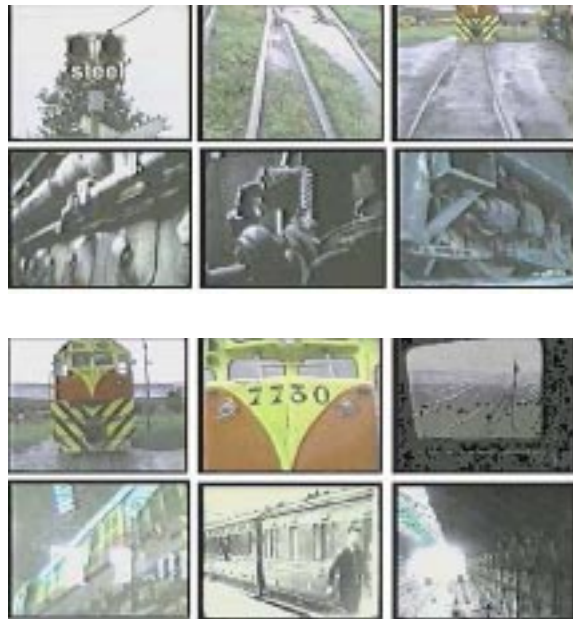

Figure 1 "Steel " An abandoned railroad station (ferrocarril) suggests a nostalgic reverse journey in time and space. The train is momentarily "brought to life" through its re-presentation vis a vis the medium of film, only to metaphorically "die" at the end. Students: Sebastian Adelia, Facundo Berra and Guillermo Mantaras.

Within architecture such a position acknowledges that an exploration at the margins of the discipline is very much a part of the journey. Furthermore, such a position attempts to see architecture as a series of acts, experiences and events that seeks to demolish the boundaries involving itself as a self contained isolated identity. There exists, consequently, the need for an extension of the discipline in "bridging" new territories that becomes a necessary strategy in an era of increasing globalization. Therefore I would like to comment on three conditions: the *media*, the *inter-disciplinary* and the *cross-cultural* in addressing the concept of "bridging" these new territories.

Bridging New Territories

Condition One: the media

Media as the new vehicle of power has acquired global significance and therefore necessitates incorporating disciplines within its domain through migration. In architecture, this means that both practitioners and the academy must not only explore, but also colonize and eventually dwell in such seemingly unfamiliar territory. Two responses might be observed. First, while one may leave the more familiar territory of the "real", inhabiting the "re-presentational" allows us the possibility to observe with greater clarity that so called "real" world. S.I. Hayakawa noted in the now distant modernist period of the 1960's that " our basic knowings are no longer of 'things' and their 'properties,' but of structures...(that) are never directly experienced; they can only be visual*ized* through the construction of (molecular) models...." [6] This suggests that observation retains a kind of intrinsic truth, but only through technological intervention.

However, observation, as an extension of human nature, may itself be problematic. As early as the invention of the telescope the image that re-presents the thing itself has been both a source of fascination and suspicion. [7] The era of mass media and the reproducible, ubiquitous "xerox" copy further suggests part of the problematic condition. Consequently, such a condition also means that "in fact, we have adopted the artificial in place of the real, and learned to make use of this new reality."

[8] Therefore, a cross-migration appears to occur: one, in which we move from the real into a re-produced reality that enables us to see (with presumably greater clarity) new properties and structures of the original reality; the other in which moving into the "artificial" (or virtual) produces a new reality, consequently replacing the original reality.

Condition Two: the interdisciplinary

Within the context of such cross-migration it is inevitable that *inter-disciplinary* conditions should be addressed. Architects, as Nigel Coates once observed, "have remained strangely isolated from these changes (replacement of reality worlds) . The fact is that the way *we live* has changed for good, and architecture must respond with a thorough rethink." [9] Subsequent events within the profession, and now the academy suggest that we are not only rethinking, but also engaging in these new conditions, but often at only a technological, rather than inter-disciplinary level. [10] Within this context the work of John Forbes Nash, Jr. comes to mind . A brilliant mathematician, Mr. Nash developed the foundations of game theory (partly through his complete absorption in tea time games at Princeton) which were subsequently applied to economics and even later, gravitational field theory. Consequently, his theories provided both theoretical as well as an applied knowledge basis within these seemingly disparate disciplines, that were received initially, without recognition, or else with skepticism. [11]

What this suggests, perhaps, is that which Walter Benjamin called a *critical reception of the technological experience*. For Benjamin, critical reception of recent technologies involved radio and the cinema. These employed montage and interruption- thus giving their works a "shock effect" that might awaken new responses to the political conditions of the time on the part of a seemingly disengaged public. [12] The late twentieth century with its own appurtenant technologies invites similar responses. Now, however, such critical receptions reside within the realm of the computer and the cathode ray tube....Or do they?

Condition Three: the cross-cultural

The cross-cultural, engages both literal, as well as analogous situations. In migrating we literally

move from one place, or condition to another. Therefore we are inevitably involved in another culture. Consequently one culture is inhabited and/or co-exists with another. Colonization is another matter. It is about establishing some kind of *remnant* order that is superimposed on the existing order. For the colonizer this clarifies the notion of *assimilation* - a cognitive attempt at framing events as something known that is reframed due to a resistance to conform with the reality of the projection... the *accommodation*.

Consequently, in an era of post-colonization and the rapidly emerging globalization the need for assimiliation and accommodation requires new definitions. How do we respond to new definitions of colonization, regardless of the 19th and early 20th centuries industrial demise and the emergence of information technologies? The bottom line: WalMart exists, just as much as Bill Gates' Windows 98 - throughout the world! What are the new rules that dominate a culture that is increasingly based on both assimilation *and* accommodation? Are Piaget's notions [13] out the window? The pedagogical basis for cross-cultural investigations is a complex yet very necessary one.

To inhabit a new land requires not only *bridging new territories* but also *dwelling*. To dwell means to inhabit through the act of making. In order for the students to engage in a new world - in this case the medium of film/video, required their participation in making, and therefore to engage in the act of dwelling in new territories.

Dwelling in New Territories

I chose to involve the students in a series of filmic investigations utilizing *video* as the medium and the *computer* as the post-production vehicle. The studio involved both theoretical presentations and discussions as well as a practicum. The students were presented with what I called three stratas of inquiry. These involved: (1) Excavations: explorations regarding the sources and issues of *re-presentation* regarding "authenticity" and film theory; (2) Extrusions: the evolution of theories *vis a vis* the development of story (narrativity) and theories of place (set theory); and finally (3) Extensions : typology in film (genre) and the Urbis (the city).

Excavations

What is original and what is not? Consequently, what is the meaning of something that is not original versus the original? Walter Benjamin in his now famous essay addressed this issue through the concept of the "aura." An art object originated as a kind of cultic phenomenon and consequently it retained qualities of authenticity. With the advent of reproduction, in particular photography, the original's "aura" was lost. " One might subsume the eliminated element in the term "aura" and go on to say: that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art." [14] This might be further extended by observing that subsequent reproductions by artists (and others) have themselves acquired their own authenticity through the artist's transformations, and therefore their own "aura." [15]

As reproduction techniques developed within film, the notion of time and motion, of course, entered the scene. Early experimentations with images in motion that began in France, later extended into Russia, and the US. Vertov and Eisenstein, in particular, provided one of cinema's foundations through the concept of montage. [16] For Eisenstein, cinema had the power to evoke strong emotions that could induce in the viewer certain responses. By juxtapositioning images the responses could be, to some extent, manipulated.

Both the concept of the "aura" and "montage" provided the students an opportunity to migrate into new territory, while at the same time anchoring themselves within the milieu of their own Argentinean culture. The studio, divided into several groups, explored the issue by selecting an architectural artifact, which curiously turned out to be a series of historic or abandoned buildings.

For one group, an abandoned railroad station (ferrocarril) suggested a kind of nostalgic journey- a return to the period in which the (now defunct) railroad was a significant element in the economic as well as cultural life of Argentina. It therefore had acquired a kind of "aura." The images suggested through tempo as well as content, a momentary "life" that ultimately, at the end of the very short film, returns to a dead state. In contrast, another group selected an abandoned port facility but

chose, instead of returning to a past scenario, to re-construct the building utilizing many of the techniques that the Russian Constructivists used in their own re-presentations (i.e. montage). This suggested a positivist attitude towards history, in contrast to the classical attitude (cyclical history) that the previous group presented.

Fig.2 An abandoned port building is reconstructed utilizing the imagery of the Russian Constructivist movement. Built of fragmented images, only at the end is the entire "structure" completed - a paradoxical reading of the modernist and post-modern conditions.
Students: Gustavo Weiskal, Martin Calabrese and Guillermo Weiskal.

The subsequent discussions that emerged suggested that for the latter group a post-modern ideology was part of their agenda - namely that based on fragmentation, a non-linear sense of time and history as well as non-closure (no "end.")

On the other hand, the first group's nostalgic journey also suggested elements of irony as well as history as pastiche: elements that can also be found in post-modern sensibilities.

More importantly, for me, however: the "aura" and "montage" themes were not only "inhabited" but transformed into new worlds by students from an entirely different culture.This also suggested the universalizing attributes that the media itself has acquired, in "bridging" between cultures as well as time epochs.

Extrusions

Architecture suggests a kind of permanence. It has spatial structure and definable function. It is part of history. By contrast, the architecture that resides as image (i.e. within the filmic environment as "set") is ephemeral- lasting only as long as the production of the film. Curiously, because of its permanence and its connection with history, the seemingly non material film image is therefore closer to architecture. Yet in its materiality, the "set" is closest to architecture. [17]

Consequently the debate regarding the "authenticity" of architecture as "set" has been a continual one. [18] It even suggests the "roles" that architecture (and set) might play as either subordinate, mutual, or dominant "characters" - as integral parts of the narrative. Consequently set may be seen as constituting five levels or conditions: denotative- the lowest level of narrative weight; punctuational - a claim for attention; as embellishment - in which the imitative aspects of architecture often are portrayed; as artifice - the totally fictitious (as in science fiction) ; and finally as narrative - a total integration of the set as narrative - the story itself.

The latter was investigated by the students through the integration of an abandoned power plant as the narrative itself. Two perceptions of the narrative were explored. The first resided with the video camera in continual motion - a participatory, subjective point of view. Utilizing the computer's software capabilities to provide filter processes, a high degree of pixalation enhanced the notion of a static, synchronic structure transformed into that of a dynamic, diachronic character.

Here the architectural "set" became the actor and therefore the narrative. The second, however, suspended the temporal, acquiring an objective point of view. However, like the haunting images of Atget's Paris, [19] the camera called into question the reality of time and place. Consequently, as with Atget, it constructed it's own universe and therefore also re-established its own subjectivity.

Fig.3 "2 " A powerplant is observed through dual "eyes" -
that of the video camera (a subjective point of view) and
that of the still photograph.(an objective point of view).
 At the same time the plant becomes both a character
and a set that conveys both memories and potentialities.
Students: Arq. Marcelo Molina, Arq. Miguel Vitale and
Mauro Chiarella.

Narrative may also be seen at an even more fundamental level. It provides the basic "structure" within filmic constructs. Stories may have beginnings, middles and endings... but not necessarily in that order. As such, the narrative can observe two possibilities - that of the *bildungsroman* - the "picture novel" and that which may be referred to as the "spatial narrative." The first is linear, and therefore sequential in terms of temporality and story. It also has closure - the ubiquitous "the end."

The second, and more apropos to postmodern thought - the spatial, is non linear, inward moving, often conveying a fragmented view of the world and reality. It suspends time and remains ambiguous regarding closure. In the context with which the studio was conducted (Argentina) , the work of

Jorge Luis Borges provides one model of spatial narrativity and a postmodern sensibility. Here notions of displacement, discontinuity and disjunction are essential elements in the structure

of the works. [20] Similar themes may also be found in the writings of Robbe Grillet and the films of Alan Resnais. [21]

An overlay of the spatial narrative and the *bildungsroman* were explored by one group of students that transformed an inert element (a peso coin) into that of a "character," The study engaged the character through a series of sets that were the city itself ("real" rather than fictitious) .

The humorous events in which the character engages the world were also referential. The notion of sign (and semiotics) that directors such as Jacques Tati [22] utilized, became evident in the work that eventually concludes with the character implying a re-enactment of the entire story. This whimsical re-enactment metaphorically suggests perhaps, the cyclical nature of money and "value" itself.

Figure 4 "Moneyless" A peso becomes the "character "
moving through a series of sets. While implying the
bildungsroman or linear story, the humorous work
ultimately suggests a spatial story- non linear, perhaps
even metaphorically cyclical - like that of the peso and
"value." Students: Valeria Busaniche, Adriana
Sarricchio, Javier Schanz and Roasa Sdrigotti.

For another group of students, however, the suspension of time and place, based on both the works of Borges, as well as the films of Resnais formed the ideological framework. Within this context a series of rooms formed spatial as well as metaphorical layers - both internally as well as externally (one of the house typologies found throughout Santa Fe, Argentina). The group involved four students , each providing his own filmic "point of view." A character (with no particular meaning or purpose) moved within these layers. Contrasting points of view either followed the character or, in the style of Yasujiro Ozu, [23] remained stationary. The only constant that acquired meaning resided in the "set" itself - an authenticity that architecture itself maintains.

Figure 5 " 0'-00''-20 " (20 Segundos) A traditional house in Santa Fe provides a series of layered spaces within which the "character" moves in seemingly meaningless patterns. Recalling the work of Resnais in film as well as Borges's own labyrinthian themes, the study suggests that perhaps the only real meaning resides in the architectural spaces themselves. Students: Frederico Antony, Gonzalo Bonadeo, Marcelo Milone and Ruben Valdemarin.

Extensions

History invites interpretation. On the one hand it is based on a cyclical notion of history - hence the notion of repetition or pattern. Within this context , mimesis emerges.

By nature, humankind utilizes mimesis as one basis for its existence. In architecture this has been codified and extended by the Enlightenment into constructs such as typology. [24]

On the other hand, we are confronted with the positivist notion of history suggesting an ever improving state of the cultural condition (more often, through technology).

Both of these interpretations find their presence in the city - a place based on both convention as well as invention. But it is also a place to become existentially lost. As a detached observer - the *flaneur,* one might experience the city as dream or the city as labyrinth - the mythology of Daedalus and a return into mystery. [25]

In response, and as a final investigation, one group of students explored the concept of the *flaneur* by examining their own city of Santa Fe, Argentina.

Their study, entitled "Los Intocables" ("The Untouchables ") engaged in a series of reflections - windows containing what they called "trapped images." The contents - desires, on the part of an increasingly comsumer driven society also reflected the observers.

Ambiguities began to emerge. What was meant by the untouchable - the merchandise or the consumer ? The images in the window? The window itself? Or, finally the glass in that window ... with its paradoxically "trapped" reflections?

Figure 6 " los Intocables " (The Untouchables)
*Windows in the city provide reflections that form "trapped
images." The observers, however, by participating in
their own disengagements, unlike Benjamin's free willed
Flaneur , suggest their own entrapment as part of a
consuming culture.*
*Students: Frederico Antony, Gonzalo Bonadeo,
Marcelo Milone and Ruben Valdemarin.*

Conclusions

The paradoxical qualities of this last work
provides an overlay regarding some conclusions.

The studio experiences that I participated in
suggested ways of "bridging new territories."
Through the medium of video and film I and my
students explored interdisciplinary and cross-
cultural issues by *re-presenting* our experiences.
Yet re-presentation while engaging, can also be
distancing.

" Ultimately, we are left with a final paradox: Is
re-presentation an interpretive lens which allows
us to understand an otherwise incomprehensible
reality? Or is re-presentation an obscuring veil which
might hinder us from perceiving the inherent order
of the universe? " [26]

Paradoxes are stories inviting inquiry. That was
what motivated Borges to engage so brilliantly in
his endless fascination with the labyrinth, the library
and ultimately, the story. Beginning in Argentina,
his stories ended with the world. This studio
suggests only the beginning of just such a
paradoxical journey.

End Notes

[1] This is further discussed in a previous paper by **Bermudez, Julio and Hermanson, Robert**, "Pedagogical Migrations: Constructing New Worlds Through Media," in *Proceedings of the 1998 ACSA International Conference* (Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture, Washington D.C. , 1998, pp. 66-71)

[2] **Bermudez and Hermanson**, ibid.

[3] **Bermudez and Hermanson**, ibid.

[4] For further discussions on re-presentation see *Via* (Rizzoli, New York, 1988 p. 167)

[5] **Martin Heidegger**, *Poetry, Language, Thought* (Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1971, p. 152)

[6] See **S.I. Hayakawa**, " Domesticating the Invisible" in *The New Landscape in Art and Science* (Paul Theobald and Co., Chicago, 1967, pp. 64-65)

[7] We need only reflect on Galileo's dilemma with the Catholic Church in order to surmise the ideological ramifications of these observed images.

[8] **Nigel Coates**, "Street Signs," in *Design After Modernism*, ed. John Thackara (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1988, p. 98)

[9] **Nigel Coates**, ibid.

[10] Numerous articles appear monthly in the professional journals, such as *Architectural Record* et al. addressing the application of new technologies to the profession. What is curiously missing, however, relates to articles that involve the profession of architecture with other disciplines (other than as client related).

[11] **Simon Singh**, *A beautiful Mind*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998)

[12] Refer to M. Christine Boyer's comments on Benjamin's observations in *Cybercities* , (New York, Princeton Architectural Press, 1996, p. 58-59). Also refer to Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, (New York, 1969)

[13] **Jean Piaget**, *The Principles of Genetic Epistemology* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982). Jean Piaget, *Psychology and Epistemology* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1971)

[14] **Walter Benjamin**, ibid. He states that "One might subsume the eliminated element in the term "aura" and go on to say: that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art."

[15] The work of **Robert Rauchenberg** comes to mind. One of his more famous studies entitled *Persimmon* used xerox copies of Ruben's *Venus at Her Toilet*. The work has since acquired its own "authenticity" as an icon of the contemporary American art scene.

[16] **Eisenstein** utilized the concept of the ideogram (from Japanese hieroglyphs) in which two dissimilar objects such as water and the eye, for example, when read simultaneously provide a new meaning or concept, in this case weeping or sorrow. Extending this further he postulated the concept of dialectic montage- conflicting or dissimilar events that suggested entirely new meanings: thesis versus antithesis equalling synthesis. See Sergei Eisenstein, "Cinmatic Priciples and the Ideogram," in *Film Form*, (Harcourt, Brace, New York, 1949, pp. 28-44)

[17] See **C & M.J. Affron**, "Set Theory," in *Sets in Motion* (Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 1995 p. 32)

[18] What began initially as a relatively immaterial condition later developed into elaborate constructs that were complete fabrications such as we observe in the German Expressionist period and later extended to the American scene in Hollywood. With the advent of neo-realism in Italy at the end of WW II, the notion of utilizing "real" architecture and the city as a background for the drama emerged. The oscillation between the real and the fabricated continues even today, as the use of computer generated sets increasingly inhabits the film industry, but also advertising and other media related activities.

[19] See *Atget Paris* , ed. **Laue Beaumont-Maillet** (Hazan, Paris)

[20] Refer to **Jorge Luis Borges** numerous short stories such as " In the Garden of Forking Paths," " The Library of Babel," and " The Circular Ruin," in *Labyrinths: selected stories & others writings Jorge Luis Borges*, ed. Donald .A. Yates & James E. Irby; with a preface by Andr• Maurois (Modern Library, New York, 1983)

[21] See the film *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961) that creates a placeless, timeless environment in which the characters move in and out of the sets without any sense of purpose or direction.

[22] The French film director **Jacques Tat**i utilized semiotic theory in his films such as *Playtime* (1967)and *Mon oncle*(1958), both literally as well as through analogy.

[23] **Yasujiro Ozu**, representing traditional Japanese values utilized off-screen space in many of his films. The camera, for example, remains stationary as the characters move in and out of the scene. This preoccupation with empty space is very much a part of the Zen concept known as *ma* - in which spatial emptiness, in the Western tradition, is, for the Eastern mind, filled with meaning and purpose. See David A. Cook, *A History of Narrative Film*, (W.W. Norton & Company, New York, 1981, pp. 585-590)

[24] **Genres** refer to the equivalent of architectural typologies. One may observe so called "pure" genres in the form of the Western (*Stagecoach)* , Science Fiction (*Invasion of the Body Snatchers*), *Film Noir*, Horror, Romance, etc. However, they also form hybrids- i.e. graftings of the initial growths: *2001*, *Blade Runner*, *Star Wars* et al.

[25] **Nadir Lahiji** discusses the *flaneur* as related to the writings of Walter Benjamin. For him the *flaneur* is removed from the city, observing it but not engaging with it. It (the city) thus becomes a "paved solitude" - a metaphor for the modern city with its purposefulness, yet one in which solitude exists- the existential alienation of the poet who in a detached manner, sees the reality of the modern condition. See Nadir Lahiji, " The Flaneur in the Paved Solitude of the City," in *Via* (Rizzoli, New York, 1988, pp. 121-127)

[26] *Via*, p. 167