

*Panel 1: Visuality and Gendered Body Across Borders*

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**The Cinema of the Real: A Transnational Paradigm**

In the South Korean film *The Front Line* (Jang Hun, 2011), set during the Korean War, there is a scene in which South Korean soldiers are waiting for a battle against the Chinese army to begin. In the glare of illumination flares is the sea of the Chinese soldiers, its sheer size is enough to completely cover battlefield, sweeping down upon South Korean soldiers. Here, the mountain range functions as a threshold, across which the traumatic encounter with the Real occurs: from the vanishing point at which the mountain stands, which serves as the limit of seeing, the Other emerges to annihilate the subject.

In Werner Herzog's *Aguirre: The Wrath of God* (1972), a significant body of water, the Amazon River, surrounds a curtain of forest, marking the limit of seeing, the opaque, impenetrable perspectival point. On this waterway, which endlessly extends the space of looking while simultaneously prohibiting true visual penetration, Aguirre's expedition team, which had come to seek El Dorado, is decimated by arrows flying above the line of vision. The subject encounters the Real of imperial history at the point at which the visual penetration fails. In a Lacanian context, the Real is that which reveals how the pre-given order of things really works. The Real ruptures "reality" and in that rupturing, ideology and subjectivity collapses.

These films exemplify what I call the cinema of the Real. It frames the emergence of the Real in various national and cultural contexts. In this paper, I demonstrate how the cinema of the Real transforms the visual field itself into the field of the Real. The cinema of the Real also transforms the spectator into a subject of the Real: Through the violent shattering of subjectivity and encountering the Real, which the visual form produces, the subject of the Real emerges. I focus on how, in certain films, a point of view, that of the spectator, works as a conduit through which the visual field of the Real opens up. The spectator inhabits the Real, in addition to just seeing and encountering an object that signifies or marks the eruption of the Real. This departs from the prevalent mode of theorizing the Real in cinema. The questions I raise are: What does the Real look or feel like, and how does film visualize the subject's encounter with the Real; and how does film resolve or refuse to resolve the problem of the Real.