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A COMPLEX BODY OF FILMMAKERS:
THE SOCIO-TECHNICAL NATURE OF COLLABORATIVE EXPERTISE IN SHOOTING AUTEUR'S FILM

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Abstract

No matter which disciplinary location, the figure of the *auteur* haunts theories of film authorship and filmmaking. This paper suggests reconnecting to the richness of filmmaking in everyday practice in order to "flesh out" what film authoring is. Based on two ethnographic case studies in the European independent film context, *Sebastian* (2024, dir. Mikko Mäkelä) and *Raptures* (2025, dir. Jon Blåhed), this paper examines what creative collaborative expertise looks like on auteur's film sets. The data suggests that rather than by any single body, auteur's film is produced by a complex socio-technical "plural subject" (Bacharach and Tollefsen, 2010) that I call the body of filmmakers. Yet, the "sufficient creative control" (Livingston, 2011) of director-screenwriters remains crucial, showing that auteurism is a part of the material, social and cultural processes of filmmaking. Consequently, the paper is a case in point for the value and necessity of engaging with filmmaking empirically in order to theorise it.

Keywords: Media anthropology, ethnography of film, auteur, collective film authorship, collaborative expertise

> *It's my first day on film set. I don't know at all what to expect, so I'm nervous when I enter the filming location, an ordinary British tenement house. The first thing that strikes me is that everyone is very busy and focused on their own thing, and that everyone has a screen in their hands and a radio on their hips. Within the location, although spatially dispersed and engaged in their own tasks, people are temporally in sync and connected to each other with their radios and monitors. It feels like one giant socio-technically operating organism. When I get an earpiece, I start feeling like I'm integrating to this machine. This is not just a feeling of belonging in the sense that I now have a visible marker of belonging, but a much more visceral connection to the film-making.* (Tuusa, field notes from *Sebastian*, April 3, 2023).

In this field note I describe the first time I went on set to observe filmmaking for research purposes. I was in awe of the way people worked seamlessly together with one another and with technologies in a manner that seemed remarkably sovereign and self-organising. Reviewing the field notes from the first few days, I was surprised to notice the lack of reference to authorial control, such as giving out instructions or deciding on a creative direction. In fact, rather than any single body, my first intuition has been to use the descriptors "machine" and "organism" to designate the subject making the film. According to an online dictionary, an organism is "a complex structure of interdependent and subordinate elements"; a machine suggests that said structure is mechanically operated (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

My way of describing the subject who makes a film was startling. I had initiated the research to better understand film authorship as an embodied, situated practice marked by human agency. The productions that I observed were selected on the basis that I presumed to find strong authorial influence within them. The two films that I discuss in this paper, *Sebastian* (2024) and *Raptures* (2025), are both publicly funded feature-length fiction films initiated and led by a screenwriter-director, Mikko Mäkelä and Jon Blåhed respectively. Both films are strongly personified to their directors, hence I consider them as part of the auteurist tradition in film. John Caughie's (1981, 9) edited collection traces the large brushstrokes of auteurism, in summary, a film is commonly considered an auteur's film when the director's personality is expressed in the works and can be traced in thematic and stylistic consistency across their oeuvre.

In this paper, I draw on participant observation in the making of *Sebastian* and *Raptures* to unpack what "collaborative creative expertise" looks like on auteur's film sets. I frame my analysis with a discussion of the concept of the auteur and the ways authorship has been understood in film studies. I follow film editor and scholar Karen Pearlman's (e.g., Pearlman, 2021; Pearlman et al, 2018; Pearlman, 2017) initiative to pay attention to the way films are made to better understand the creative and artistic work at play. Whereas Pearlman focuses on editing, I apply theories of collective film authorship (Bacharach and Tollefsen, 2010; Livingston, 2011) to the production of filmic images through the socio-technical expertise of the camera crew and the general use of screens in the set by the director and other crew members. The way cinematic technologies are used collaboratively is absolutely central to the production of images for film and deserves to be considered in detail.

The question of collaborative expertise is particularly salient in my case studies because they can be classified as "auteur's films". This means that in cinematic discourse these films are seen as "Mäkelä's film" and "Blåhed's film", suggesting that they were authored by these filmmakers alone. Following work in production studies (Mathieu, 2011; Caldwell, 2013), I analyse how the collaborative expertise on set of *Sebastian* and *Raptures*, though seemingly sovereign, is in fact governed by the social and professional hierarchies

of film production cultures structured around the single author. The dual aim of paper is then to argue that the auteur's film is produced by a complex socio-technical "plural subject" (Bacharach and Tollefsen, 2010) that I call the body of filmmakers rather than by a single author. This re-examination does not diminish the auteur's significance in relation to their "sufficient creative control" (Livingston, 2011) but positions the authorial function as a part of broader material, social and technical and cultural processes. Additionally, I wish to argue for the value of ethnographic and phenomenological-hermeneutic study in challenging normative assumptions of film authorship within film studies.

Auteur's film: single-authored yet collaboratively created?

My initial observations from the making of *Sebastian* complicate and challenge the commonly held view that films are authored by their directors. The idea that the author of a film should be its director emerged in the 1940's in the French intellectual circles and especially in the film publication *Cahiers du Cinéma*. In the essay *The Birth of a New Avant-Garde: La Caméra-Stylo*, critic Alexandre Astruc (1948/2014) describes the aesthetic value specific to film as stemming from the complex coordination of various materials in a dynamic sequence of time, and assigns this core authorial function to the director, declaring that "directing is no longer a means of illustrating or presenting a scene, but a true act of writing" (p. 606). Astruc's and the rest of the *Cahiers* writers' application of literary theory's ideas of authoring to film authorship was productive in elevating film's status from a form of industrial reproduction to art. Yet, as American auteurist critic Andrew Sarris (1977/2003, p. 28) notes, "auteurism has less to do with the way movies are made than with the way they are elucidated and evaluated". Auteurism or auteur theory is based in the reception of films, not on empirical data on the making of films.

In an anthology on film authorship that gathers together film authorship studies in the early 2000's, film scholars David A. Gerstner and Janet Staiger (2003) both stress in their respective introductions that a corrective step is necessary and authorship needs to be studied also as an empirical relation in the process of filmmaking. Since, film studies have done necessary theoretical work to link the empirical and discursive director-as-author. For example, Cecilia Sayad (2013) analyses the ways in which auteur-directors such as Jean-Luc Godard and Agnès Varda have inscribed their empirical selves into their films as characters, voice-overs or more ambiguously, as shadows or mere glimpses. Equally, Linda Haverty Rugg (2014) makes note of the "autobiographical traces" in auteur's film. By opening a link between filmic representation and the real behind the scenes, these "autobiographical traces" and "corporeal self-inscriptions" construct a strong authorial presence in the viewers' experience of the films. Nahuel Ribke's (2023) authorial analysis shifts focus to documentary directors Michael Moore and Eduardo Coutinho. He argues that the growing salience of directors-as-characters may be seen as part of the larger cultural, social and technological changes affecting media production (p. 79). I understand this to suggest that the growing authorial presence of directors is parallel to for example the blurring of boundaries between public and private in a social media-saturated era. Sayad, Rugg and Ribke shift analysis away from the author as mere textual discourse, to the way in which filmmakers' real-life personas are part of our experience of films, even if mediated and carefully constructed for specific purposes. Though fruitful, the focus on the director-as-author remains the focal point.

What is more surprising is that many top-of-the-line studies on filmmaking in the fields of cognitive and neuroscientific studies also take on the director-as-author relatively unchallenged to produce theoretical understanding of how films become. For example, cognitive film theorist Torben Grodal (2004, p. 28) reduces filmmaking to the "biological entity" of the auteur who

produces "a specific work of art and a specific oeuvre". In neurocinematic scholar Pia Tikka's (2022, p. 48) paper on "enactive authorship" the hypothetical "author" is a singular entity that "simulates the protagonist's humane situatedness via their own experiential context". The prevalence of understanding filmmaking as a single-authorial process speaks to the force of the figure of the auteur in our ways of understanding film authorship. This is not just the case in our reception of films. Indeed, organisational studies scholars Chris Mathieu (2011) and Sara Strandvad (2012) have shown that auteurist thinking is so enmeshed in our ways of thinking and doing that it structures—and often hinders—work on film sets.

Film editor and scholar Karen Pearlman (2021, 1588-1589) notes that though promoting auteur theory was successful in elevating film's status to an art form, it also meant disregarding the inherently collaborative nature of film-making and leaning into the historical masculinist idea of the single author as a genius. Philosopher Paisley Livingston (2011, p. 224) hints that it is our assumptions about the nature of authorship that may provide the key constraints on a viable theory of co-authorship. However, re-examining the way authorship functions empirically is not relevant just for the sake of better theorisation. As film scholar Priya Jaikumar (2016) argues, normative conceptualisations of film authorship mask culturally formed assumptions and hierarchies about filmmaking and authorship that uphold for example patriarchal and Western structures of thought.

In her scholarly work, Pearlman (e.g., Pearlman, 2021; Pearlman et al, 2018; Pearlman, 2017) employs the theoretical frameworks of embodied and distributed cognition to expand knowledge of filmmaking and creative collaboration. She uses her own creative practice as an editor to shed light on the collaborative nature of especially the editor's and the director's work together. Pearlman's work adds important empirical, embodied and situated data to the philosophical and theoretical work that has worked to reconfigure film authorship from single-authorial to collaborative, multi-authored or co-authored (e.g., Gaut, 1997; Sellors, 2007; Bacharach and Tollefsen, 2010; Livingston, 2011).

Bacharach and Tollefsen (2015, 334) suggest that a bottom-up method that begins with art-making practices and ways of attributing authorship should be adopted in studying authorship. In what follows, I will respond to this call and examine the theories of collaborative creative action of Bacharach and Tollefsen and Livingston in light of my case studies. Bacharach and Tollefsen make use of philosopher Margaret Gilbert's theory of plural subjects and joint commitment to theorise on filmmaking as "a body". According to them (2010, p. 29), "to espouse a goal as a body is to act as if one were part of a single body, to work in unity with others in order to construct, as far as possible, a unified subject". In response, Livingstone's (2011, p. 224) formulation states that a commitment to the making of a film "does not suffice to constitute a group that actually co-authors a particular work".

The data in this paper is generated from ethnographic fieldwork in two case studies. *Sebastian* is a British-Finnish-Belgian co-production filmed primarily in the United Kingdom. I initially reached out to the co-producer Aleksi Bardy from Helsinki-Filmi, who put me in touch with the director-screenwriter Mikko Mäkelä. Mäkelä took an interest in my research project and invited me to follow the production. My engagement was also agreed upon by producer James Watson from the production company Wild Beast Productions. The film premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in January 2024 in the World Cinematic Competition. I followed pre-production and shooting of *Sebastian* across 2022–2023. *Raptures* is a Swedish-Finnish co-production filmed primarily in Torne Valley, a region between Northern Finland and Sweden. I was initially put in contact with the Finnish co-producer Tiina Pesonen from Rabbit Films who took an interest in facilitating my research, and my engagement was later approved by director-screenwriter Jon Blåhed and Swedish producer

Andreas Emanuelsson from Iris Films. *Raptures* premiered in February 2025 at the Rotterdam International Film Festival, where it won the Big Screen Competition. I followed the shooting and editing of *Raptures* in Spring 2024. In both case studies, where identifiable, cast and crew members have also given informed consent to participate in the study.

My methodology is situated in a crossroads between "thick description" associated with the anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973) and the "fleshing out" of film in lived experience by film phenomenologist Vivian Sobchack (1992). Both ethnography and phenomenology are premised on being "thrown in" to a situation and building conceptualisations from this empirical evidence. These methodologies are useful in re-directing authorship studies away from their home in the humanities-based idea of single-authorial creation. As media anthropologist and ethnographer of Bollywood cinema Tejaswini Ganti (2014) writes, ethnography "grounds the study of media in a specific time and space" (p. 17), making it possible to analyse the role of subjectivities and inter-subjectivites in filmmaking "in terms of affect, perceptions, thoughts, sentiments, and desires that constitute the basis of agency" (p. 18). Indeed, in her review of the emerging field of the anthropology of cinema, Lotte Hoek (2016) lifts up anthropologist of Tamil cinema Anand Pandian's (2015, p. 272) way of describing the creative process as "less an exercise of human agency on an inert and inactive world than a way of working resourcefully with the active potential of diverse forces, feelings, beings and things".

Much of the work in the anthropology of cinema leans on Sobchack's theory of film as experience. Sobchack builds on Don Ihde's phenomenology of technology to show how technology functions as the mediator in the embodied perception of cinematic signification. Ihde (1990, p. 1) argues that human existence is thoroughly technologically textured, indeed that we "live, move and have our being in the midst of our technologies". I extend Sobchack's and Idhe's work to study filmmaking ethnographically, allowing for a relational analysis of human–technology relations that preserves what "the actional and dynamic" (Ihde, 1990, p. 27) sense of this relation embedded in the material culture of filmmaking.

In ethnography, the role of the researcher as the locus of knowledge production both in the field and in the consequent research outputs is an essential part of the methodology. As Gay McAuley (2008, p. 286) notes in relation to her ethnographic study of the theatre, the ethnographer must first "grasp" and then "render" what has been grasped. My way of "grasping" relied on "shadowing" and "hanging out" (Miller, 2022). This mode of ethnographic enquiry came about naturally in my first case study *Sebastian*. I became aware that in a film set, there is a lot of shadowing – novices learning by watching and listening to what more senior professionals do – and a lot of hanging out – being there all day even though you are actively needed for little. As feminist anthropologist Donna Haraway (1997, pp. 190–191) has noted, ethnographic study is a situated knowledge practice that remains mindful of itself and the hopes, risks and purposes embedded in the knowledge projects that it engages in. My assumptions in going to the field are thus central to how knowledge is built. The validity of my "grasping" and the consequent "rendering", like in any first-person methodological or ethnographic practice as defined by Haraway, is not based on the static correspondence to experience but rather, on the authenticity of the process of becoming aware and describing the experience (See Petitmengin & Bitbol, 2009).

Making an image: the collaborative work in embodying the technics of the camera and directing cinematography

> *In the act of filming scene 33, the camera is operated by three people. The director of photography Mimmo is the one who moves the camera's perceptive parts, resulting*

Image 1 Mimmo, Otto, Elina and Jacob on set of Raptures. Tuusa, 14.2.2025.

> *in how the picture is being framed. The key grip, Otto, moves the camera on the dolly. He is responsible for the camera's broader movement in space. Then there is the focus puller Elina, who adjusts the focal point of the camera's vision. So concretely in the moment, three people result in how the camera perceives.* (Tuusa, field notes from *Raptures*, 14 February, 2024)

Scene 33 depicts the two main characters of *Raptures*, Rakel (Jessica Grabowsky) and Teodor (Jacob Öhrman), at their home farm. It was shot in a studio where a replica of the inside of the farm was built. The call sheet states that the scene is set in the evening, it is to be shot in the main room of the house, and Rakel is to sit in bed reading. Acting on these instructions, concretely in the moment, it was Mimmo, Otto and Elina whose collaboration resulted in how the camera perceived the scene both in terms of movement and framing. Their work serves as a tangible example of how filmmakers may act "as a body" (Bacharach and Tollefsen, 2010). Acting as a body here is thoroughly technologically mediated. Mimmo, Elina and Otto can all be described as having embodiment relations with the camera technology. According to Ihde (1990, p. 73) in embodiment relations there is a partial symbiosis of myself and the technology where the technology becomes perceptually transparent: this means that the technology "withdraws" and becomes part of one's perceptual-bodily-self.

In that moment, The Director of Photography Mimmo saw the film set through the camera's perceptive parts, most importantly the lens itself. Mimmo looked through the viewfinder and she embodied the optical technology of the camera in a sense where she saw *through* the technology to the "other side of the optics" (Ihde, 1990, p. 73). If the lens could be best equated to the camera's "eye" in terms of its optical properties, the mass of the camera where the lens is incorporated into could be its "head". This analogy comes from the observation that the "camera's head" can turn up, down and sideways in its static position on the camera rig in a somewhat similar way than a head can. Mimmo's hands grasped the "camera's head". With her hands and to an extent, with her whole body, she moved the "camera's head" in relation to what she saw through the lens – a hand-eye coordination that speaks to the multisensory nature of bodily perception.

The key grip Otto was responsible for the spatial motility of the camera rig which, to continue the analogy, could be equated as the camera's whole body. Here, the camera was mounted on a dolly which technologically stabilises the movement of the camera, a movement which happened based on how Otto's body moved as he gripped the dolly. Mimmo and the

camera were both on the dolly, so as Otto moved, he moved them both. Mimmo's and Otto's movements together resulted in how the image was framed.

Then there was the focus puller Elina, who determined the perceptual focus of the camera's lens. Put simply, focus pulling is about deciding which area of the image is sharp. It depends largely on calculating and estimating distances between the lens and the objects of its vision. Elina stood further away from the camera rig with her own small monitor that was wirelessly connected to the camera rig. Her hand moved a dial on the monitor that adjusts focus. This adjustment was done based on how she perceived the feed in the monitor but also to how she perceived the relationship of the camera's lens to the objects of its vision in live action. Her hands passed the visual information to the camera's perceptive parts through the focus pulling wheel – again, hand-eye coordination was essential. Observing Elina's facial expression and bodily motility, I could notice how she attuned and reacted to the live scene in the same manner as Otto and Mimmo did where the camera's technology is withdrawn and the focus is on the live referent.

The joint commitment of these three people in acting as a "unified subject" as theorised by Bacharach and Tollefsen is particularly salient here, because their work resulted in footage as if perceived by a single body operating the camera. In film phenomenology, a distinction is made between the "viewed-view", which roughly means the contents of the image, and the "viewing-view", which speaks to the manner in which those contents are perceived (Sobchack, 2016, p. 72). Indeed, Sobchack (1992, p. 10) stresses that rather than experiencing a static image like a photograph, in "watching a film, we can see the seeing as well as the seen, hear the hearing as well as the heard, and feel the movement as well as see the moved". This means that how an image is perceived can be of significant importance to how its contents are interpreted. A neurocinematic study by Yilmaz et al. (2023) tested the way different camera technologies impact spectators' immersion and emotional response to the same scene with the goal in mind to show that the cinematographer's embodiment was a meaningful facet in the finished films. Their results were tentative, yet the research setting itself points to the importance of the camera crew's embodiment of cinematic technologies and the consequent "viewing-view" for how film images are interpreted. Indeed, in my observation of the making of scene 33, the concrete creative expertise of framing and capturing an image was a collaboration between Mimmo, Otto and Elina. The director of the film Jon was very open about the fact that he does not really know how to use the camera equipment.

However, even if the three worked together "as a single body", I would hesitate to call their actions co-authoring of the film. This echoes Livingstone's (2011, p. 224) contention to Bacharach and Tollefsen's theory, stating that a commitment to the making of a film "does not suffice to constitute a group that actually co-authors a particular work". In making scene 33, Mimmo, Otto and Elina had different levels of control. They were all following a learned professional organisation of work that is highly structured and hierarchical. Departments all have heads, who are creatively in charge of their areas, and they all answer to the director who holds the creative control on set. Additionally, in auteur's film, as is the case in *Raptures* and *Sebastian*, the director is also the screenwriter and usually has what is called the "final cut", meaning that they sit in the edit and get to decide what is the final version. Mathieu (2011) has described this type of production setting where the creative control is centralised to the single-author as "auteur-ideology". He draws upon interviews with Danish filmmakers, yet similar production cultures reign across European independent filmmaking regardless of nation. For example, *Raptures* and *Sebastian*, like most independent European films today, are co-productions between two or more European countries and testify to the trans-nationalisation and homogenisation of production cultures across Europe.

In *Raptures*, the head of the camera department was the Director of Photography Mimmo, whose work together with Jon could however constitute a realm of co-authoring. According to Bacharach and Tollefsen (2015, 335), beyond acting as a single body in a joint commitment, co-authorship entails "a mutual responsiveness to other authors, a give-and-take, a conversation, a sharing of ideas" that is "a-two-way street". From the way Jon talked about his process with Mimmo in pre-production, it certainly seems to point to a co-authorial direction. For example, upon writing the final version of the script in a residence in the North of Sweden where the film is set, he invited Mimmo up, and they scouted locations together and discussed the visual style of the film. During the shooting, they had pre-planned a shot breakdown for each scene, detailing camera and actor positions and routes before the actual shooting. This constituted the plan of action for the rest of the filmmakers like Elina and Otto.

Even Mimmo's and Jon's co-authorial work should not however be considered as "an exercise of human agency on an inert and inactive world" (Pandian 2015, p. 272). Anthropologist of Nigerian film and media culture Brian Larkin (2008, p. 4) points out that we should remain sensitive and critical to the autonomous powers that technologies hold and focus our analysis on "which aspects of technologies' technical and social potential are brought into being", so in how filmmakers use the technologies at their disposal. For example, planning a shot breakdown is certainly a way of exercising control over the production. Yet, the way a film is shot usually follows a similar formula across productions. In *Raptures* too, the types of shots that were taken reflected the traditional formula of scripted drama. As Pearlman (2017, 72-73) notes from an editorial point of view, a good "coverage" includes "two or three takes of a whole scene in a long shot, a medium or 2-shot, possibly over the-shoulder shots of each character, and generally a close-up of at least the key characters". This is more or less how most of the scenes were also shot in *Raptures*.

Another example of the cultural influence embedded in filmmaking technologies and practises is the choice of what camera lens and rig to use. In *Raptures*, a Cooke Anamorphic Full Frame lens range was used, which according to the manufacturer's website is exemplary of "anamorphic characteristics combined with The Cooke Look™ including oval bokeh" (Cooke Optics, n.d.). The website further describes the lens range to be good for close-up scenes that convey emotion. The technology itself thus carries cultural and institutionalised, even trademarked meanings and ways of seeing, such as the idea of a close-up as a good way to communicate emotion. Furthermore, *Raptures* was largely shot with a stabilised camera, which minimises the effects of the camera operators' (here, Mimmo and Otto) movements in the image especially compared to handheld or Steadicam. The degree of how much a spectator can perceive the camera's movements has in film phenomenology been analysed as a degree of how much "the film's body makes its presence known" (Barker 2009, p. 7). In classical Hollywood style, this relation is usually played down with stabilised camera use, whereas more experimental productions may use for example handheld to specifically call attention to the camera operator's role in constructing the image. In *Raptures*, combining the steady camera use with the relatively classical shot coverage with an emphasis on quality close-ups were all artistic choices that were more or less co-authored by Mimmo and Jon. Yet, these choices were also embedded collectively within filmmakers' silent knowledge of how to make a quality film. As Pearlman (2017) notes, and editor would "expect" to get certain shots, equally, the camera operators expect to shoot certain shots. Thus, rather than being imposed on by a director or a head of department, many authorial choices are already embedded within the production cultures.

There are also clear occasions where authorial instructions were given by Jon to the way the image should be. These instances act as concrete showcases of what production studies scholar John Caldwell (2013, 362) has called "strategic

authorship control schemes" whereby the director explicitly calls upon the authorial status that they hold within the organisation. Here's an example from *Raptures*:

> *The focus puller Elina asks whether she should follow the movement of the actor. The director Jon is right there, he is looking at the gaffer's monitor, and he says yes, that looks good, please do that.* (Tuusa, field notes from *Raptures*, 13 February, 2024).

The decision to have the camera's perceptual focus track the movements of the actor in the shot was made by Jon. The decision was however based on the offering made by Elina who had an embodiment relation with the camera technology. Going by the book, Elina would not be considered to have an authorial function within the production because she is part of the below-the-line crew, who do not get authorial credit unlike above-the-line crew like the director or the Director of Photography (Caldwell, 2013, p. 350). Rather than a situation of a superior "controlling" a subordinate with authorial instructions, in my observation the work in this instance was collaborative and led by Elina. However, even if the working relationship here was amicable, the work between Elina and Jon was still not a "two-way street" of co-authoring. Rather, the director called upon the tacit and embodied skill that an experienced focus puller like Elina possesses.

Embodying a technology such as a camera is an activity that is learned. Ihde (1990, p. 73) uses the example of corrective glasses: this is an easy technology to learn to embody, as merely putting on the glasses allows one to see the now corrected world and adjustments that the wearer must do to use the technology are minimal. To embody a technology such as a film camera is much more complex. The process entails learning the "right way" to embody a technology and consequently, the "right way" to relate to the film's world via framing shots and sequences – which can of course be deviated from, resulting in shots that stand out to the spectator as unconventional, amateurish or perhaps, artistically motivated. The praxis of cinematographers according to film scholar Brian O'Leary (2003, p. 199) may seem to arise from the cinematographer in the moment, yet upon closer semiotic-functional analysis of camera movements, reveals itself to be culturally coded. This shows that embodying a camera technology is learned over time, from watching and making movies, and that the creative expertise in using camera technologies is culturally saturated – just like the creative expertise of planning such work.

To summarise, the fact that the work of the camera department "as a single body" seems so sovereign is then largely due to good planning and a shared idea of how the work should be organised. This is premised on the individual creative expertise of using cinematic technologies as well as being familiar with the professional organisational hierarchies that facilitate the work. Yet, the question of "sufficient control" raised by Livingston in response to Bacharach and Tollefsen's formulation of the filmmaker as a single body remains highly relevant. I agree with Livingston (2011, 221), who argues that assigning authorship requires exercising sufficient control in the making of the work as a whole. Yet I would note that authorial influence, rather than a controlling presence, is much more subtle and engrained within the social organisation of the work at least in my case studies. For example, Jon has been able to select the people he wants to work with and has spent time with them discussing the vision he has for the film prior to the shooting of the film. The work is premised on (co) authorial choices that have been already negotiated prior to the shoot and authorial control is accepted and embraced as part of the social organisation of the work.

The hierarchical organisation of work in film sets can be fruitfully compared to the way theatre is produced. Performance studies scholar Gay McAuley (2008, 285) highlights the importance of the rehearsal period in theatre for the actors and director to find a form for the script together. In film,

pre-production is not a distinguishable moment where filmmakers come together. It is fragmented and usually coheres around the director and the producer over many years. It is only in the moment of production that the majority of the team join the project. Hence room for improvisation and exploration together with the whole team is minimal, and more responsibility falls on the director. This is the case even more so, Jon emphasised to me in discussion, since budgets for independent films are tight. Expensive shoot days have to be vigilantly planned and executed beforehand so that the individual creative expertise can be made use of effectively in the limited time frame.

Ownership, not authorship, in managing look and continuity through screens

> *I find myself crammed into a tiny bathroom, sitting on the edge of the bathtub, watching the lead actor Ruaridh's face on a monitor. The standby art director Martin and script supervisor Cristin are sitting next to me. Outside in the corridor there are dozens of other people, also peeping at their handheld monitors. They all have eyes on the set where the actors, director, camera, sound and lights are – where the picture is made.* (Tuusa, field notes from *Sebastian*, April 3, 2023)

This scene from *Sebastian* depicts the main character Max (Ruaridh Mollica) typing on his computer in his bedroom. The scene, like all of the film, was shot on location. Compared to shooting in the studio like I described in the previous field note from *Raptures*, it is much more difficult to cram all of the crew and equipment into location. Here, only the absolutely essential crew like the director and camera operators were in the heart of the set, in the bedroom. The rest of us were dotted around the house wherever we could fit, and followed the action from monitors and earpieces. Being further away from the "action", I paid attention to different aspects of filmmaking.

On film sets there are many more crew members besides the ones discussed in the previous section. These are filmmakers such as prop masters, standby costumers and make-up artists. In shooting *Sebastian*, they all had a live feed of the camera's image either on bigger monitors or their own handheld devices such as tablets and phones. According to Ihde (1990, p. 85), human-technology relations of this kind are hermeneutic, meaning that they provide a link to a referent outside the technology–to the set–yet the immediate perceptual focus is in the technology–the screen. To take an example, the standby art director Martin used the live feed on his tablet for establishing how the set is dressed for each shot. On top of that, he monitored the set's continuity and ageing via taking screenshots. At one point, when the set was being prepared for the next scene, Martin noted that a pile of books by Breton Easton Ellis on Max's table should be changed. In the timeline of the film, Max had been due to interview the author for the magazine where he works at, but last minute, the interview had been given to someone else. Martin's reasoning was that surely, after his disappointment of being pulled from the interview, Max would not want to have those books on the table anymore to remind him of the disappointment. So, from the bathroom Martin could see that the image was not right for continuity reasons, and thus he left the bathroom to go and change what books were piled on the table The screen here provided a hermeneutic relation to the set. For the majority of the crew, cinematic technology on set was used in this way.

Here, even if Martin's work was self-led in that no one told him to change the books, his decisions to do so was governed by the script. He brought this up out loud, and our other fellow bathroom companion Cristin, consulting the script, agreed. Indeed, Cristin made a point of the importance of the script as the document that they all "work for". This shows how each individual worked towards a mutual goal, rather than working for "someone", indicating that the joint commitment of working as a single body was actively felt and sovereignly executed, rather than resulting from active top-down directorial control.

To achieve a good quality of image, what emerges as important is then the synchronisation of individual filmmakers' creative expertise in the filmmaking situation. As exemplified by Cristin and Martin's small exchange about the Bret Easton Ellis books, constant mental, emotional and physical effort is put into establishing an idea among the filmmakers of what is it that "we are seeing": what is the intended mood of each shot, how these shots work as a scene, but also how scenes make sense in the continuity of the whole film and the things it wants to express. It could be argued that the better this synchronisation works, the more "unified" the work of the "body of filmmakers" will seem to the spectators. For example, noting the detail about the books was particularly significant in this production, since the story is set in a literary world and plays with many literary references. This kind of synchronisation happens to an extent before the shoot when filmmakers read the script. An important continuation of this synchronisation happens in the set with the help of technologies that provide a non-stop feedback loop of what is going on in the set in real time and what the image looks like. In this process, countless of micro-decisions are made by all of the filmmakers in a process that is thoroughly inter-subjective and emerging from its technological-material conditions.

Impressed by this collaborative nature of the filmmaking, I asked Cristin about his view on the film crew's authorship over the film. He dismissed the term completely.

> *It would mess things up. It's meant to be someone else's art. Everybody follows the script for how they do their job.* (Cristin, 3.4.2023)

This is in line with what Caldwell (2013) notes about below-the-line work: contractually, and in self-assessment of their own work, film crew members regularly attribute authorship to the above-the-line members of the filmmaking team, such as the director, Director of Photography, actors, and the producer. To explain how he understands his own role, Cristin started talking about ownership. According to him, crew members all have their own role within the film, and they feel strong ownership over that particular thing.

What Cristin's role entailed is the use of a continuity sheet to mark down details of each scene, shot, and take. This includes marking down camera angles, especially eye lines, so that scenes that are due back-to-back flow technically correctly and do not, for example, cross the "line". "Crossing the line" refers to what is called the "180-degree rule". Imagine a scene with two characters, standing over a straight line extending to infinity. If a camera crosses over that line, going around to the other side, the character's positions are flipped on screen. So, part of Cristin's job was about ensuring that such mistakes do not happen on set and that editing can happen smoothly. For Cristin, ownership of his area within the production seemed to be a source of pride, signalling professionalism. He rejected any claim to authorship, saying that his job is to serve someone else's vision. The separation of ownership and authorship indicates an understanding that filmmakers work together as a single body with a joint commitment, while pointing to the fact that this creative collaboration does not equal co-authoring.

A similar negotiation between authorship and collaborative expertise came across in the way the directors of both *Raptures* and *Sebastian* talked about their own work. For example, on a zoom call with Mikko during the pre-production of *Sebastian*, he told me that he was collecting references for the heads of the art and costume departments so that when they start their work, they would "know what I am looking for". This is an example of how authorial control can be exercised in collaborative work: first from the screenwriter-director to the heads of departments, and then to the people in their teams, and then again, on to the set, supervised by the same screenwriter-director who gave the initial instructions. This type of social organisation of work points towards placing

"sufficient authorial control" in the hands of the single-author. Control and collaboration however coexist. When I asked the *Raptures* director Jon directly about who he thinks a film "belongs to", he responded:

> *The film comes from me but it goes through all these people and it wouldn't have been the same thing if it was other people it went through in the whole process. Everyone who gets involved changes the outcome of it.* (J. Blåfield, interview transcript, May 2, 2024).

Similarly to Mikko then, Jon sees his authorial influence as a significant structuring force of the film, while recognising that his vision is by no means translated from his mind to the screen directly.

This illustrates that while filmmakers acting as a single body is in many ways a useful and apt way to illustrate the nature of collaborative expertise in filmmaking, it must be recognised that single-authorial frameworks have a strong impact upon the organisation and the outcome of said work. Equally, it is not a given that people need or want authorial credit. Crew members take professional pride in their work of building and acting on someone else's vision. Even if filmmakers do co-author, like in the instance of a Director of Photography and director working together, the legal and institutional frameworks around film authorship name the director as the author. Thus, the idea of genuine co-authoring raised by Bacharach and Tollefsen (2015, p. 333) where "all take responsibility as a group for the contents … and they decide as a group how they want to allocate credit", does not generally happen on film sets. Very few films of a professional scale are after all made by collectives, and even beyond auteur's film, most follow a strict organisational structure where some people are more responsible than others.

Conclusion

Based on my two case studies, it is fruitful to say that a "plural subject" (Bacharach and Tollefsen, 2010) which I have here termed the body of filmmakers makes films. Concretely, this means that several bodies dispersed across space and time aspire to, with the help of technologies, create a film that upon viewing, comes across as if it was created by a single body. However, the body of filmmakers is very large and complex. In this paper I have merely scratched the surface. I have discussed how the camera operators' creative expertise in the embodied use of the camera technologies is concretely perceivable to the viewers of the film. In this sense the camera operators have a direct influence on the way the "body of filmmakers" "sees" the film's world. Filmmakers who are crafting the look of the film and managing continuity with the help of screens make sure that from the viewers' perspective, the way the film unfolds is not only faithful to the script, but unified and plausible. The management of look and continuity is then equally important in creating the illusion of a "single body" behind the camera.

The body of filmmakers achieve their joint commitment by working within a professional organisational structure with clearly defined roles. The work is structured by documents such as the script, the call sheet and the shot breakdown, and the management of the work is distributed across the director, assistant directors, and the heads of department. In the auteur's film like *Raptures* and *Sebastian*, creative control across the production is largely consolidated to a single-author: the screenwriter-director. These films were conceived of, scripted and directed by Blåhed and Mäkelä respectively.

The auteurist social organisation suggests that working together as a "single body" does not equal co-authoring. Instead, it speaks to the necessity of "sufficient control" in claiming authorship (Livingston, 2011). Yet, this does not mean that other filmmakers cannot claim any authorship.

Especially heads of departments have creative control over the way their department will execute on the script. These decisions are often made in conversation with the director-screenwriter; hence they can be considered co-authored. Beyond that, all filmmakers are expected to make independent micro-decisions and offer creative input based on their expertise to the heads of departments or director. This shows that filmmaking in an active and lived sense is based on creative collaboration of a body of filmmakers, rather than any single body of an author.

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