

The imagination of early Hollywood: movie-land and the magic cities, 1914–1916

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Imagination: the action of imagining – or forming a mental concept of what is not actually present to the senses; the result of this process, a mental image or idea.
Oxford English Dictionary

What does it mean to speak of “movie-land”? In her 1915 essay for *Feature Movie Magazine*, reporter Edith Johnson obsessively lauds the land of movies as a locus of the “real”, a topography far removed from the parameters of the stage where “painted scenery, lights, etc., all add to the illusion”. But “[i]n movieland”, she intones, “there is real scenery, the forests and streams form the backgrounds, and when the brave girl plunges into the sea ... she is required to take a real plunge into a real-for-sure sea”.¹ Not everyone, of course, appreciated a “real-for-sure sea”, and it may be Geraldine Farrar’s lack of water skills that brought her “Home Again from Movie Land”, as the *New York Times* headlined in August 1915, thus announcing the diva’s resumption of stage roles following her brief hiatus with the Lasky Company.² That the realism of movie-land was itself “staged” is visibly evidenced in a 1916 essay carried by the *Illustrated World*, titled simply “Stagey Realism in Movie-Land”, which relays the monumental feats involved in constructing, performing, and shooting scenes “on-location”.³ Even so, the emphasis on a capacious topography that far exceeds the measured steps available on a rectilinear stage remains. The finite border movie-land most emphatically exceeds, however, is that implied by the frame and screen. As Rufus Steele exclaimed to readers of *Ladies’ Home Journal* in 1915, the “narrow eye” of the camera catches but a mere portion of the land “behind the screen”, the dimensions of which have “suddenly become just as big as all indoors and all outdoors combined”.⁴ Notwithstanding this writer’s noisy emphasis on novelty, on the temporal flash of the “suddenly”, one need only recall Eileen Bowser’s detailed account of the “wanderings of the motion picture studios” that began in earnest around 1908 to question what, precisely, was new in this ballyhoo surrounding “movie-land” by the mid 1910s?⁵ Glancing back a few years one finds that the Kalem Company settled a small studio base in Jacksonville, Florida, around 1908 and established a traveling company under the direction of Sidney Olcott that shot films in Germany, Ireland, the Middle East and Rome between 1910 and 1912. Based in Brooklyn, New York, the Vitagraph Company announced a trip to Paris in 1909, while traveling companies were sent to

Jamaica and Maine, with a winter filming company established in San Diego, California, at the end of 1910. William Selig’s Polyscope Company shortly joined in the venture, spiraling outward from its central base in Chicago to set up a winter company in Jacksonville in 1910 and another in Los Angeles in 1911, while simultaneously shipping touring companies to New Orleans, Mexico, and Japan. Without pausing to account for every such studio mobilized in these years, this abridged list sufficiently hints that the wealth of on-location activities associated with movie-land, and concurrently the public’s perception of an increasingly powerful and pervasive American-based business, emerges well before the mid 1910s. How then, amid such an obvious continuum, do we pinpoint any historical difference? Why did “movie-land” become such a ubiquitous word, one suggestive of an equally ubiquitous space, between 1914 and 1916? A provisional answer is deduced by reflecting upon Bowser’s chapter title: “Detours on the Way to Hollywood”. If the years between 1908 and 1914 can be accurately termed a detour, then the logical conclusion to draw is that by 1914 we have arrived, so to speak, at Hollywood itself.

This is slippery ground indeed, for it raises the question: “where” is Hollywood? Geography presents itself, and in turn presents a puzzle. A contemporary perspective might assert that the term “Hollywood” maps a particular geographical space occupying several miles that stretch between Ventura and Wilshire Boulevards in Los Angeles, incorporating parts of Griffith Park in the northwest and bounded by Beverly Hills in the southeast. This Hollywood is a neighborhood (one of three in the U.S. that share the name “Hollywood”, as do twenty-three other townships ranging in location from West Virginia to North Carolina, Florida, Texas, Idaho, Oregon, etc.) and certainly not a center of American film production. Confronted with such a muddled geography, the reader searching for more literal ground might point directly to those infamous letters boldly anchored to a hill that capitalize HOLLYWOOD before recognizing, of course, that the literal here is entirely figural, nothing more (and nothing less) than a sign. Moreover, this sign has a history. It was erected in 1923 by a real estate development company, headed by comedy director Mack Sennett and by *Los Angeles Times* publisher David Chandler, with the purpose of luring investors to purchase specific tracts of land – indeed, the sign initially read “HOLLYWOODLAND” until 1950, when the latter four letters were removed in an effort by the Parks and Recreation department to more easily effect the sign’s massive upkeep.⁶

I do not mean to suggest that when we speak of “Hollywood”, whether its early or late incarnations, that geography is not important. The migration westward of studio companies to California increases exponentially throughout the 1910s, and the business of building massive studio complexes in and around Los Angeles determines, in part, a significant component of movie-land’s historical formation in the years between 1914 and 1916. Emphatically, however, studio complexes built in Florida, New Jersey, New York, and Philadelphia also impressed. It is precisely the ubiquitous tension in these years between the settling, building and mapping of a geographically specific place, and the marked obfuscation of where this place might be, which effects a rhetorical recoil that relocates what I am calling early Hollywood – or “movie-land” as it was termed then – to an imaginary space, or to a mode of imagining, to a way of thinking about the American film industry as a spectral phenomena never entirely available to the senses, yet one relentlessly geared to producing sensational affects.

One need not travel far to find that sensational fiscal and topographical calculations underlie the discourse at stake. Indeed the “million dollar investment” that William Fox paid in 1916 to build a “Great Film City” on Long Island, reportedly covering 11 acres of land, neatly competed with reports of “Inceville”, rebuilt in Culver City that

same year, which also represented an "investment of practically a million dollars" although the complex in this case covered "15 acres of property".⁷ In Los Angeles the Selig Company's Jungle-Zoo, built to support the company's "real wild animal dramas", opened in June 1915 and was hailed as an enterprise of extraordinary proportions, although the exact proportions were occasionally in question. According to *Motography*, Selig's "wonder-plant" covered "twenty-two acres" and the "mammoth gateway with its arch of elephants leading into the Jungle-Zoo alone represents an outlay of \$50,000". According to *Moving Picture World*, the "ornate entrance, on which alone \$60,000 was spent", opened onto a park comprised, in their calculations, of "thirty-two acres".⁸ Regardless of such quirks in statistical regularity, these "striking monuments to the growth of the film industry" made clear that moving pictures were no longer a cheap amusement, much less a mechanical toy.⁹ To the contrary, as the U.S. Supreme court declared in 1915, motion pictures comprise "a business pure and simple, originated and conducted for profit".¹⁰

A business, yes, but emphatically one neither "pure" nor "simple". In the case of Selig's Wonder-Zoo, for instance, the business of making movies merged seamlessly with the studio's function as a public park. According to reporter G.P. von Harleman, the Selig grounds beget the "playground of Los Angeles".¹¹ Elsewhere, Selig forged an alliance with the railway industry to mount the "Selig-Feature Movie Exposition Special", a 17-day tour that took visitors from Chicago to Los Angeles on a trip to experience "life, laughter and the wonders of an unfolding fairyland". What unfolded more specifically was the combined attractions of grand-scale train travel, the spectacle of filmmaking, the wonders of the zoo, and the marvels of the San Francisco and San Diego Expositions.¹² Dedicated to celebrating the first month of the park's public opening, this gala event magnified the daily tourism available to any interested spectator, who could access the park by riding one of the jitney buses, if not the daily city street car, whose routes from the center of Los Angeles to the jungle-zoo's location were established in conjunction with the park's opening. One could also ride the bus to Universal City, the opening of which predated the Jungle-Zoo by three months.¹³ Known in the press as the "Magic Village", later as the "Ninth Wonder of the World", the built compound and its "colossal facilities" reportedly drew "four or five hundred casual visitors" every day that were willing to pay the cost of "25 cents admission to the grounds".¹⁴

To be sure, the grand-scale tourism marking the enterprises of Selig and Laemmle proved difficult acts to follow, and visits to studio environments elsewhere took place on a smaller, albeit notable, scale. In the spring of 1914, when the Kalem Company opened their St. Augustine studio in Jacksonville, Florida, they hosted a "housewarming" for "local city officials and prominent society folk" as well as for "members of the film colony", particularly the "Edison and Lubin companies".¹⁵ Whether or not Siegmund Lubin extended a similar courtesy to the "Kalemites" to visit "Lubinville" in Pennsylvania is unclear, although he reportedly took pleasure in "showing visitors through the wonderful plant and expatiating upon the mechanical marvels of the place".¹⁶ Marvels, too, were on display in Edendale, California, where the Keystone company—alternately dubbed "Sennetburgh" and "Keystonia" by the press—had mushroomed from a "tiny corner lot" in 1912 to "one of the largest studio sites in the entire industry" by 1916, and was heralded by reporter Mabel Condon as "one of the most likeable studios in the whole industry". Although tours were never planned, Condon lured her readers with the possibility, inciting them to reflect: "one of the happiest penalties you might receive would be a sentence of a day or more to be spent on the Keystone lot".¹⁷

What emerges so distinctively from these accounts is an unprecedented fascination

with the "place" of motion pictures, a destination at once visible and spectacular. Even those of a less grandiose nature riveted attention, routed through itineraries drawn by newspaper reporters like Kitty Kelly, whose "Flickerings from Filmland" column in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* incorporated over twenty entries relaying her trip to California in the spring of 1915. After hopping aboard Carl Laemmle's "Universal Special" in Chicago, speeding south, and witnessing the gala event that put Universal's "motion picture municipality on the map", Kelly's itinerary spiraled outward.¹⁸ One day she "drifted out to the Majestic-Reliance studio" and browsed around, although it took a bit more dedication to reach the Essanay Company: "A ticket to Niles, a trip across the ferry, a short jaunt through an orchard blooming, poppy glowing country – and there you are in a regular cinematographic pocket". Regaling readers with her first view of the "long, low building topped by Essanay's familiar Indian head", Kelly ambles about the grounds, peeping into the barn to watch "Broncho Billy" Andersen's horse practice a few tricks, eyeing the people who "float about in make-up and flutter about in their Snakeville costumes", and sizing up the "row of little bungalows" located "back of the studio" where, as Margeurite Clayton explained, "all the people live".¹⁹

That the place where people live is also where they work emphasizes the singularity of the environment, its status as a contained *topos*. The reader may object, of course, that those bungalows assembled in the isolate stretch of country called Niles suggest nothing more than a practicality. But if the trip to Corona, Long Island, from greater New York proves a less treacherous commute, then it is worth noting the property William Fox purchased "adjacent" to the sixteen acres of his "Great Film City" for the purpose of building "cottages and homes of such persons as wish to live near their work".²⁰ In Philadelphia, likewise, motion picture people lived not in "the City of Brotherly Love" but at "Lubinville", which one writer in early 1914 described as a "community, distinct and complete", numbering "1000 inhabitants" on a property covering "five acres".²¹ The rhetorical stress on the "distinct" quality of the place trumpets its difference from an elsewhere, bounded from any exteriority; the majority of studios, in fact, were quite literally bounded by ornate entrances, gateway arches or, in more picturesque vein, as at the American Studio in Santa Barbara, by "a high wall of cream colored concrete, banked with masses of flowers and shrubbery".²² Thomas Ince, however, supplanted such pleasing flora with "an immense sign, the letters of which are plain enough to be seen and discerned nearly a half mile away", which he "erected atop the gatekeepers building" in late 1914. According to reporter W. E. Wing, "it reads, 'Inceville,' and has made such an impression upon Alma F. Young, the faithful stage-bus owner, who conveys the tardy ones to toil each day, that he has caused 'Inceville' to be numbered among the stops on his route, instead of 'Santa Ynez Canyon'".²³ The example is, in a word, exemplary, if we follow Michel deCerteau's assessment that proper names "make sense" of space: "in other words, they are the impetus of movements, like vocations and calls that turn or divert an itinerary by giving it a meaning (or a direction [*sens*]) that was previously unforeseen".²⁴

It may seem, at this point, that I have skirted an obvious prompt in our attempt to "make sense" of the American film industry's phenomenal expansion in these years by treating the lexicon of urbanism – evidenced most powerfully in "proper names" like the Fox Film City and Universal City – only elliptically. But this oblique approach proves a necessary prelude, since it is only from a side view, and with a bit of squinting, that these environments resemble the model of industrial urbanism initially exhibited by Baron Von Haussman's reconstruction of Paris in the mid-nineteenth century, where grand boulevards underlined by intricate sewer systems transformed medieval clutter into efficient thoroughfares, hence enabling the smooth and efficient circulation of people and goods. To be sure, the rhetoric of efficiency haunts the discourse we

have been tracing, "There is a saying", Henry MacMahon explained to readers of the *New York Evening Post*, "you can get anything you want at Inceville, for its activities are as complete as the modern city, despite the fact that it possesses only a few hundred inhabitants".²⁵ Despite such "complete" resemblance to the "activities" of a "modern city", however, the commercial imperative specific to movie-land – a space designed for making motion pictures – insinuates a radical difference, the most obvious being the wild proliferation of cities and towns, as well as people and animals, within the studio-grounds: a profusion that deranges the organization of place a metropolis proper seeks to propose.

The difficulty of delineating such an environment led some writers to express a "touch of hysteria after visiting the place", while others were convinced they had entered "bedlam".²⁶ The latter term comes from the story of "Bob", whose hunting party in the Santa Monica range, not knowing they had crossed the border into Inceville, suddenly encountered a "shock": "It was an Irish settlement, true to life. In our retreat down the gulch we ran the gamut of erratic emotions. For a bit of Switzerland, a peaceful Puritan settlement, and substantial colonies of various nations hastened our delusion that the Santa Ynez range had suddenly gone mad."²⁷ The writer's "delusion", a nice word for what is commonly called psychosis, bespeaks an inability to distinguish between the real and the illusory. But the point of the piece lies in the urge to incorporate what are otherwise antipathetic mental states, since the very ontology of "Inceville" is conditioned by its status as both a "Wonderland" and a "Complete Municipality". Other writers enter movie-land with a descriptive mode that initially lessens the image of the fantastical through the language of familiarity, an imago of the everyday. Hence, one pseudonymous author known only as "the Spectator" describes his tour of Universal City's lunchroom thus: "Three French maids ... ate their rhubarb pie calmly, while French artists in blouses were throwing dice with the man behind the lunch-counter. An Arab sheik with long white beard strode past, picking his teeth." If the ostensibly fantastical appears more and more "real" in this description – where the picking of teeth, the throwing of dice, and the calm eating of pie resemble the normative features of a familiar world – then the reverse is also true: the apparently "real" is rendered more and more fantastic. As "The Spectator" quickly adds: "We missed only one character – Alice. Surely Lewis Carroll's little girl would have been at home in the lunch-room of Universal City. One felt that if one clapped his hands the people would vanish. 'You're nothing but a pack of cards!'"²⁸

Curiously enough, things did vanish in movie-land. In *Feature Movie Magazine's* 1915 spotlight on William Selig's capacity to produce "all that is spectacular and elaborate in feature picture-plays", for instance, the writer offers an example: "In 'The Spoilers' Colonel Selig ordered an exact replica of the town of Nome, Alaska, to be erected and it was destroyed by dynamite, an action called for in Rex Beach's novel".²⁹ To "order" a "replica" may sound simple, but the labor involved in the construction of sites designed for destruction – which is to say, ironically, for motion picture production – surface with remarkable regularity. Readers of *Motography* learned that in preparation for an avalanche scene in *The Diamond From the Sky*, "artisans" at The American Studio in Santa Barbara were "mining and tunneling for several days so that the earth when it slid would have all the force and weight of a real avalanche [sic]".³⁰ If this flurry of artistic activity – erecting and dynamiting; mining, tunneling and sliding – insinuates a temporality that deranges the stability of place, the confusion may explain in part the uncertain location of the "Moorish city" and "ancient fortress" that William Fox allegedly built in order to "be destroyed by high explosives" in 1916 for the production of *Daughter of the Gods*. According to the *New York Times*, this "replica of a turreted, castled stronghold" was constructed on the coast of "the Island of Jamaica, British West

Indies", while *Current Opinion* offered an image of the set replete with a caption emphasizing: "No, this is not in Syria or Palestine, but is near Jamaica, Long Island, U.S.A." That is to say, near the Fox Film City.³¹

Perhaps nowhere is the marvelous lack of certitude associated with making movies more loudly inscribed than in Carl Laemmle's 1915 call to the public to "come and see" Universal's facilities, recently transformed to what the *Moving Picture World* described as a "whole town built for the production of motion pictures".³² Touting his City's attractions in a tone akin to that of a circus barker, Laemmle bellowed:

Come see the inside workings of the biggest moving picture plant in the wide, wide world – a whole city where everybody is engaged in the making of motion pictures, a fairyland where the craziest things in the world happen – a place to think about and talk about all the rest of your days! See how we blow up bridges, burn down houses, wreck automobiles and smash up things in general in order to give the people of the world the kind of pictures they demand. See how buildings have to be erected just for a few scenes of one picture then have to be torn down to make room for something else.³³

To "blow up" or "smash up", to "burn" or "wreck", to relentlessly "make room for something else": these practices are hailed as a sign of the times, specifically a sign of the "kind of pictures" demanded by the "people of the world". Yet Laemmle's jaunty *cri de coeur* does not direct attention to a view of any one picture per se, but rather to the spectacle of the processes of production and, ultimately, to the spectacle of the studio itself – "a whole city ... a fairyland" – designed to capture the public's interest and fascination.

As should be clear by now, the rhetorical conjunction of the urban and the mythological, the modern and the magical is salient to what I am calling the imagination of early Hollywood. But it is hardly new to the lexicon of film historical discourse. Without question, the most oft-cited example surfaces in Tom Gunning's description of the earliest cinema as one which attracted viewers not by virtue of the particular representation available on screen, but by virtue of the spectacle of the machine itself, the Bioscope, say, or the Cinematograph, each akin to "the display of technological wonders[s] ... of such widely exhibited machines and marvels as X-rays, or earlier the photograph".³⁴ That these marvels were widely exhibited at the World Expositions – at London in 1851, Chicago in 1893, or Paris in 1900 – is of particular interest in the present context, insofar as the historical development at stake is one in which the studio itself becomes an attraction commensurate not simply with the wonders exhibited at the Expositions, but with the wonder of the Exposition per se: an entirely constructed and fantastically drawn urban space – a whole city, a magic village, a fairyland.

Implicit in my argument here, of course, is the synchronic construction of the San Francisco Panama-Pacific Exposition of 1915 and San Diego's Panama-California Exposition of 1915–1916, each of which overlapped with movie-land's historical formation in a variety of ways. Although the phenomenological difference of these environments ultimately proves more compelling than their commensurability, it bears mention that when caricaturist Hy Mayer presented to readers of *Puck* a two-page sketch titled "In Universal City, A Moving-Picture Town", the editors described it as "a series of double pages made by Mr. Mayer on his recent trip to the two California Expositions".³⁵ The rhetorical slippage between the "where" of the place – a visit to the Expositions or to a Moving-Picture Town? – evinces the emblematic scrambling of these built environments, while the choice to render "Universal City" also evinces a representational preference. It is hardly coincidental that attempts to describe the mirth-making design of Keystone's "enormous and intricately linked stages", which

"generated a course that resembled a number of letter 'S's,' one running into and overlapping the other", would simply explain by way of comparison: "The House of Mirth' on the Zone at the San Francisco Exposition was, if anything, a little less intricate than is a stage of Keystone sets".³⁶

Comparisons of this sort not only favored movie-land; they also favored an innovative rhetorical mode and a touch of whimsy designed to reflect the fantastical proportions of the environment. Offering a "Chatty Description of Filmland's Contribution to the Wonders of California's Exposition Year", for instance, one writer for the *New York Dramatic Mirror* opened a view of Selig's Jungle Zoo in *medias res*; in the middle, that is, of an argument between its jungle folk. A tiger, complaining he had been cast in "an unpopular part" in a recent picture, is "admonished" by a lion who retorts: "Ain't I the king of beasts; and didn't they dissolve me into a coyote during a scene only yesterday? And you grouch around talking about trouble in the pictures?" More than simply mimicking the penchant for anthropomorphizing movie-land's animal attractions, this scenario emphasizes the metamorphic tricks played by the camera, the "dissolve" that turns one creature into another, just as "Colonel W. N. Selig, the modern wizard of motion pictures... was able to wave a practical but effective wand over a few gulches and lop-sided hills, dissolving the whole misfitting jumble into a royal garden".³⁷ Like the magician for whom the fixity elsewhere associated with form is rendered plastic – or, at best, entirely immaterial – these spectral environments seem to construe the limit, the very horizon, of the imagination's power of figuration. But before we leap to the conclusion that such chimerical shape-shifting proves movie-land's triumphant appeal over that of the Expositions, we note this writer's noisy claim that Selig's "exhibit" is at once "most attractive" and, emphatically, "permanent". This fantastical place is paradoxically a business; it has been built to last.

The paradox however is only apparent, since what movie-land flaunts is most precisely the fantasy of a particular *kind* of business and by extension the fantasy of a particular mode of production, one that involves the participation and interaction of an entire *polis*. Put sharply, the American film industry's privileged position in the dream world of modernity emerges from its capacity to envision a utopic place where the rationalizing imperatives of capitalism, the tyrannical regulation of time, and the numbing effects of assembly line labor, transform to a phenomenological realm of endlessly variegated metamorphosis and play. A comparison sharpens the point: if the World Exhibitions, in Walter Benjamin's keen assessment, enshrine "places of pilgrimage to the commodity fetish", then America's movie-land heralds wonder at what might best be termed a "production fetish".³⁸ The spectacular whirl of motion picture production, to recall Laemmle's harrumphing, surfaces most visibly as a "crazy" mode of destruction – the smashing up, burning up, or blowing up of things – but the lure of the apparently anti-rational suffuses most every operation. This is a place "Where Work is Play and Play is Work", to quote Universal Studio's characterization of its West Coast facilities as early as 1913, a phrase that Mark Cooper explicates in his elegant study of that studio's historical formation. Importantly, as Cooper notes, "play" functions in the studio's self-promoting lexicon as a rhetorical gesture that not only links labor to fun, but links the fun of "play" to the relentless mutability of the place. Play structures the environment itself, which *Universal Weekly* described as a place that "takes on the appearance of an Oriental city, again it is a Spanish garrison, still again an Indian Pueblo ... a frontier settlement, or an army post".³⁹ Play, then, insinuates a mode of labor that defies the laborious, including the physical laws that elsewhere govern solid matter; the standardization of space and time gives way to a phantasmagorical spatial-temporal fluidity.

In a much longer study, it would be possible to explore the paradoxical play whereby movie-land constitutes itself as an idealized world, a Utopia proper, uniquely capable of producing an ever greater, ever more idealized, future. The terms may not sound that unique after all, since every utopian vision, in a genealogy ranging from Plato's *Republic* and Thomas More's *Utopia* through Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *The Social Contract* and the blueprints of possibility envisioned by St. Simon in the context of nineteenth century modernity, construe the past or present as an idealized future, often in the topographical form of an isolated city or polis. "But while a picture of the future", observes philosopher Elizabeth Grosz, "the utopic is fundamentally that which *has no future*, that place whose organization is so controlled that the future ceases to be a pressing concern". Indeed, it is precisely against the idea of the new, the unforeseeable and unprepared for "event" that most fantasies of Utopia are developed to reassure us.⁴⁰ The imagination of movie-land – or early Hollywood, to invoke this term's future – alone provides a vision of Utopia constituted, precisely, by the production of contingency, constant change: a volatile and magical impermanence.

In lieu of any such extended investigation, let me conclude with a few remarks suggestive of *movie-land's* capacity to impact our historical imagination of the period. It is indeed necessary to stress this "spatial" interruption of a familiar linear historicism that uniformly charts a trajectory in which the presentational mode of the earliest "cinema of attractions", its flaunting of technological prowess and magical tricks, yields to a narrational system and a "realist effect" capable of absorbing the spectator; capable, that is, to borrow Miriam Hansen's neat summation, of "segregat[ing] the fictional space-time on the screen from the actual one of the theater or, rather, the subordination of the latter under the spell of the former".⁴¹ What I hope to have provoked into view is the ecstatic parameters of yet another space-time demanding our scrutiny, the distraction of which is nowhere more powerfully evinced than in a scenario envisioned by Rufus Steele in 1915 for readers of *Ladies' Home Journal*, which begins with the image of "two girls" who sit "in the pleasant twilight of a moving-picture theater":

One was round-eyed with absorption in the romance unfolding before them. The eyes of the other girl narrowed with a thought that was deeper than the story. At length, the thought found expression in a whisper.

'Were you ever filled with a desire to go straight through the screen and see just what is behind it?' she asked ... I mean ... just as Alice went through the looking-glass? What we see is nothing but the shadow. Don't you realize that somewhere all these interesting and exciting things are actually taking place?⁴²

The "somewhere" of the place poses a lure, and the lure is a ruse. Leading his reader "behind" the "shadow", Steele describes a place in which the material and geographical specificity of the "blue mountains" that are "indeed Californian" dissipate as soon as one begins to gaze: "for between the blue walls there moves a procession of events so heedless of all limitations of time and place as to leave one in little doubt that he has invaded the realm of the Grand Vizier". I have little doubt that further investigation of this realm will lead us, like Lewis Carroll's little girl, to a symbolic economy that is neither mirror nor symmetrical anti-matter to what we think we already know, but rather poses a historical riddle, the heuristics of which we may now begin to game.

Notes

1. Edith Johnson, "Realism in the Movies", *Feature Movie Magazine* 1.4 (5 May 1915): 39. [Hereafter *FMM*.]
2. "Our Geraldine is Home Again from Movie Land", *New York Times* (Aug. 22, 1915): X4.

3. "The Search for Realism in Movie-Land", *The Illustrated World* (Chicago, August, 1916), quoted in "Stagy 'Realism' in the Movies", *Literary Digest* 49 (19 August 1916): 1147.
4. Rufus Steele, "Behind the Screen: How the 'Movie' is Made in the Valley of the New Arabian Nights", *Ladies' Home Journal* (October 1915): 16.
5. Eileen Bowser, "Detours on the Way to Hollywood", *The Transformation of Cinema* (New York: Scribner's, 1990), 149-165.
6. See "The Hollywood Sign", an on-line history published by National Public Radio (NPR), at www.npr.org/programs/morning/features/pat/hollywoodsign/index.html Charlie Keil also discusses the history of the sign in an unpublished paper, "'They Make Movies There': Hollywood as a Fantasy of the Everyday". I thank the author for generously sharing his fascinating study.
7. See, respectively "William Fox to Build Great Film City", *Motography* (22 January 1916): 171, and "Ince Culver City Studios Now Open", *Motography* (5 February 1916): 289.
8. See George Blaisdell, "Great Selig Enterprise", *Moving Picture World* (10 July 1915): 227; and "Selig's Jungle-Zoo Soon to be Opened", *Motography* (3 April 1915): 517-518.
9. The quoted phrase is found in "Splendid Ince Studios Complete", *Motography* (8 July 1916): 440.
10. Quoted in Thomas Schatz, *Hollywood Genres: Formulas, Filmmaking and the Studio System* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981), 4.
11. G.P. von Harleman, "Motion Pictures Studios of California: A Review of the Wonderful Development of the Film Producing Industry on the Pacific Coast", *Moving Picture World* (10 March 1917): 1599.
12. See "The Selig-Feature Movie Special", *FMM* (10 June 1915): 42. This six-page exposé offers detailed accounts of every aspect of the trip, including lavish accounts of the scenery and views passed along the railway line, and promises participants the opportunity to watch Kathlyn Williams "make a movie". See also Kitty Kelly, "Flickerings from Film Land: Are You Going? It's Selig Special Day", *Chicago Daily Tribune* (8 July 1915): 14. [Hereafter *CDT*.]
13. An exquisite account of the ballyhoo surrounding Universal City's opening is retailed in the opening chapter of Richard Kosarski's *An Evening's Entertainment: The Age of the Silent Feature Picture, 1915-1928* (Berkeley: University of California Press) 1990.
14. See "Universal's Unique City: A Town Built for the Production of Motion Pictures", *Moving Picture World* (10 July 1915): 231.
15. "Two Views of the New Kalem St. Augustine Studio", *New York Dramatic Mirror* (April 29, 1914): 28. [Hereafter, *NYDM*.]
16. Esther Penington, "On the Inside at Lubinville", *Photoplay Magazine* (February 1915): 133.
17. See Mabel Condon, "Keystone: The Home of Mack Sennett and the Film Comedy", *NYDM* (9 September 1916): 33.
18. The quoted phrase comes from Kitty Kelly, "Flickerings From Film Land: World's First Film City Opens Its Gates", *CDT* (17 March 1915): 14. For details of the reporter's trip west, see her "Flickerings from Film Land" columns in the *CDT*, respectively "'Specialing' with the Universals" (March 13, 1915): 15; "Universal Special Reaches Filmland" (15 March 1915): 14; "Kitty Writes from the Grand Canyon" (16 March 1915): 10; and "Specialing Aboard a Prairie Liner" (20 March 1915): 12.
19. Kitty Kelly, "Flickerings from Film Land: Kitty Visits the Essanay Studio", *CDT* (April 2, 1915): 23. On the trip to Majestic-Reliance, see Kitty Kelly, "Flickerings from Film Land: With Fay Tincher Off the Screen", *CDT* (26 March 1915): 20.
20. "William Fox to Build Great Film City", *Motography* (22 January 1916): 171. Slight modifications to such a plan appeared when the Gaumont Company "tripled" the size of its plant in Flushing, Long Island, without incorporating living conditions, although general manager F.G. Bradford clarified that "stock" members of the company "are planning to buy or lease homes in Flushing to be near their work". See "Gaumont to Triple Present Plant", *Motography* (18 December 1915): 1277.
21. "Lubinville", *NYDM* (14 January 1914): 65.
22. "The American Studio", *Moving Picture World* (10 July 1915): 255.
23. W.E. Wing, "On the Pacific Coast", *New York Dramatic Mirror* (6 January 1915): 23.

24. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 104.
25. Henry MacMahon, quoted in "The Romance of Making the 'Movies,'" *Literary Digest* (23 October 1915): 902.
26. The first quoted phrase comes from "A Visit to Selig's Jungle Zoo: A Chatty Description of Filmland's Contribution to the Wonders of California's Exposition Year", *NYDM* (27 January 1915): 46.
27. See "Tom Ince, of Inceville: The Wonderland Which Began with One Stage and Now Covers an Investment of \$35,000 - A Complete Municipality", *NYDM* (24 December 1913): 34.
28. "The Spectator", *Outlook* (4 August 1915): 823.
29. "Colonel Selig: President, Selig Polyscope Company", *FMM* (10 June 1915): 41.
30. "Another Thrill for Serial", *Motography* (29 May 1915): 887.
31. See, respectively, "At Least \$500,000,000 Invested in 'Movies,'" *New York Times* (2 January 1916): SM20, and "Giants of the Stage are Pygmies Artistically on the Screen", *Current Opinion* (July 1918): 30.
32. See "Universal's Unique City: A Town Built for the Production of Motion Pictures", *Moving Picture World* (10 July 1915): 231.
33. Carl Laemmle's announcement appeared in *Universal Weekly*, as quoted in Clive Hirschorn, *The Universal Story* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1983), 12-13.
34. Tom Gunning, "The Cinema of Attraction: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde", *Wide Angle* 8.3/4 (1986): 66.
35. Hy Mayer, "In Universal City, A Moving-Picture Town", *Puck* (29 May 1915): 77.
36. See Mabel Condon, "Keystone: The Home of Mack Sennett and the Film Comedy", *NYDM* (9 September 1916): 33. It is also true that Keystone in particular exploited the California expositions as sets built for hilarious indirection, prominently displayed in two 1915 shorts, *Fatty and Mabel at the San Francisco Exposition* and *Fatty and Mabel at the San Diego Fair*.
37. "A Visit to Selig's Jungle Zoo", *ibid*.
38. Walter Benjamin, "Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century [Exposé of 1935]", *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1999), 7.
39. The *Universal Weekly* entry, "Where Work is Play and Play is Work", appeared in the December 1913 issue, as quoted in Mark Cooper, "Work Space: Universal City", unpublished paper, presented at the fourth international "Women and the Silent Screen" conference, Guadalajara Mexico, June 2006.
40. Elizabeth Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2001), 139.
41. Miriam Hansen, *Babel & Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1991), 83.
42. Rufus Steele, "Behind the Screen", 16.