

It serves as both an acknowledgement of her contributions to cinema and a testament to the rewards of finding one's own way amid hardships.

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Making Worlds: Affect and Collectivity in Contemporary European Cinema by Claudia Breger

How does contemporary cinema apprehend and reimagine the sense of catastrophe that overwhelms the present? *Making Worlds* derives its critical urgency from the rhetoric of crisis and pervasive negativity in politics and the public realm. Claudia Breger's timely study frames cinema's intervention in "collective closures"—a term she employs to signal the closure of geopolitical borders accompanied by the foreclosure of global solidarity through mobilizations of negative affects like hate and fear.

Making Worlds assembles works of European art cinema from the last two decades alongside modernist film precedents, continental philosophy, and affect theory (especially that of Massumi and Berlant). Since affects circulate beyond the level of the individual, Breger turns to affect as a way of experiencing a world collectivity. In doing so, Breger argues that contemporary cinema's affective narratives and sensory addresses to spectators open up possibilities for collectively imagining, inhabiting, and remaking the world against the widespread recourse to "political hatred." Her readings of a wide-ranging set of films demonstrate how complex affects are instrumentalized in sociopolitical controversies around borders and migration, economic precarity, and right-wing populism. She argues that contemporary cinema can reconfigure belonging and resistance within the European and global contexts where conflicts around these issues have only intensified.

Making Worlds reframes contemporary films as "open worlds with porous boundaries" (11) against the backdrop of a Europe marked by fortified borders, deadly migration regimes, neoliberal austerity, and authoritarian resurgences. The "European" of the title is not circumscribed by filmmakers' nationalities, as instead Breger defamiliarizes Europe as a zone of precarious mobility and fraught contact.

It is with this aim that she studies films that affectively produce two modes of collectivity in Europe today: communal forms of intercultural solidarity amid displacement and exile as well as group attachments to structures of violence and exclusion. Breger's focus on Europe's ambivalent hospitality aligns itself with recent scholarship that reorients and politicizes the category of European cinema by highlighting "interzones" (Randall Halle), crises of ethnicity (Ipek A. Celik), and "precarious intimacies" (Beverly Weber and Maria Stehle). By attending to conflicting affects within such crises of collectivity, Breger demonstrates that "dismantling the imagined coherence of fascist, racist, and fundamentalist worldviews requires engaging their affective underpinnings in detail" (17).

Breger's methodological framework is inspired by Bruno Latour's actor-network theory, which provides a robust descriptive vocabulary for mapping the filmic traffic of affects, gestures, and implicated histories across local, continental, and global scales. Breger follows Latour's claim that agency is fundamentally "nonsovereign" and takes place between human and nonhuman actors that reconfigure collective worlds. This turn to agency shifts emphasis from postmodern critiques of representation to what Breger sees as a twenty-first-century "aesthetics of assembly." She underscores how contemporary films assemble "real-world materials"—such as insertions of documentary footage or visual references to present-day political struggles—to elicit specific affective responses in their reception. Breger draws on Latour to rethink the affordances of fictional films, claiming that cinema's "fictional worlds are never imaginatively closed and autonomous but remain bound to the life worlds surrounding them" (34).

Her methodological focus on agency further clarifies how film's nonhuman elements produce specific affective states that conjoin their "noticeably fictional but not impossible" (32) plots to their spectators' political realities. For instance, Breger repeatedly shows how the camera's position has the ability to construct distinctive shots that impart collective affective states, such as shared vulnerability. In doing so, Breger conceives filmmaking and spectatorship as part of an open-ended process of "affective worldmaking" across the porous bounds of real-world conflicts and their fictional portrayal in contemporary cinema.

Breger's first chapter examines Fatih Akin's *Auf der anderen Seite* (*The Edge of Heaven*, 2007) and Asghar Farhadi's *Jodái-e Nadér az Simín* (*A Separation*, 2011), focusing on how each film probes the affective conflicts that arise when cultural differences are brought into proximate contact. Breger addresses Akin's labyrinthine narrative, which skips

between Germany and Turkey, by placing it within the charged, post-9/11 historical context that was marked by xenophobic hatred and fear as well as by affective debates on the status of Islam and racialized minorities in Europe. *The Edge of Heaven*, she argues, affirms cosmopolitan openness, given how it insists on crossing the cultural divisions in the Turkish-German milieu that it explores. Breger maintains that Akin conveys transnational contact through his use of “foregrounded narration”—the technique of actively making visible structural and technical dimensions of a narrative—which she characterizes as “Akin’s post-Brechtian modulation of distance and intimacy” (42).

Breger’s reevaluation of Brecht also guides her reading of *A Separation*. In the case of Farhadi’s film, Breger illustrates how Mahmoud Kalari’s cinematography affectively constructs the film’s social divisions between a secular middle-class Iranian family on the verge of divorce and emigration and a poor devout Muslim woman that the family employs as a caretaker. The sharp juxtaposition of distanced and intimate camerawork compels a multisensory engagement with the family’s vulnerable world that is unmade and reoriented across the collective bounds of religion and class. Breger concludes that the focus in Akin’s and Farhadi’s films on direct confrontations through the affective conflicts produced by encounters across cultural differences exemplifies how modes of collectivity can be cinematically assembled and reimagined.

Where, in her first chapter, Breger takes note of Akin’s and Farhadi’s uses of Brechtian techniques, she then takes a chronological step backward, so to speak. In her second chapter, Breger turns to two canonically Brechtian films, Godard’s *Vivre sa vie (My Life to Live)*, 1962 and Fassbinder’s *Katzelmacher* (1969), in order to historicize the legacies of modernism in contemporary cinema. Breger aims to “unsettle the oppositional historical narrative according to which twenty-first century attempts at imagining shared worlds in more affirmative terms reversed the critique of collectivity—as saturated with domination and violence—developed by modernist countercultural cinema” (76). As Breger argues, Godard’s and Fassbinder’s critiques of collectivity rely on Brechtian modes of distancing and foregrounded narration. Yet she insists that the Brechtian techniques of “defamiliarization” (*Verfremdungseffekt*), such as static cinematography and nontheatrical, distanced acting, are too often taken to be devoid of affect and sensation. She argues instead that both directors utilize Brechtian devices to create “messy affectscapes” that critique collectivity while highlighting affective attachments to group violence.

In *Katzelmacher*, for instance, Breger interprets the stationary frontal camera shots and the actors’ understated, severe gestures not as composing a distanced tableau of alienation, as the film’s uses of these techniques are most commonly interpreted, but rather as examples of the manner in which Fassbinder employs Brechtian devices helps to assemble the film’s complex dramaturgy of volatile social relations exemplified by the central group of postwar German friends. The tension in their relationships becomes increasingly hostile upon the arrival of Jorgos, the Greek guest worker played by Fassbinder himself. Fassbinder’s Brechtian techniques thus serve to draw out the film’s messy affect, as he is able to highlight the cruelty and dependency that binds the friends as well as to present their responses of either hatred or tenderness toward Jorgos. By analyzing how acts of aggression and care reconfigure the group of friends, Breger gestures toward affect’s transformative agency. “If we let ourselves be affected” by the shifting relations of collectivity in *Katzelmacher*, Breger argues, “we might more fully align with its utopian orientation” (111).

Breger’s third and fourth chapters thematize two developments in contemporary European art cinema: reinventions of genre and uses of realism, both of which employ documentary elements in order to inflect their fictional narratives with real-world conflicts. Breger argues that films that rely on conventions of either genre or realism to structure affective encounters across cultural and geopolitical borders reorganize the way that collectivity is imagined. In Breger’s account, genre conventions, precisely due to their simplicity, have the ability to build affectively complex worlds. She reasons that genres’ familiar visual and narrative tropes can condense otherwise messy affects and channel convoluted sociopolitical conflicts into intelligible narrative structures.

Chapter 3 explores genre conventions in Fatih Akin’s Western-inspired *The Cut* (2014) alongside Aki Kaurismäki’s fairytale-like “Refugee Trilogy” series (2011–). *The Cut*, Akin’s controversial film about the Armenian Genocide, centers on Nazareth, an exiled Armenian. Berger argues that Akin employs the conventions of the Western strategically to induce Turkish audiences to accept the overall conceit of the film and its challenging story beyond ethnic and ideological divides. In this chapter, Breger continues to draw links to the post-Brechtian genealogy of her prior chapters, here extending her analysis toward genre conventions. For instance, she argues that Akin’s use of wide screen along with the spatially distanced shots of Nazareth in barren, Western-style landscapes serve to forge an affective connection with the film’s historical circumstances of persecution and exile.

In chapter 4, Breger examines three films that are grounded in a realist aesthetic: Michael Haneke's *Das weiße Band* (*The White Ribbon*, 2009), Gianfranco Rosi's *Fuocoammare* (*Fire at Sea*, 2016), and Alejandro González Iñárritu's *Biutiful* (2010). In her approach to these films, she once again focuses on the simultaneity of group violence and collective solidarity. In her analysis of the documentary *Fire at Sea*, for example, Breger notes how Rosi carefully presents two separate worlds that exist in parallel to each other on the Italian island of Lampedusa. The film aesthetically isolates the images and narrative of the island locals, affected by geographic isolation and economic precarity, from those that depict the African migrants who, after having crossed the Mediterranean, are held in a facility and barred from entering Europe. Rosi leaves the connections between the two groups unredeemed. Breger contends that this invites spectators to sense how the locals and the migrants are both affected by the unequal distribution of what is, in essence, their shared vulnerability. In so doing, she argues, the film reimagines the ethical stakes of inhabiting the world collectively.

Breger's epilogue provides an analysis of Deniz Gamze Ergüven's *Mustang* (2015), which centers around the struggle of five orphaned sisters against the violent patriarchal customs of their adopted family in rural Turkey. Breger sees Ergüven's drama as a model of fictional collectivity that inflects ongoing political conflicts. In her interpretation of *Mustang*, she shows how Ergüven embeds coded visual references to the Gezi Park protests of 2013 within the five sisters' bodily gestures of solidarity and collective resistance, thus opening the film's fictional world to recent political events. This concluding analysis once again reiterates the affective modes by which cinema assembles collectivity amid sociopolitical conflicts.

Breger's commitment to political openness, affective plurality, and the collective worldmaking possibilities of film position her study as a vital contribution to and beyond the field of European cinema. *Making Worlds* is crucial for anyone attempting to reimagine how contemporary film and media can advance the collective responsibility of building and belonging to a common world in the face of the divisive political negativity that overwhelms the present.

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Everyday Movies: Portable Film Projectors and the Transformation of American Culture by Haidee Watson

In the 1970s and early 1980s, when the academic discipline of film studies was still young, budding scholars readily took to making the grandest claims for motion pictures. In 1975, Robert Sklar argued in *Movie-Made America*, his pioneering study of movies and American culture, that the film industry was distinct from other major industries because it was created by people who were at the margins, not the center, of existing social and cultural institutions. Stephen Heath, one of the foremost proponents of "apparatus" theory, suggested in 1981 in *Questions of Cinema* that the cinema was an institution uniquely adept at forming and fixing its spectator-subject in order to maintain capitalist ideology. And, of course, Laura Mulvey famously suggested that destroying the "male gaze" of classical Hollywood cinema was necessary to liberating motion pictures, and perhaps society itself, from patriarchal control.

For these scholars, the cinema was a powerful but rare thing: an apparatus reliant on a darkened theater; a projected, larger-than-life image; and an audience held rapt before the screen. In their view, the cinema was designed to be set apart from everyday life and yet, somehow, encapsulate all of it, making movies, a popular art form, attractive to ideologues and aesthetes alike.

Haidee Wasson's smart, readable, and well-timed book *Everyday Movies: Portable Film Projectors and the Transformation of American Culture* is the latest in a series of books, edited collections, and journal articles to underscore that what scholars thought the cinema *was* in the early years of the discipline was in fact just a sliver of its scale and reach. For every ideologically laden John Ford film, there were a dozen films made by the Ford Motor Company, each pushing corporate America's positions on capitalism and labor. If classical Hollywood films encouraged audiences to adhere to social and behavioral codes, educational films one-upped them by ensuring that their messages were more direct—and, in many situations, required viewing for audiences of impressionable young people. These "other" cinemas of churches, schools, factories, military bases, and fairgrounds, which the motion-picture trade magazines grouped under the heading of "nontheatrical film venues," were just as significant as commercial, and theatrical, movies—if not more so.

Wasson situates her study of the nontheatrical (a term she rejects because she believes it negatively frames the