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DOCUMENT A

The illusion of motion was barely relevant. Perhaps it wasn't a movie I was creating so much as a scroll, a delicate bit of papyrus that feared discovery. Veterans of the film industry would swear the whole thing pre-dated Edison's kinetoscope. My answer to them is simple. It takes centuries to invent the
5 primitive.

Glenn Yost opened the door. His long tired head leaned to the left and the crazed eye flared. I imagined that in some green diamond-shaped pasture of his mind the bases were loaded and a big eager rookie was striding to the plate, man-
10 mountain with heavy lumber, a golden eater of cereal. Glenn lived in a two-story white frame house on a street of very old houses, almost all white, several needing paint. He led me downstairs to the basement, where his son was sprawled in a corner watching a Kirk Douglas western on TV.

"The wife is using the big set," Glenn said. "I thought we'd be quieter down here but I see the creature beat us to it."

15 "The All-Seeing Eye," Bud said.

"It's fine with me. I wanted to talk to Bud anyway."

"Let's sit down."

"What do you do for a living, Glenn?"

"I'm partners in a lumber yard."

20 "How's business?"

"Retirement's not exactly looming on the horizon."

"That's really neither here nor there. My question I mean. I was just being polite, leading into the real subject of my visit. Which is: would you be at all interested in appearing in the thing I plan to shoot in the area in the next week or so? It
25 wouldn't take more than a couple of hours of your time. All you have to do is read some lines before the camera. Actually read from a script, a piece of paper. No memory work, no preparation. Just showing up and reading. I know it doesn't sound like the most intriguing thing in the world, especially since I can't pay you a dime, but you wouldn't be losing more than a couple of hours' time and maybe
30 you'd have some fun. I know one thing. You'd be doing me a tremendous, a really great favor. Bud, how old are you?"

"Be sixteen in three months."

"You too," I said. "A couple of hours."

"I don't know anything about reading lines," Glenn said.

35 "Everything out of your mouth is a line," Bud said. "You never mean anything. He never means anything. He tells people he was in the submarine paratroopers during the war. They used to bail out of submarines. They'd drop up instead of down."

"All right, wise ass."

40 "How old are you, Glenn, if you don't mind my asking?"

"I guess I'm forty-seven."

"Aside from jumping out of submarines, did you actually serve in World War II?"

"He was in the Bataan death march," Bud said.

Glenn went upstairs for some beer and then we watched the movie until it ended
45 about an hour later. I loved the landscapes, the sense of near equation called forth by man and space, the cowboy facing silent hills; there it was, the true subject of film, space itself, how to arrange it and people it, time hung in a

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desert window, how to win out over sand and bone. (It's just a cowboy picture, I reminded myself.) Owney Pine came down the stairs then, short and slightly
50 bowlegged, ample in his width, roundhead, crewcut, ferrying across the floor now and docking with a bump, belly opening and automobiles pouring out.

In the morning I took my camera over to the hotel and told the desk clerk I wanted the same room, indefinitely this time. Traces of sneeze lingered in his mustache. He looked at my camera, wondered whether or not to comment, and
55 then simply pushed the key across the desk.

Don DeLillo, *Americana*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971 (reprint: London & New York: Penguin Books, 1989)

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DOCUMENT B

Ever since the camera learned the trick of manifolding in swift succession, the picture-film has been a mechanical product, full of artificiality and even artfulness, but denied the breath and pulse of true art. It has been a mere medium of reproduction of the external photography, however sumptuous some
5 of its theatrical or scenic effects, however fantastic and ingenious some of its mechanical and optical possibilities. But Art fled the lens which only the concrete reality or the constructed sham would enter. Moving pictures – movies – the populace pierced instinctively through all pretenses and named them for what they were.

10 A true art-form for the film had not yet been invented or evolved. It had not yet found its true expression or convention. It was still the lively daughter of dead photography. A mock-world, the phantasm of the actual, projected itself upon the screen in all the tones of black and white and seared itself upon our aching retinæ. It mimicked the photograph, the stage, the painted picture, the formal
15 tableau.

But at last the revolution of this world of light and shadow has begun. The creative element has entered it. The smug phantoms, the gorgeous settings, the smirking dolls with bared teeth and ox-like eyes, the creased cavaliers, prettified puppies and exotic sirens are threatened in their easy monopoly of this domain.
20 The background which to them had been a mere foil for their mountings, oglings and struttings, has become alive. The artist has slipped into this crude phantasmagoria and begun to create. He has seized upon unconjectured, aesthetic, dramatic and optical possibilities. Space – hitherto considered and treated as something dead and static, a mere inert screen or frame, often of no
25 more significance than the painted balustrade-background at the village photographer's – has been smitten into life, into movement and conscious expression. A fourth dimension has begun to evolve out of this photographic cosmos.

The sixth sense of man, his feeling for space or room – his *Raumgefühl* – has
30 been awakened and given a new incentive. Space has been given a voice. It has become a presence. It moves and operates by its distances and by its masses, static yet instinct with the expression of motion; it speaks with forms and with color-value. It has taken on something dynamic and daemonic, demanding not only attention but tribute from the soul. It has become an obedient genius in
35 league with the moods and dreams and emotions of the artist bent on forcing his will upon the audience.

This art, as I have already implied, is not a reflection of reality but a transformation of it: it may even be a distortion of it. The film is not to be a mere reproduction of life and the outer world, but a sublimation and adumbration of it.

40 The frozen and rigid forms and values of the outer and apparent world to which the lens and the sensitized celluloid-strip are so relentlessly faithful, are broken up, dissolved and endowed with a new role. They are no longer a dead, two-dimensional background for the animate walking, kissing, dancing, murdering, pantomimes and automata, but expressive presences, immanent forces that act
45 not, but react and enact.

They claim and exercise the right to share in the dumb action of the living. The frown of a tower, the scowl of a sinister alley, the pride and serenity of a white

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peak, the hypnotic draught of a straight road vanishing to a point – these exert their influences and express their natures; their essences flow over the scene and blend with the action. A symphony arises between the organic and the inorganic worlds and the lens peers behind inscrutable veils. The human imagination is fructified and begins to react, willingly or unwillingly. A new magic ensues, a new mystery possesses us.

Herman G. Scheffauer, "The Vivifying of Space," *The Freeman* (New York), Nov. 24 – Dec. 1, 1920. In Lewis Jacobs ed. *Introduction to the Art of the Movies: An Anthology of Ideas on the Nature of Movie Art*. New York: The Noonday Press, 1960; 76-78.

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DOCUMENT C



Still of Gloria Swanson in *Sunset Boulevard* (Billy Wilder, 1950, Paramount Picture). <http://www.imdb.com/media/rm4021925376/nm0841797>