

Bibliotekarstudentens nettleksikon om litteratur og medier

Av Helge Ridderstrøm (førsteamanuensis ved OsloMet – storbyuniversitetet)

Sist oppdatert 30.11.23

Om leksikonet: https://www.litteraturogmedieleksikon.no/gallery/om_leksikonet.pdf

Gåtefilm

(_film, _sjanger) Engelsk: “puzzle film”. Også kalt “mind-game film”. En film der det er “perplexing patterns of story time and causality, trusting that viewers will search for clues by rewatching the movie” (Bordwell og Thompson 2007 s. 85). Seeren strever med å forklare det tilsynelatende uforklarlige i filmen. Det er fortellemåten som tydeligst definerer sjangeren.

Slike filmer “has been called “forking-path narratives” (David Bordwell), “multiple draft narratives” (Edward Branigan), “puzzle films” (Warren Buckland), “mind-game films” (Elsaesser), or, finally, “complex or modular narratives” (Janet Staiger), ranging from Christopher Nolan’s *Memento* (2000) via *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (Michel Gondry, 2004) to *Oldboy* (Park Chan-wook, 2004) and beyond.” (Henry M. Taylor i <http://cineaction.ca/issue86sample.htm>; lesedato 22.03.13)

Et tidlig eksempel på en gåtefilm er amerikaneren Robert Altmans *Images* (1972). Den kvinnelige hovedpersonen Cathryn har en mental lidelse (schizofreni?) som får henne til å se avdøde personer og andre personer som fysisk ikke er til stede. I løpet av handlingen pusler noen av personene et puslespill fra hennes barndom, et puslespill som ingen vet hvordan skal se ut når det er ferdig. Puslespillet antyder noen “sammenhenger” i det gåtefulle som Cathryn opplever, men gir ingen klare svar.

“[O]ne overriding common feature of mind-game films is a delight in disorienting or misleading spectators (besides carefully hidden or altogether withheld information, there are the frequent plot twists and trick endings). Another feature is that spectators on the whole do not mind being “played with”: on the contrary, they rise to the challenge. The fact that audiences are set conundrums, or are sprung “traps for mind and eye,” that they are [...] confronted with odd objects or puzzling details that do not “add up” – even though the overall experience “makes sense” – would indicate we are dealing with a phenomenon that spectators recognize as relevant to their own worlds.” (Thomas Elsaesser i Buckland 2009 s. 15-16) Seeren av gåtefilmer leter etter “subtle shifts in intonation and gesture and facial

expression – scrutinizes the action on the screen, looking for clues ...” (Thomas Elsaesser i Buckland 2009 s. 34).

Kjennetegn ved gåtefilmer:

“1 A protagonist participates in, or is witness to, events whose meaning or consequences escape him: along with him, the film asks: what exactly has happened? There is a suspension of cause and effect, if not an outright reversal of linear progression (*Memento*, *Donnie Darko*, *Lost Highway*).

2 A protagonist seems deluded or mistaken about the difference between reality and his/her imagination, but rather than this inner world becoming a clearly marked “subjective” point of view of a character (as in the European art film), there is no perceptible difference either in the visual register or in terms of verisimilitude, between real and imagined, real and simulated, real and manipulated. [...] films like *The Matrix*, *Dark City* (1998), and *The Truman Show* [...]

3 A protagonist has a friend, mentor, or companion who turns out to be imagined (*Fight Club*, *A Beautiful Mind*, *Donnie Darko*, *Lost Highway*).

4 A protagonist has to ask himself: “who am I and what is my reality?” (the Philip K. Dick adaptations *Blade Runner* [1982], *Total Recall* [1990], *Paycheck* and *Minority Report* [2002]), and even “am I still alive or already dead” (*Angel Heart* [1987], *Jacob’s Ladder* [1990], *The Sixth Sense*, *The Others*).

5 Not only is the hero unable to distinguish between different worlds: he or she is often not even aware that there might be parallel universes, and neither is the audience – until a moment in the film when it turns out that the narrative and plot have been based on a mistaken cognitive or perceptual premise (*Fight Club*, *The Sixth Sense*, *A Beautiful Mind*). The point in the story at which it undergoes such drastic revision, where the ground is pulled from under the audience’s feet, is commented on by one of the fans as follows: “You want that big, juicy, brain-blasting, oh-my-god-everything-has-changed feeling,” to which another blogger replied: “Yes – but the ‘oh-my-god-everything-has-changed’ feeling in *The Sixth Sense* is reinforced by the ‘gotcha’ feeling of replayed scenes from earlier in the movie that you now understand differently. The viewer gets to have it both ways: have the oh-my-god feeling and watch the protagonist experience it too.”

6 A character is persuaded by his – or more often, her – family, friends, or the community that she is deluded about the existence or disappearance, usually of a child – a self-delusion brought upon by trauma, excessive grief, or other emotional disturbance. He/she insists on maintaining this delusion against all odds, and is usually proven right, by uncovering a conspiracy, either of a very sophisticated, diabolical kind, or on the contrary, consisting of a very “scientific,” bureaucratic, or routine “test” or “measure” ordered by the powers that be (*Minority Report*, *The*

Forgotten [2004], *The Village* [2004], *Flight Plan* [2005]).” (Thomas Elsaesser i Buckland 2009 s. 17-18)

“Hermeneutic Play and Interpretive Multiplicity [...] Impossible puzzle films do not allow a single interpretive resolution to achieve full closure; rather, they appear to be designed to keep viewers in a loop of sense-making. In so doing, they evoke a perpetual sense of “cognitive dissonance” that encourages an enduring search for a satisfying resolution or a clear meaningfulness. This invites viewers to repeatedly try out different interpretations, frames of knowledge, analytical strategies, and critical competences, without necessarily settling on a single outcome. This prolonged interpretive quest, we hypothesize, can maintain a distinct *interpretive multiplicity* that viewers may appreciate for various reasons. First of all, this lack of closure and interpretive hierarchy may be deemed *liberating*. In terms of engaging with fiction, impossible puzzle films offer an appeasing alternative to the closed, teleological cause-and-effect logic of classical film narratives.” (Ian Christie and Annie van den Oever i <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/j.ctv5rf6vf.8.pdf>; lesedato 29.09.21)

“Mind-game films and other complex narratives have been a prominent phenomenon of the cinematic landscape during the period 1990-2010, when films like *The Sixth Sense*, *Memento*, *Fight Club* and *Source Code* became critical and commercial successes, often acquiring a cult status with audiences. With their multiple story lines, unreliable narrators, ambiguous twist endings, and paradoxical worlds, these films challenge traditional ways of narrative comprehension and in many cases require and reward multiple viewings. [...] Mind-game films tell stories about crises between body, mind and world, and about embodied forms of knowing and subjective ways of being-in-the-world. [...] The puzzling effect generated by these films stems from a conflict between what we think and what we experience, between what we know and what we feel to be true, and between what we see and what we sense.” (<https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/making-sense-of-mind-game-films-9781501337048/>; lesedato 20.05.21)

Elsaesser hevder at det er “twelve key features of mind-game films: (1) multiple universes, (2) multiple temporalities, (3) causality between coincidence and conjunction, (4) feedback: looped and retroactive causalities, (5) mise-en-abyme constructions, (6) the observer as part of the observed, (7) living with contradictions, (8) imaginary resolutions no longer dissolve real contradictions, (9) antagonistic mutuality under conditions of distributed agency, (10) agency – with the self, against the self, (11) time travel films as black boxes and (12) the mind-game film as pharmakon. Ultimately, mind-game films amplify ontological instability and dismantle both the sovereign subject and its antidote, the divided self of modern subjectivity, in view of accepting more complex but also self-contradictory, more limited but also more extended forms of agency. [...] the pharmakon is the very figure of similarity and difference, active and passive, affirmation and critique as not binary oppositions, but relationalities, which makes

the pharmakon the movement, the site, and the play for the production of difference” (Elsaesser 2017).

“Characteristics of the mind-game films include a diegetic world that looks both realistic and has a high degree of verisimilitude, but turns out to consist of several parallel, disjunctive and potentially incompatible universes. Films also feature multiple timelines, either quite separate from each other, or connected by inverted figure-of-eight loops in the manner of a Möbius strip. Narrators are a priori unreliable, either by design and with intent to deceive, or because they are themselves deceived. Such protagonists can appear to be rationally motivated agents but in the course of the action reveal themselves to have a mental condition or a psychic disorder, which, however, is not initially revealed to the audience, often obliging the spectator to retroactively revise the premises and assumptions about the reality status of the world depicted. [...] they are traditionally formulated around the reality of other minds, the nature of perception and human consciousness, of the difference between simulacrum and fake” (Elsaesser 2017).

“[P]uzzle films embrace nonlinearity, time loops, and fragmented spatio-temporal reality. These films blur the boundaries between different levels of reality, are riddled with gaps, deception, labyrinthine structures, ambiguity, and overt coincidences. They are populated with characters who are schizophrenic, lose their memory, are unreliable narrators, or are dead (but without us – or them – realizing).” (Warren Buckland i Buckland 2009 s. 6) *Fight Clubs* hovedperson har blitt oppfattet som en person som lider av langt framskreden schizofreni, samtidig som han har et behov for å bevise at han fortsatt eksisterer (Hamus-Vallée 2001 s. 163).

“A puzzle implies that a situation is deliberately set up to have gaps or missing pieces, to be counter-intuitive or pose an enigma, so that the task is to complete the design, recognize the underlying pattern or resolve the enigma: in other words, the term puzzle film already assumes as given what might actually be the key stake at issue, namely whether we are dealing with a puzzle that has a solution, in contrast to, perhaps, a film posing a dilemma, for which there is no solution as such, and which can only be probed. [...] figuring out the underlying structure of such a puzzling or bewildering narrative does [...] have its own genuinely aesthetic rewards, even revealing the beauty of simple designs generating complexity – as does mathematics” (Elsaesser 2017).

“[T]he mind-game film questions not only the ‘can-do’ posture of the action hero of classical Hollywood, but also the very notion of a ‘fully self-present’, the autonomous individual, and thus re-appraises major tenets of Western philosophy as well as contemporary identity politics. An entire critique of identity, subjectivity and intersubjectivity can be developed around films that develop more ‘distributed’ forms of agency’, e.g. network films like *Short Cuts* or *Magnolia*, and more problematic ones like *Babel*, *Time Code* or *Crash*, while *Being John Malkovich* and

Donnie Darko allow for a more complicated version of self-presence as schizo-presence. [...] whereas classical Hollywood sees the world as a set of problems, to which one applies solutions, the mind-game film is more likely to see the world as full of dilemmas, which one can explore and probe, but to which one cannot apply or even invent solutions, except by misunderstanding the nature of the problem or dilemma. The more appropriate response is to start ‘living with contradiction’, that is, by embracing them as generative and productive. [...] [filmene] invite a problem-solving mindset, but are actually about dilemmas that have no obvious solution, thus inducing the sort of onto-epistemological vertigo that one associates with the mind-game film. [...] a meta-cinema of prototypes, simultaneously unfinished and in progress, always already suffused with affective, projective and otherwise doubled and mirrored states of body and mind.” (Elsaesser 2017).

“Gaps and inferences come in many shapes and sizes. There are: temporary and permanent; flaunted and suppressed; diffused and focused gaps. These prompt the spectator to generate curiosity and suspense inferences; inferences with different levels of probability; inferences that are either exclusive or nonexclusive” (Warren Buckland i Buckland 2009 s. 12). “[T]he gaps are designed to wean viewers from their habitual, virtually automatic habits of perception learned from years of watching traditional narrative films. [...] expects viewers to do considerably more interpretative work than traditional narrative films require.” (Marshall Deutelbaum i Buckland 2009 s. 208)

“Mise-en-abyme construction and inside out narrative architecture[:] While ‘positive feedback’, i.e. the amplification of an effect by its own influence on the process which gives rise to it, is the crucial mechanism of retroaction at the level of causality and temporality, there are other ways in which such self-referential but also self-empowering (or ‘bootstrapping’) tropes or processes can be put in play. One that situates itself on the visual-perceptual level can be a similarly disorienting factor by inducing not only perceptual groundlessness, but also a kind of ontological vertigo. [...] the mirroring and doubling process better known as mise-en-abyme. In mind-game films, characters are often either literally in front of mirrors, which reflect mirrors and thus create endless reduplication, or the self-mirroring mise-en-abyme becomes one of the structuring principles of the various narrative moves and countermoves.” (Elsaesser 2017)

Filmen *Reality* (2014; regisseret av Quentin Dupieux) “constructs a mise-en-abyme in which different story levels are contained in one another, offering a continuous paradox; and *Synecdoche, New York* [2008; regisseret av Charlie Kaufman] plays with another kind of mise-en-abyme, one that is implied through a constantly duplicating simulacrum: as protagonist Caden wants to direct a play that honestly and realistically captures his real, mundane life, he finds that his play must also include him making the play, which then needs to include a play about him making that play – a logic that ultimately points toward a potentially infinite recursion of

plays within plays within plays.” (Ian Christie and Annie van den Oever i <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/j.ctv5rf6vf.8.pdf>; lesedato 29.09.21)

Tilskueren blir lurt av regissørens dramaturgiske virkemidler, og kan ikke si med sikkerhet hva som er sant og usant, ekte og uekte, fornuftig eller sykdom og galskap. Filmsjangeren skaper forvirring og usikkerhet. Seeren lures/manipuleres, men “ikke på det optiske nivået, som f.eks. gjennom bruk av computerteknologi og spesialeffekter, snarere er det en psykologisk-emosjonell manipulasjon gjennom nye formidlingskonvensjoner [som] overskrider de vanlige grensene mellom mainstream, independent, asiatick og europeisk auteur-kino [...] de blir vanligvis til “kultfilmer” [...] dekonstruktiv fortellemåte [...] oppsplitting av konvensjonelle fortellemønstre [...] Fordi motivene er kjente, fordi handlingsrekkefølge og rytme innen konvensjonell dramaturgi er fast forankret i publikums følelser, kan den postmoderne filmen tillate seg å leke med disse bestanddelene, å løse opp på den vanligvis kausalt oppspente handlingsrekken, å forvirre og rive i stykker.” (Friederike Linge i http://othes.univie.ac.at/9594/1/2010-04-14_0347038.pdf; lesedato 15.01.13)

“Certain impossible puzzle films owe part of their attraction to the arousal of what seems to be a deeply rooted human fascination with infinity. Whether encountered via mathematics or geometry, cosmology, or theology, the idea of endlessness seems to exert a strong curiosity, detectable throughout Western cultural history and the arts (Maor 1987).” (Ian Christie and Annie van den Oever i <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/j.ctv5rf6vf.8.pdf>; lesedato 29.09.21)

“It seems that the challenge of coming to terms with the infinite pushes the limits of our embodied and situated cognition – which is not surprising, considering that our cognition emerges in, and is directed at, a seemingly “finite” world (as our lived environment is characterized by apparent physical boundaries and limitations). The way in which infinity surpasses these everyday intuitions and defies our imagination may therefore be experienced as engaging, uncanny, enthralling, or simply surprising. Some impossible puzzle films play on this effect, suggesting infinity to further fuel the fascination that viewers find in the narrative acrobatics and cognitive challenge of metalepses, loops, and other intricately multiplying story patterns.” (Ian Christie and Annie van den Oever i <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/j.ctv5rf6vf.8.pdf>; lesedato 29.09.21)

“Some critics have argued that complex, unsolvable narratives reflect the decentralized or diffuse postmodern culture, or the complexity of contemporary socioeconomic problems. It is assumed that there are viewers who feel that artworks that evoke high complexity, dissonance, or ambiguity as an effect (instead of merely depicting these conditions in their stories) do a better job at representing the inherent complexity or ambiguity of the human condition or the world around us.” (Ian Christie and Annie van den Oever i <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/j.ctv5rf6vf.8.pdf>; lesedato 29.09.21)

“Bordwell bruker begrepet *puzzle films* om filmer som baserer seg på twists og uventede historievendinger. Noen av filmtypens kjennetegn er den upålitelige historiefortellingen og at historien presenteres som objektiv, men viser seg å være en del av protagonistens subjektive tolkning, en fantasi eller hallusinasjon. (Bordwell 2006: 81). Allan Cameron bygger videre på et begrep som brukes av Jason Mittel som beskriver *puzzle films* som filmer hvor tilskueren ikke bare kan glede seg over historien, men også hvordan historien fortelles, som *The Sixth Sense*, *Memento*, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004) eller *Lola rennt* (1998) (Mittel 2006 ifølge Cameron 2008: 22ff). Cameron supplerer begrepet med ‘*psychological*’ *puzzle films*, hvor narrativet viser seg å være et bedrag, og fortalt fra protagonistens forvridde sinn, som *Fight Club* (1999), *Donnie Darko* (2001) og *Mulholland Drive* (2001) (Cameron 2008: 22ff). Slike puslespillfilmer lar tilskuere både ta del i historien, og observere den fra utsiden, som en lek hvor tilskueren blir invitert til å forsøke å forstå narrativets regler, og hvordan historien henger sammen.” (Stapnes 2010 s. 70)

“For some people, impossible puzzle films may resonate with their need for autonomy (as the interpretive freedom and playfulness of these films leave a relatively high amount of choice and authority to the individual viewer), or may be a means to establish *relatedness* (for instance, through collective forensic fan activities, or the social rewards of sharing of interpretations, plot maps, or explanatory videos online). [...] The narrative and psychological pressures on viewers to resolve dissonances and achieve comprehension make room for all kinds of creative, intellectual, analytical, and interpretive skills and processes. [...] not only do they appeal to a deep-seated human hunger to solve puzzles, they also embrace our life’s complexities, providing enigmatic journeys into the impossible.” (Ian Christie and Annie van den Oever i https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/j.ctv5_rf6_vf.8.pdf; lesedato 29.09.21)

Fra 1990-tallet av har noen gåtefilmer fått diskusjonsfora på Internett om hvordan filmene kan eller bør tolkes, og det finnes nettsteder lagd av seere som vil presentere sine “løsninger”.

“[O]ne can foreground issues of narrative and narratology (by concentrating on the unreliable narrators, the multiple time-lines, unusual point of view structures, unmarked flashbacks, problems in focalization and perspectivism, unexpected causal reversals and narrative loops); one can highlight questions of psychology and psychopathology (characters suffering from amnesia, schizophrenia, paranoia, “second sight” or clairvoyance); philosophers of mind can find conundrums about the relation of body, brain, and consciousness that challenge concepts of “identity,” or ask what it means to be “human” as we share our lives with ever smaller machines and ever more “intelligent” objects. Mathematicians can elucidate game theory, explicitly thematized in *A Beautiful Mind* and implicitly instantiated in David Mamet’s *The Spanish Prisoner* (1997), or they can comment on the role of contingency, chance, stochastic series, and explain the “butterfly” effects of chaos

theory, the “sensitive dependence on initial conditions” thesis, (positive) feedback loops as opposed to linear causality (in films like *The Butterfly Effect* [2004] or *Donnie Darko*). Several films raise matters of *ontology* and parallel worlds, while skepticism and doubt, but also their obverse: belief and trust, are often the *epistemological* issues at stake.” (Thomas Elsaesser i Buckland 2009 s. 18-19)

“[G]iven the multiple and interconnected narrative strands, causality is based on a series of interdependent and thus interacting factors, each of which can be both cause and effect, taking us into the realm of retroactive causality. *Minority Report* is again a good example, and so is David Lynch’s *Lost Highway*, insofar as the first operates with a pre-emptive and a retroactive causality, and the second tells its story in the form not only of a loop, but of an inside out loop, i.e. a Möbius strip, with the two lives of a single character intertwined. In *Lost Highway* the film actually starts somewhere towards the end of the story, but the audience is not given any clue that they are about to witness flashbacks. Nor are these really flashbacks, because we only gradually realize we are faced with a split character, and even then, we never quite know if it is Pete who imagines being Fred or it is Fred escaping into Pete.” (Elsaesser 2017)

“In much of the literature that examines narrative or narration in mind-game films, the key issue is whether the narrative is linear or non-linear, and what the relation is between *fabula* and *sujet* (the story world and the way of arranging it). Mind-game films often widen the gap, by foregrounding the act of narration to such an extent that it is almost impossible to form a coherent image of the story world and its internal consistency: *Memento* might serve as an example, as well as *Inception*, but *Through a Scanner Darkly* is also a case in point. From a narratological perspective, this raises questions about unreliable narrators (*The Usual Suspects*), focalization (*The Sixth Sense*) and several other intriguing technical problems such as the existence of multiple timelines. [...] the interweaving of incompatible plots in the same film is partly what is responsible for creating ontological uncertainty.” (Elsaesser 2017)

“A mind-game film can encourage an audience to entertain hypotheses that turn out to be false, or remain unproven even at the end. They have to willingly submit to a reshuffling not only of the temporal sequence of events, but be prepared to expand mental space altogether, as well as share a world where linear causality is suspended and effects can generate their own causes, in a reversal of agency and of power-relations – a feature that the mind-game film shares with the time travel film [...] Time is non-linear, reversible and knows different ‘speeds’ [...] leaps of logic and general undecidability that the spectator has to contend with and make sense of. [...] the protagonists’ gradually revealed delusions, the ontological switches, the multiple realities [...] ‘what-if’ scenarios upend hard and fast distinctions between truth and lie, reality and illusion, the actual and the virtual. [...] Causation, which is usually tightly plotted in classical cinema, is in mind-game films much more indeterminate: incidents connect or follow each other through no immediately

discernable causal nexus, and often causation is only retrievable or constructed via retroaction, projection and one's own additional premises and propositions.” (Elsaesser 2017)

“From the position of mind-game films, this Aristotelian binary logic of ‘either true or false’ appears as an arbitrary (if necessary) reduction of the world’s complexity, incompleteness and therefore fundamental openness, introduced so that we as individual human beings can retain some kind of agency in the world and can believe in mastery over our fate and environment. [...] to dissolve the either/or logic into a series of consecutive and cascading contradictions, none of which gets resolved, but merely interact with and follow each other” (Elsaesser 2017).

I gåtefilmer er et traume “not only something that connects a character to his or her past, but also opens up to a future. It suggests a Foucault-inspired approach: Foucault sought to explain mental pathologies in terms of bodily regimes, discourses, and institutional practices, which go beyond the individual instance, and inscribe pathology “productively” – in terms of the micro-politics of power – into society at large.” (Thomas Elsaesser i Buckland 2009 s. 31)

Amerikaneren David Lynchs *Lost Highway* (1997) viser en marerittlignende, bisarr verden. Filmen tilhører sjangrene gåtefilm, psykologisk thriller og “noir horror”. Den ukjente Mystery Man i filmen ligner både Mefistofeles og seriemorderen John Wayne Gacy som kledte seg ut som en klovn. Den mest sentrale personen i filmen heter Fred Madison. “[H]ow can Fred’s dreams and visions so accurately predict forthcoming events – unless those events have already happened? This suggests that the narrative of *Lost Highway* is organized like a loop – or better, a Möbius strip – rather than linearly. If this is the case, then scene 18, in Fred’s prison cell, represents the twist in the möbius strip, the twist where the topside is transferred to the underside. Scenes 1 and 49 are the moments where the two edges of the Möbius strip are connected together, with Fred represented outside his house on one side, and inside the house on the other side. Moreover, to travel around the entire length of the Möbius strip, one needs to go around it twice – first on one side (from the intercom message to Fred’s transformation in his cell), then on the other side (from Pete being released from prison to his transformation back into Fred), before we are returned to the moment where the two sides are joined (Fred conveying the intercom message to himself). The metaphor of the Möbius strip appears to accurately represent the structure of *Lost Highway*.” (Warren Buckland i Buckland 2009 s. 56)

“Temporal relations: multiple time frames and crisscrossing timelines[:] Each narrative strand in a mind-game film may have its own temporality, including time running backwards (*Memento*), looped time (*Groundhog Day*), or time seemingly standing still or slowing down (*Interstellar*). Such variable temporalities may be extremely disorienting for the viewer, as in David Lynch’s *Lost Highway*, where very few clues allow one to reconstruct the chronological sequence of events, at

least not on initial viewing. However, a film may also guide the viewer into feeling familiar with circular time and reversible temporalities, as is the case with Denis Villeneuve's *Arrival*. There, almost the entire subplot concerning the death of a child, and the foreknowledge the mother has of this devastating loss, is meant to give us a narrative and affective context for the strange new temporality that the alien heptapods bring to mankind. In *Inception*, to cite another example, time slows down or speeds up, depending on which 'level' of each dream the protagonists find themselves in. [...] the weaving together of different temporalities serves less to create ontological doubt, but opens up a potential confluence and coexistence of different timelines. This applies to *Interstellar* (where two radically different time-scales and speeds enable an incest phantasy to form the loop that saves mankind) and to *Dunkirk*, where – apart from the different perspectives from land, sea and air on the retreat, there are also three different temporal strata that combine to form a kind of symphony of sacrifice and overcoming, turning defeat into victory. It seems to make variable time a special feature of Christopher Nolan's imaginative universe and adds a redemptive dimension to mind-game films." (Elsaesser 2017)

Gåtefilmer "enact the very condition their hero suffers from, in the structure of the film itself, as in [Christopher Nolans] *Memento*, where the film, as it were, wipes out its own memory, by being told in short segments that precede each other, rather than follow each other." (Thomas Elsaesser i Buckland 2009 s. 20) Filmene visualiserer ofte "the idea of identity crises and personality disorders" som en slags "productive pathologies" (s. 19).

"[T]he most intriguing and innovative feature is this insistence on temporality as a separate dimension of consciousness and identity, the play on nonlinear sequence or inverted causality, on chance and contingency, on synchronicity and simultaneity and their effects on characters, agency, and human relations: we are in worlds that often look just like ours, but where multiple time-lines coexist, where the narrative engenders its own loops or Möbius strips, where there may well be a beginning, a middle, and an end, but they certainly are not presented in that order, and thus the spectator's own meaning-making activity involves constant retroactive revision, new reality-checks, displacements, and reorganization not only of temporal sequence, but of mental space, and the presumption of a possible switch in cause and effect." (Thomas Elsaesser i Buckland 2009 s. 21)

"In *Memento* the amnesiac hero can be read as a 'what-if' thought experiment, set up in order to test what happens when short-term memory is disabled [...] a hero who takes revenge but has no memory? This means he does not remember that he has already taken revenge, has reached his goal, but he starts all over again. On the one hand: a neat paradox, perfect for tying the viewer into hermeneutic knots, but on the other hand, such a looped narrative also emulates or promotes a certain spectator engagement, namely insofar as Leonard's over and over action in *Memento* resembles that of a gamer – but also of an addict. [...] what once was classified a disorder, turns out to be a survival skill. [...] films that feature different

mental-physiological states, such as schizophrenia, paranoia, autism, amnesia, bipolar, split and multiple personality, etc., and go on to claim that these are ‘productive pathologies’, in the sense that the protagonists’ behaviour may seem aberrant and even dangerous under ordinary circumstances, but in the narrative is not marked as a disorder or affliction (i.e. a case study), and instead turns out to be a particular skill-set that proves important if not crucial for a specific task at hand. Thus, when mind-game films feature protagonists whose view of the world is radically skewed, due to the nature of their physical condition or mental state, these ‘constraints’ reveal themselves to be enabling conditions in some other register, and in some other way of interacting with the world. [...] psychologically aberrant conditions (schizophrenia, paranoia, bipolar disorders, amnesia, autism) in mind-game films often have an enabling and empowering function, precisely because they can sustain contradiction.” (Elsaesser 2017)

“As one can see from the uses that the other protagonists in *Memento* – especially Teddy and Natalie – make of Leonard, in order to further their own ends and objectives, the amnesiac hero is in his pathology programmable like a weapon: he is like a smart bomb, a repeat-action projectile on autopilot. [...] programmable not through ideology and false consciousness, but programmed by a fantasy, or self-programmed through the body (where the body functions as a technology of recording, storage, and replay: the somatic or pathologized body as an advanced “neural” or “biological” medium, in its mental instability and volatility potentially more efficient than the current generation of electronic media, at least for certain tasks.” (Thomas Elsaesser i Buckland 2009 s. 29)

“[T]he disavowal of his [Leonards] guilt-feelings regarding his role in the death of his wife converge with his guilt-feelings regarding one of his clients, the wife of amnesiac Sammy Jankis, with whom Leonard increasingly comes to be identified.” (Thomas Elsaesser i Buckland 2009 s. 29) Filmen prøver å trekke “the audience into the protagonists’ world in ways that would be impossible if the narrative distanced itself or contextualized the hero via his or her (medical) condition. In other words, the hypothesis would be that mind-game films imply and implicate spectators in a manner not covered by the classical theories of identification, or even of alignment and engagement, because the “default values” of normal human interaction are no longer “in place,” meaning that the film is able to question and suspend both the inner and outer framing of the story.” (Thomas Elsaesser i Buckland 2009 s. 30)

“In *Memento* multiple story lines, either progressive, regressive, recounted, or fragmented, are bound together by elements capable of recalling previous stages of the story, announcing or suggesting possible developments, showing effects whose causes are still unknown, retrospectively affecting several central features of the story, or even obliging the viewers to reconsider the story as a whole. [...] These kinds of “puzzle-films” have in fact the particularity of highlighting the role of the viewers, the mental abilities they have to employ, and the mental operations they

have to perform. As a matter of fact, the difficulties we experience are deeply rooted in the skillful way we normally watch ordinary movies. *Memento* is difficult and challenging because we are not able to construct a coherent *fabula* during the screening. It is also attractive because the puzzle demands a solution.” (Stefano Ghislotti i Buckland 2009 s. 87-88)

“The second disk in the DVD special edition of *Memento* arranges the film’s scenes in chronological order. To mark the difference existing with the theatrical version, the end credits are shown at the beginning, scrolling down from the top of the screen to the bottom: a clear cue, referring to the fact that the narration of the original edition has been reversed. In the same fashion the opening credit sequence is shown at the end of the film moving backward, from the director’s name to the cast members. The film has not, in fact, been completely reversed: we should say that its structure of events has been linearized, and from this respect the film is similar to other “ordinary” films. Black and white and color scenes do not interpolate: all the scenes are arranged in their temporal succession, and the color scenes, with respect to the original version, are shown in reverse order, following diegetic time.” (Stefano Ghislotti i Buckland 2009 s. 90)

I *Memento* er det to “strings of events, in black and white and in color [...] linked together by the crosscutting editing, but they are not meant to be simultaneous. They have two different time directions: chronological in black and white scenes, reversed in color sequences. The fact that black and white scenes interrupt the color sequences creates an effect of interference: while we have to keep in mind the actions of the color sequence, a black and white scene wipes out our working memory and attracts our focus of attention. As the subsequent color sequence appears, it is difficult to remember the previous one. In other films that adopt a backward narration, such as *Betrayal* (by David Hugh Jones, 1983; based on Harold Pinter’s play) or *Irréversible* (by Gaspar Noé, 2002), this effect is not present, because the sequences are connected to one another, and one can reflect on the causal relationship existing between them. In *Memento* the script is designed to create confusion in the viewer: beyond the crosscutting of two opposite time streams, we can notice that the average length of black and white scenes (except for the last two) is less than a minute, while color sequences (except for the last one) are from one to six minutes long. Such a fragmentation produces 22 black and white scenes and 23 color sequences which are systematically alternated. In addition, in the black and white part we find abrupt interruptions of action, which prevent the possibility of a plain reconstruction, and in the color part continuous actions are cut into two or three parts: it happens with Dodd’s chase, Ferdy’s bar, City Grill, the hooker and the derelict building scenes (two parts), and with Natalie’s home and Dodd’s room (three parts). This partition creates confusion because in order to reorder the color line of actions we have to recollect similar segments which can muddle, overlap, or be exchanged, and which appear as bewildering elements.” (Stefano Ghislotti i Buckland 2009 s. 95)

Mange av scenene i *Memento* “encourage the viewer to make the operation of mental rotation, which consists in putting the events of the two sequences in the right chronological order, to verify the temporal and the causal relationships. [...] [W]e have to arrange the events without the possibility of anticipating actions that have already happened. We can only investigate the causes at the origin of the effects we have witnessed.” (Stefano Ghislotti i Buckland 2009 s. 96)

Leonard lever innen en syklisk tid. Hans skyld er uklar, kanskje drepte han sin egen kone: “The ominous association with Sammy Jankis becomes, in Teddy’s words, a complete identification: Leonard’s wife survived the rape, she was diabetic, Leonard injected too much insulin provoking her death.” (Stefano Ghislotti i Buckland 2009 s. 101-103) Hovedpersonens mulige selvbedrag minner om lignende filmer (f.eks. psykologiske thrillere) som har noen overlappende trekk med gåtefilmer, f.eks. Martin Scorseses *Shutter Island* (2010).

Michael Wedel skriver om den tyske regissøren Tom Tykwers film *Run Lola Run* (1998) at filmens mål er “to fold cause-and-effect patterns into a self-reflexive temporal knot is announced already in these first words spoken during the prologue.” (i Buckland 2009 s. 130) Blant annet *Run Lola Run* “have all embraced a game aesthetic, inviting audiences to play along with the creators to crack the interpretive codes to make sense of their complex narrative strategies. But crucially, the goal of these puzzle films is not to solve the mysteries ahead of time; rather, we want to be competent enough to follow their narrative strategies but still relish in the pleasures of being manipulated successfully.” (Jason Mittell gjengitt fra <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/j.ctv5rf6vf.8.pdf>; lesedato 29.09.21)

Strukturen i den sørkoreanske regissøren Hong Sang-soo sin film *The Day a Pig Fell into the Well* (1996) “presents viewers with a narrative whose uncertainties of meaning and motivation mirror the limits of understanding that viewers encounter in everyday reality. By refusing to allow viewers to escape briefly into the highly interconnected alternative to reality presented in a classical narrative like *Crash*, Hong redirects viewers to an alternate cognitive model applicable to their everyday experiences. Rather than an escape from reality, the film offers viewers a method of escape from the perils of jumping to conclusions based upon insufficient evidence. [...] Hong has fashioned the film’s narrative structure and visual style to continually force viewers to struggle to construe the uncertainties of motivation. Unlike *Crash*, in which the motivations and experiences of the film’s characters are reduced to the easily understood consequences of racial discrimination and suspicion, *The Day a Pig Fell into a Well* revels in a complexity created through narrative gaps and nontraditional editing that suggests conversely how difficult it can be to interpret motivation or understand experience. Quite the opposite of traditional, mainstream narrative films, as well as of the films of the Korean New Wave which preceded it, *The Day a Pig Fell into a Well* demands that its viewers engage in an exercise in epistemological realism that asks them to ponder the

nature of knowledge, its presuppositions, the extent of its validity, as well as its inevitable uncertainties.” (Marshall Deutelbaum i Buckland 2009 s. 214-215)

Donnie Darko (2001; regissert av Richard Kelly) handler om “an emotionally troubled boy [...] in the timeline we see, someone is playing games with his mind, trying to bring about an outcome that is worse for him than his fate. There is an original timeline which is if not exactly happy considerably less disturbing than the one in the movie. From the ending of the movie, we can see that there is another timeline that is also less disturbing than the one we see; in fact, we resolve the story to four timelines [...] At some point, while watching football with his father, Donnie starts to see these blurry watery images extending from people’s chests telling him where they are about to go. He also sees one coming from his chest, showing him where he is about to go. Later he again sees these at the party; by now he’s probably mentioned them to his psychiatrist, and is wondering what they are. [...] The Frank who appears to Donnie in the movie is a ghost – a supernatural being, the spirit of a man who died an unexpectedly violent death. The ghost has taken advantage of the portal to travel back in time to a moment just before the arrival of the jet engine, and has chosen to do so in order to ruin the life of the person who killed him. He might even be thinking that if he does it right, Donnie Darko will be incarcerated before the shooting, and he won’t be dead. [...] The timing of events is not terribly clear despite regular updates on the screen.” (Mark Joseph Young i <http://www.mjyoung.net/time/darko.html>; lesedato 20.05.21)

Sørkoreaneren Park Chan-wook sin film *Oldboy* (2003) “leaves the spectator simultaneously enlightened and baffled. The secrets of the story are revealed, the masks of the protagonists are thrown off, and, yet, one feels the need to go over the facts once more, to double-check the connections among the characters and verify the premises of a particularly twisted narrative as it is transmitted through the channels of an equally twisted narration. And indeed, it was all intentional; as Park admitted at the news conference following the award presentations at Cannes Film Festival, he made the film with the DVD viewers in mind so that they could watch it several times and discover new elements each time. The young South Korean filmmaker, however, is not alone in the effort to cater for the needs and tastes of the DVD audience, which is not constrained by the limitations of the single viewing of a film in the theater. Since the late 90s, an increasing number of films have employed complex storytelling techniques that extend the classical rules of filmmaking and test the limits of the narrational capacities of the cinematic medium. Some of them experiment with the treatment of narrative time, using time-loops and repetitions as in *Run Lola Run* (1998); others exhaust the possibilities of the screen by “exploding” the cinematic space as in *Time Code* (2000), while others create characters with impossible identities as in *Mulholland Dr.* (2001) and *Inland Empire* (2006).” (Eleftheria Thanouli i Buckland 2009 s. 218)

“It may, for instance, be left unclear as to whether scenes belong to the past, present, or future, or are a part of someone’s hallucinations or dreams about the past, present, or future. One may, for instance, think of the extensive sections in *Mulholland Drive* in which the film delves into a mysterious variety of uncanny scenes and storylines (including those of the Hollywood director, his casting and the mobsters, the nightmare story at the Winkie’s diner, the cowboy, the hitman, as well as the ongoing story of Betty and Rita). While the film spirals into these different nonchronologically organized and ambiguously focalized story paths, it becomes increasingly difficult for a viewer to establish how events relate to one another, or how scenes might be connected – either spatially, temporally, causally, or as a network. The film does not follow a single character who could have provided a navigable reference point through the succession of different scenes and settings; nor does *Mulholland Drive* include other clear spatial or temporal markers by which events could be readily placed in relation to one another. Moreover, the few recurring characters, such as Betty and Rita, who could embody a focal(izing) center point around which these events revolve, seem to have slippery identities as well, which further riddles the story with contradictions and incoherency. As the film progresses, this continuous lack of a clear center of orientation, from which the story’s dimensions could be mapped (for example, as past or present, or as a dream or reality) frustrates the engaged viewer’s attempts to do so.” (Ian Christie and Annie van den Oever i <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/j.ctv5rf6vf.8.pdf>; lesedato 29.09.21)

“*Oldboy* acquires thus a Möbius strip structure that assigns its protagonists doubly coded roles with shifting qualities and dimensions. [...] Instead of the classical staging in depth, the linear perspective, and the central positioning of the characters in the frame, he opts for overhead shots, slanted angles, fish-eye lens distortions, extreme long shots, and extreme close-ups. [...] a mannerist and self-conscious staging and shooting approach” (Eleftheria Thanouli i Buckland 2009 s. 221-223). “The construction of its characters and the causal chain of events borrowed some of the compositional and generic elements of the classical narrative, such as the role of the male avenger or the motif of the investigation, only to subvert them by entailing them in a Möbius strip structure that allows every person and every event to be doubly coded.” (Eleftheria Thanouli i Buckland 2009 s. 229-230)

Den amerikanske regissøren James Mangolds film *Identity* (2003) er en gåtefilm. “Your identity is the blueprint of your being, the foundation on which morals, ideals and opinions evolve on an internal level. Every behavioral detail is derived from its essence, and when it undergoes any kind of damage or harm, one’s perception of the world around them is greatly altered. [...] James Mangold’s “Identity” is very much a puzzle movie caged by these sentiments (as hinted by the enigmatic title). Indeed, what is the significance of identity for a group of unrelated people who wander into the same motel during a stormy night? What brings them together during a cold stormy night out in the middle of the desert? The great thing about a movie like this is that it only reveals knowledge when it expects its own

characters to be on the same page; if they are out of the loop, we are stuck right alongside them. And perhaps that's what identity itself is all about, too: learn things as they come to you rather than have everything implanted in your head ahead of schedule.” (David Keyes i <http://www.cinemaphile.org/reviews/2004/identity.html>; lesedato 05.02.13)

“In the convoluted time-travel logic of *Primer* [2004 ; regissert av Shane Carruth], for instance, the multiplying – and, for the viewer, often indistinguishable – versions of the protagonists destabilize our ability to map the past, present, and future, because these versions all form different, simultaneously existing deictic centers which are active at different points on the film’s timeline. As various incarnations of the protagonists coexist within a single looping structure, the film’s spatiotemporal markers become increasingly dislocated.” (Ian Christie and Annie van den Oever i <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/j.ctv5rf6vf.8.pdf>; lesedato 29.09.21)

The Butterfly Effect (2004; regissert av Eric Bress og J. Mackye Gruber) “takes its name from a premise of chaos theory: a butterfly flapping its wings in North Africa can cause a typhoon half-a-world away [...] how re-arranging the time stream can result in a slip into an alternate reality. [...] Evan learns that, by concentrating on the words in a journal he composed while growing up, he can transport himself back in time and re-live certain events. Sometimes, he can make changes; sometimes he can’t. [...] This film follows a single incarnation of Evan as he meddles in his own time stream, changing his future from grim to grimmer, even as he remembers all of the permutations he has been through.” (<https://www.reelviews.net/reelviews/butterfly-effect-the>; lesedato 20.05.21)

I *The Butterfly Effect 2* (2006; regissert av John R. Leonetti) “our time traveler makes only three trips to the past, none reaching back much further than a single year. [...] There was one other problem with the first Butterfly Effect film which they managed to incorporate into the second. Despite the fact that Nick only makes three trips to the past he still manages to overlap himself. That is, his future self takes over his past self at the same time that he had already done so, and he does so with the intent to change what he had already changed. [...] the film seems to rely on an interpretation of Niven’s Law, to the effect that once you’ve changed the past it remains changed unless someone else travels to the past and changes it. [...] the audience is lulled into believing that there must be a solution that makes it all work, and tries to find it.” (Mark Joseph Young i <http://www.mjyoung.net/time/butter2.html>; lesedato 20.05.21)

The Butterfly Effect “was a convoluted time travel movie in which the hero, Evan Treborn, managed to ruin his own life and the lives of others around him by trying to fix things in the past. It was laced with impossibilities, inconsistent with its own rules, and generally the kind of film that time travel fans love because they believe they can solve it, and keep working at it, despite the fact that it is insoluble. Thus a

sequel was made, *Butterfly Effect 2*, in which a new hero, completely unrelated to the original one, Nick Larson, discovers a similar ability, and so attempts to fix things in his own life, again with disastrous effects. That one managed to find impossibilities that the original missed, as well as repeating several of the problems of its predecessor. So they made a third, *Butterfly Effect 3: Revelations*, and the question is whether it is as disastrous, temporally, as its predecessors” (Mark Joseph Young i <http://www.mjyoung.net/time/butter3.html>; lesedato 20.05.21)

I *The Butterfly Effect 3: Revelations* (2009; regissert av Seth Grossman) “the time traveler is Sam Reid, who with the advice of a physics professor named Harry Goldberg has adopted two important rules – one that he never changes his own past, and the other that he always has someone supervising his body when he jumps. This is usually his little sister Jenna, who adores him. Together they use his gift to solve unsolved murders, pretending he is a psychic. He leaps back to the times and places of the murders and watches carefully, memorizing the details, so he can find the face in the mug shots and tell the police exactly what happened. As the film opens he has led them to twenty-two killers, and is identifying his twenty-third. We also know that prior to this he made a trip to the past to save Jenna from a fire – the main reason for his adherence to those rules, as his parents died in that fire instead, but he was fifteen at the time and had suffered through Jenna’s funeral. That implies that he already knew he could travel to moments in the past, and therefore that he had already done so. We thus have at least twenty-four trips to the past prior to the opening of the movie, only one of which (the fire) we know in any detail.” (Mark Joseph Young i <http://www.mjyoung.net/time/butter3.html>; lesedato 20.05.21)

Sam Reid i *The Butterfly Effect 3* “does not use photographs or movies or journals, but instead obtains the date, time, and place he is targeting and focuses on these as he loses touch with his present body. That body is in a tub filled with ice water, apparently to prevent him from overheating, and when Jenna is monitoring him he is attached to a couple of leads on his forehead and chest, suggesting that brain and cardiac activity are being monitored. Things start going wrong, though, when he breaks his rule. A girl he knew in high school comes to see him, Elizabeth Brown, sister to his high school sweetheart Rebecca Brown who was murdered in her bedroom. Lonnie Flenions, whom Rebecca was secretly seeing on the side, has been convicted of the crime, and now a decade later he is about to be executed for it – but Elizabeth has discovered in Rebecca’s diaries enough to cause her to believe someone else killed her sister, and she wants the real killer identified before the wrong person is executed. She offers to hire him. [...] The problems Sam encounters when he attempts to discover Rebecca’s killer arise because the killer is also a time traveler, and one with intimate knowledge of Sam’s intentions: his sister Jenna. This also complicates our analysis, because we do not know when Jenna makes her trips, or what trips she has made. We can, though, conclude that she was very young when she made the first one. She is a few years younger than Sam, and most probably made a short trip to the past to kill Rebecca. [...] “Butterfly effect” is

a reference to a very small change triggering very large changes. In terms of time travel stories, it means that the one little thing you do change in the past may well have serious consequences to the form of the future to which you return.” (Mark Joseph Young i <http://www.mjyoung.net/time/butter3.html>; lesedato 20.05.21)

Den belgiske regissøren Jaco Van Dormaels film *Mr. Nobody* (2009) stiller spørsmålet “hva hvis” og leker med fortellerståsteder og tidssprang. “Quick, what do string theory, the butterfly effect, 21st-century dystopia, the possibility of quasi-immortality, the unquantifiability of time, the impermanence of memory, death, love, second sight, the heartache of divorce, missions to Mars, and Jared Leto’s baby blues have in common? After seeing “Mr. Nobody” I’m still not sure, though I am confident that writer-director Jaco van Dormael seems to think they’re all part of the same thematic continuum. Almost moving in its gonzo self-assuredness and take-no-prisoners narrative scope – although with the nearly 140-minute running time, that could just be my exhaustion talking – “Mr. Nobody” is as ambitious as it is incoherent, an obvious labor of love that’s equal parts science-fiction, romance, and Lynchian mind game. Yet with the film’s maddening circular structure and often thudding visual expositions, the experience of watching it isn’t quite as enjoyable as a description might augur.” (Michael Koresky i http://www.indiewire.com/article/mr._nobody; lesedato 05.04.13)

Inception (2010; regisert av Christopher Nolan) “is a ‘puzzle film’ (Thompson, 2010) whose plot twists, holes, and gaps may work as ‘a cultural activator, setting into motion [audiences’] decipherment, speculation, and elaboration’ (Jenkins, 2006: 95).” (Abigail De Kosnik, Laurent El Ghaoui m.fl. i <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1354856514560313>; lesedato 19.01.18)

I *Inception* er drømmer det sentrale temaet: “In a world of corporate warfare and psychic espionage, Dom Cobb (Leonardo DiCaprio) is the premier extractor of hidden information from high-powered business “targets” whose minds he infiltrates while they are dreaming and unsuspecting, by employing with the help of his associate Arthur (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) a dream-within-a-dream strategy to access the innermost secrets. These are metaphorized as confidential documents lying in a safe. Tested and hired by the powerful Japanese magnate Mr. Saito (Ken Watanabe), Dom is lured into one last heist, a mission impossible, namely not to extract, but to perform the opposite, an “inception:” to implant – like a virus gradually penetrating through the layers of the mind to full bloom in consciousness as an original thought – the idea in the head of Saito’s main business competitor to break up his father’s monopolistic energy conglomerate. As a reward for which Dom, on the run since being charged with the murder of his wife Mal (Marion Cotillard) and haunted by her dream presence and efforts at sabotage ever since, is promised the safe return home to America, freed from all charges, and to reunite with his children. That is the basic premise. But the plot of Christopher Nolan’s heist-action film *Inception* is so intricate that most discussions of it are bound to just try to figure out what happens on the purely referential level of meaning, in this

labyrinth of mind invasions, shared dreams within dreams, projections of deep-seated memories, and dreams as reality, almost all of it framed in flashback.” (Henry M. Taylor i <http://cineaction.ca/issue86sample.htm>; lesedato 22.03.13)

“In *Inception*, Cobb, in order to impress Ariadne, the young female architect, makes the city of Paris fold in on itself (a spectacularly memorable scene), while subsequently, Ariadne reflects two large mirrors into one another, disorienting our visual-perceptual register, as if to bring home the more narrative mirroring of film-genres that takes place in the various dream levels. *Source Code* would be an example of mirroring as repetition-with-slight-difference, as Colter returns to the train eight times – but each ‘return’ generates the train at a different point in time and space, thus effectively creating a new reality – and with it, alternate modes of analysis, detection and action” (Elsaesser 2017).

“One has to agree with critic Roger Ebert that the film’s [dvs. *Inceptions*] “story can either be told in a few sentences, or not told at all.” Significantly the viewer is forced to concentrate on the process of the moment by moment narration with its striking images of dream architecture of trompe l’oeil mazes, Euclidian space turned upside down and gravity defied, gunfights and chase scenes evocative of the Jason Bourne and James Bond films, real-time and slowed-down dream-time, and four dream levels down to “limbo,” a state of “raw subconsciousness,” where a few seconds of real time can last decades or even an infinity. As we descend we simultaneously go deeper in chronological reverse into Dom’s past, finding out more and more about his traumatic backstory wound. Yet even at the level of limbo, which could be said to stand for the Lacanian real, there is the positivity of representation: the ocean’s shore, the crumbling debris of collapsing highrises reminiscent of 9/11 and dystopian, postapocalyptic science fiction – such as *Planet of the Apes* (Franklin J. Schaffner, 1968) – as well as a Japanese temple by the sea. This version of the real is in contradistinction to both Freudian and Jungian thought, for which the core of the unconscious, to use this clinically more accepted term, remains fundamentally inaccessible and unrepresentable, and which is, in Lacan, nothing but a fissure or split. [...] The task of implantation, however, just like the actual target, functions merely as a pretext for the total immersion of the on-screen characters in their various dream levels, and, by extension, the spectator in the film.” (Henry M. Taylor i <http://cineaction.ca/issue86sample.htm>; lesedato 22.03.13)

Det er seeren av *Inception* “who is the ultimate target of the “inception,” with the gnawing suspicion taking hold that the ontological status of reality as the “highest” level within the film is itself unreliable and might have lost all external reference, leading to a self-enclosed system. But of course we are used to the fact that in mindbender cinema there cannot be an unequivocal, unambiguous happy ending in the sense of a breaking out into the freedom of an open world. We may well be stuck in Plato’s cave of illusions, but unlike the classical allegory’s cave dwellers – who really believe in the reality of the shadows they see – and in keeping with

cynical reason, we knowingly suspect and enjoy it, as if to prolong the movie ride. [...] Simulations, counterfeit worlds, the *mise-en-abîme* of worlds within worlds, parallel and disintegrating realities, programmed identities, the intricate paradoxes of time travel and invasions of one mind by another, the whole question of what is reality and what does it mean to be human [...] we are here dealing with a tendency of contemporary film narrative to vampirize itself, to take itself as its own object and to diegeticize its reflexivity in forms of *mise-en-abîme*.” (Henry M. Taylor i <http://cineaction.ca/issue86sample.htm>; lesedato 22.03.13)

Inception “has been called a puzzle film because of its complexity and ambiguity. The film leaves viewers with questions like:

- Did the top [snurrebassen] stop spinning at the end?
- If it did or didn't does it really matter?
- What parts of the movies were 'real' and which were dreams?
- What does real mean anyway?
- What is the meaning behind *Inception*?
- Did the director, Christopher Nolan, have one main intention or meaning behind it?

[...] puzzle movies borrow techniques – like fragmented spatio-temporal reality, time loops, unstable characters with split identities or unreliable narrators – more commonly attributed to art cinema and independent films. [...] There are standard philosophical themes that *Inception* assumes and raises [...] Epistemology – the theory of knowledge, truth & evidence. Epistemology tries to answer questions like: How do we know? What is knowledge? What is the relation of truth to knowledge? Is having a true belief enough for knowledge? If we cannot know anything, then epistemology might end up with a particular variety of skepticism – local skepticism about one branch of knowledge, or global skepticism such as external-world skepticism. [...] Consider this: the whole movie is one big Thought Experiment that we can use to philosophise about the topics given above.” (<https://inception.guru/philosophy>; lesedato 20.05.21)

“[E]ach narrative strand can have its own reality status (e.g. consisting of an unmarked mingling of ocular perception, dream, hallucination, memory: a film like *Inception*, for instance, plays with these different possibilities). Alternatively, each strand can represent a distinct ‘ontology’, as in *Source Code*, which has several realities dependent on each other, yet at some level also incompatible with each other. The main protagonist, Colter, has bodily presence and degrees of agency in three distinct realities: his ‘actual’ existence as a war veteran with a mutilated body; his imaginary existence in the capsule, which is a projection; and a virtual/alternate existence on a train that no longer exists. The multiplication of ontologies installs at the very heart of the mind-game film a radical ‘ontological doubt’. Mind-game films often have no horizon or orientational sight-lines to stabilize the viewing subject: the films of Alfonso Cuarón (*Children of Men*, *Gravity*) and Alejandro G. Iñárritu (*Birdman*, *The Revenant*) are typical in this respect, as is the playing with

scale in the films of Michel Gondry (*Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, *The Science of Sleep*)” (Elsaesser 2017).

På nettstedet Internet movie database ble det i mars 2011 lagt inn en anbefalingsliste over gode gåtefilmer: “Best “Puzzle” Movies by David F [...] Those films that keep you thinking about the plot even after the film has ended. [...]

Memento (2000)

A man, suffering from short-term memory loss, uses notes and tattoos to hunt for the man he thinks killed his wife. (113 mins.) Director: Christopher Nolan [...]

Twelve Monkeys (1995)

In a future world devastated by disease, a convict is sent back in time to gather information about the man-made virus that wiped out most of the human population on the planet. (129 mins.) Director: Terry Gilliam [...]

The Butterfly Effect (2004)

A young man blocks out harmful memories of significant events of his life. As he grows up, he finds a way to remember these lost memories and a supernatural way to alter his life. (113 mins.) Director: Eric Bress, J. Mackye Gruber [...]

Mr. Nobody (2009)

A tale that spans different time zones of the 20th and 21st centuries. (141 mins.) Director: Jaco Van Dormael [...]

The Matrix (1999)

A computer hacker learns from mysterious rebels about the true nature of his reality and his role in the war against its controllers. (136 mins.) Director: The Wachowski Brothers [...]

Source Code (2011)

An action thriller centered on a soldier who wakes up in the body of an unknown man and discovers he’s part of a mission to find the bomber of a Chicago commuter train. (93 mins.) Director: Duncan Jones [...]

Inception (2010)

In a world where technology exists to enter the human mind through dream invasion, a highly skilled thief is given a final chance at redemption which involves

executing his toughest job to date: *Inception*. (148 mins.) Director: Christopher Nolan
[...]

Donnie Darko (2001)

A troubled teenager is plagued by visions of a large bunny rabbit that manipulates him to commit a series of crimes, after narrowly escaping a bizarre accident. (113 mins.) Director: Richard Kelly
[...]

Fight Club (1999)

An insomniac office worker and a devil-may-care soap maker form an underground fight club that transforms into a violent revolution. (139 mins.) Director: David Fincher
[...]

Lost Highway (1997)

After a bizarre encounter at a party, a jazz saxophonist is framed for the murder of his wife and sent to prison, where he inexplicably morphs into a young mechanic and begins leading a new life. (134 mins.) Director: David Lynch
[...]

A Beautiful Mind (2001)

After a brilliant but asocial mathematician accepts secret work in cryptography, his life takes a turn to the nightmarish. (135 mins.) Director: Ron Howard
[...]

The Time Traveler's Wife (2009)

A romantic drama about a Chicago librarian with a gene that causes him to involuntarily time travel, and the complications it creates for his marriage. (107 mins.) Director: Robert Schwentke” (<http://www.imdb.com/list/QyY7EMg9hpQ/>; lesedato 20.11.12)

“In December 2006, Lars von Trier’s *The Boss of It All* was released. The film is a comedy about the head of an IT company hiring a failed actor to play the “boss of it all,” in order to cover up a sell-out. Von Trier announced that there were a number of (“five to seven”) out-of-place objects scattered throughout, called Lookeys: “For the casual observer, [they are] just a glitch or a mistake. For the initiated, [they are] a riddle to be solved. All Lookeys can be decoded by a system that is unique. [...] It’s a basic mind game, played with movies” (in Brown 2006). Von Trier went on to offer a prize to the first spectator to spot all the Lookeys and uncover the rules by which they were generated.” (Thomas Elsaesser i Buckland 2009 s. 13)

“Not content with creating a revolution in filmmaking by spearheading the Dogme 95 movement, Lars Von Trier is now experimenting with how his films are shot

and how viewers engage with them. His new film, *The Boss Of It All*, is filmed using a new camera control technique developed by Von Trier called Automavision. The system removes the need for a human camera operator, replacing them with a computer which randomly selects camera shots and movements based around an initial camera position selected by the director. The system removes the usual control the director and cinematographer have over the composition of each shot and, specifically it's framing. [...] The style deliberately breaks with the traditions of the Hollywood continuity style by forcing the viewer to actively search each shot for the most significant elements. In the Hollywood style these elements, for instance a protagonist, would be centred within the frame and lit in a way which made them highly salient even in busy scenes. In Von Trier's recent films the protagonist is often cut off by the frame, visually diminished by other less important elements, or moving at odds with the hand-held camera movement. In combination with his often uncomfortable subject matter, this unpredictable framing technique often leads viewers to describe the experience of watching a Von Trier film as "hard work". (Tim J. Smith i <http://continuityboy.blogspot.no/2006/12/it-lookey-like-lars-von-trier-is-at-it.html>; lesedato 11.02.13)

"When watching a film composed according to the classic continuity style, all viewers will focus their attention on a small number of objects within a shot. In most shots there will only be one clear centre of attention, usually the face of a principle actor and it will be this that all viewers track within the shot and across cuts. By comparison, viewers watching *Dancer in the Dark* or *Dogville* distribute their attention across more of the screen and show less agreement of what they believe to be the most significant object. When a cut then happens (which they often do at unexpected moments in Von Trier's films) viewers are not guided to the new centre of attention by the director so they have to actively search the scene. This active engagement with the visual constituents of the film creates a viewing experience that is completely counter to the normal smooth, direct, almost passive viewing experience of a classical continuity film." (Tim J. Smith i <http://continuityboy.blogspot.no/2006/12/it-lookey-like-lars-von-trier-is-at-it.html>; lesedato 11.02.13)

"However, the natural instinct for framing is hard to overcome and it appears that Von Trier realised that his desire for completely un-framed shots would not be possible so long as he or his camera operator were controlling the camera. A hand-held camera is often described as a visual prosthesis: an extension of the camera operator's eye; seeing what they see. The movement of a hand-held camera may be rough and the framing imperfect but, like the human eye it will always eventually settle on the most important parts of a scene. If Von Trier is to create shots in which viewers are unable to predict what is the most significant part of a scene or how the camera is going to move he needs to take the human camera operator out of the equation. Hence, Automavision. [...] Von Trier recently announced that he has embedded five to seven "Lookeys" in the film [...] Von Trier is offering 30,000 Danish kroner (£2,700) to the first Danish viewer that identifies all the Lookeys.

The Lookeys are described as “visual elements that are out of place” (www.lookey.dk) and are intended to turn the film into a “mind game”. By informing his viewers of the presence of these Lookeys Von Trier is again encouraging his viewers to actively engage with his films in a way in conflict with the normal film viewing. Spotting continuity errors, which is how these Lookey’s would be described if they were unintentional, has been an occupation of film viewers throughout the history of film. The pastime has escalated to such a level that there are even books and websites devoted to it. Continuity errors are typically mistakes made during production that are spotted by viewers on repeated viewings of a film. The most common errors are unintentional costume changes across shots or cigarettes and drinks that disappear or refill.” (Tim J. Smith i <http://continuityboy.blogspot.no/2006/12/it-lookey-like-lars-von-trier-is-at-it.html>; lesedato 11.02.13)

Impossible Puzzle Films: A Cognitive Approach to Contemporary Complex Cinema (2017) av Miklós Kiss og Steven Willemsen dreier seg om filmer som “contain clues and ambiguities that trigger an increased hermeneutic activity on the part of the viewers, the latter gladly engage in repeated viewings and information sharing on specialized forums. From a meta-narrative perspective, these films are baits that engage viewers in debates [...] a ‘cognitive puzzlement’ that occurs when a film obstructs or suspends its viewers’ construction or comprehension of the story [...] when viewers fail to make sense of impossible puzzle films they can always stop looking for explanations, adopt a poetic stance, or alternate between different interpretative postures.” (Fátima Chinita i https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319018439_Impossible_Puzzle_Films_or_the_Attraction_of_Sense-Making; lesedato 20.05.21)

Simin Nina Littschwager har publisert studien *Making Sense of Mind-Game Films: Narrative Complexity, Embodiment, and the Senses* (2019). Hun “develops her arguments and analysis around a set of six films, namely, *The Sixth Sense* (M. Night Shyamalan, 1999), *The Others* (Alejandro Amenábar, 2000), *Memento* (Christopher Nolan, 2000), *Fight Club* (David Fincher, 1999), *Possible Worlds* (Robert Lepage, 2000), and *Source Code* (Duncan Jones, 2011). [...] Mind-game films are part of a wider group of complex-narrative films and display “multiple and non-linear timelines, ontological and epistemological twists, parallel worlds, temporal loops, subjective plots, unreliable narrators, mentally deviant characters, and often ambiguous endings” (4). [...] In her analysis of the six mind-game films in her book, Littschwager describes how the body and the senses are key, not only for viewers to understand different levels of complexity related to narrative, themes and character identity, but also for the characters themselves in those films to be who they perceive themselves to be. In *The Sixth Sense* and *The Others*, the materiality of the characters’ bodies give them an illusion of reality and existence in the world of the living and tricks them, as well as the viewers, into perceiving themselves as beings that exist in the world of the living. [...] In *Memento* and *Fight Club*, the elusiveness of memory (*Memento*) and the unreliability of narration (*Fight Club*) cannot be solved solely by putting together the complex web of facts

laid out by those films, but by using the body as a site of memory and using haptic experience and pain as ways to remember and know reality.” (Luis Antunes i https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343177905_Making_Sense_of_Mind-Game_Films_Narrative_Complexity_Embodiment_and_the_Senses_by_Simin_Nina_Littschwager; lesedato 20.05.21)

“[T]here has grown up around these mind-game or puzzle films not only an ever-growing body of scholarly articles, books and commentary, but also a community of fans who set themselves the task – and advertise their efforts via YouTube videos – precisely to unravel the complexities, fill in background information, point out deliberate clues, hidden exploits or accidental bloopers, or otherwise offer ‘helpful’ hints and clarifications. These amateur interpreters are, in this respect like other fan communities, already part of the ‘imaginary resolutions’ (i.e. the films’ ideological project, which seeks to solicit the active participation from viewers as part of their marketing strategy)” (Elsaesser 2017).

“The political frame would align mind-game films with what is no longer only the post-medium condition, but the post-truth condition: the world of ‘alternative facts’, and the politics of the ‘reality-creating business’.” (Elsaesser 2017)

Litteraturliste (for hele leksikonet): <https://www.litteraturogmedieleksikon.no/gallery/litteraturliste.pdf>

Alle artiklene i leksikonet er tilgjengelig på <https://www.litteraturogmedieleksikon.no>