Towards an Urban Narrative Layers Approach to Decipher the Language of City Films

François Penz, University of Cambridge

Abstract
In his article “Towards an Urban Narrative Layers Approach to Decipher the Language of City Films” François Penz investigates how film narratives may provide us with the perceptual tools to grasp complex urban phenomena. He posits that, in order to elicit the mechanisms that make up the projected image of city films, new analytical tools need to be devised. Penz demonstrates that the cinematic image is composed of a succession of narrative layers and suggests that the eye of the unsuspecting film spectator encounters a succession of narrative layers recomposed seamlessly into a single movie image on the screen. Penz identifies four narrative layers: the story and history of the buildings, the narratives and points of view of the city planning process, the tales and personal stories embodied by the passers-by, and the narrative intentions of the film itself. Penz uses his own movie-making experiments to test the narrative layers hypothesis concentrating on observational cinema.

Recommended Citation

This text has been double-blind peer reviewed by 2+1 experts in the field.

The above text, published by Purdue University Press ©Purdue University, has been downloaded 1792 times as of 01/22/19.