LAYERING IMAGES, THWARTING FABLES:

DELEUZE, RANCIÈRE AND THE ALLEGORIES OF CINEMA

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In "From One Image to Another," Jacques Rancière offers one of the most illuminating evaluations of Gilles Deleuze's film philosophy. Taken as a whole, the chapter presents a devastating critique of Deleuze's theory of cinema. Rancière offers two distinct arguments: the first one addresses the connection between ontology and history; the second one involves the relationship between theory and its exemplification.

The tension between ontology and history in the *Cinema* books becomes apparent in the break Deleuze proposes between classical and modern cinema. Rancière questions whether an internal development in the natural history of images — the passage from the movement-image to the time-image — could correspond to the historical distinction between classical and modern cinema.[1] Rancière's second argument takes issue with the way in which Deleuze interweaves the ontology of cinema with its fables. Rancière claims that, despite privileging the undetermined molecular world over the system of representation, Deleuze's "analyses always come to center on the 'hero' of a story."[2] Paradoxically, Deleuze's attempt to do away with the representative tradition relies on an allegorical fable emblematic of the collapse of representation.

My claim is not that Rancière's arguments are incorrect but rather that they involve a perspective foreign to Deleuze's ontology. In relation to Rancière's first argument, I suggest that Deleuze evokes social history to explain not a development in the natural history of images but our lack of belief in the action-image. In relation to Rancière's second argument, I claim that it relies on the

assumption that fable and image entertain a dialectical — rather than an expressive — relationship. In evaluating Rancière's criticism of Deleuze, I aim at offering an alternative account of these two apparent contradictions in Deleuze's film philosophy. To put Deleuze and Rancière in dialogue, it will become necessary to apply some pressure to Deleuze's terminology, expressing a few of the concepts Rancière evokes in his argument — primarily *character* and *fable* — in terms of the *Cinema* books' ontology of images. The essay is organized in six sections: the first one distinguishes the four layers in the which the image operates; the second and third sections discuss two theses that serve as building blocks for Rancière's argument that Deleuze maps an ontological distinction onto a historical one; the fourth one discusses this argument in detail; the fifth and sixth sections examine the relationship between theory and example.

I. AN IMAGE UPON ANOTHER

One of the difficulties of the *Cinema* books is that everything in its universe is an image that differs from others only by degree. These differences in terms of degree become stratified in at least four different layers. To evaluate Rancière's rhetorical moves, it is first necessary to distinguish these layers, which I refer to as *transcendental*, *ontological*, *regulative* and *semiotic*.

The transcendental layer refers to the material field from which Deleuze deducts both natural and cinematographic perception.[3] Of course, this layer is not transcendental in the traditional Kantian sense of an ideality that serves as the condition of possibility of all experience.[4] For Deleuze, this transcendental layer is, paradoxically, also material or empirical.[5] In Spinozist terms, this transcendental materialism denotes the parallel expression of substance as *natura naturans*

(expressing itself as cause of itself) and *natura naturata* (expressing itself as material effects).[6] Deleuze translates Spinoza's affirmation of a single substance into "the laying out of a *common plane of immanence* on which all minds, all bodies, and all individuals are situated."[7]

In the context of the *Cinema* books, Deleuze offers a Bergsonian understanding of the plane of immanence as "a set of movement-images; a collection of lines or figures of light; a series of blocs of space-time."[8] Deleuze presupposes/constructs this plane of immanence (a world of universal variation without any centers in which all images act and react in relation to one another), which is interrupted by an interval (a gap between action and reaction). This interruption creates a double system of reference in which images vary both in relation to all others and in relation to the interval, generating centers of indetermination or horizons within the plane of immanence.[9]

The ontological layer is concerned with the varieties of world images that result from this double system. At first, only three images emerge: the perception-image, the action-image and the affection-image. Most ontologies identify entities with bodies, distinguishing them in relation to their qualities and their possible actions or passions; Deleuze's ontology does not privilege bodies over actions or qualities, regarding all of them as images (the only entities in this ontology), which may be regarded in relation to their bodies (perception-images), their actions (the action-image) or their qualities (affection-image).[10] Once images cease to be referred to their sensory-motor function, they may enter relations with one another in memory, time or thought, and even develop internal relations between their components. The images that emerge in this new context — the recollection-image, the dream-image and the crystal-image — are entities in the same right.

Both the regulative and the semiotic layers are exclusively cinematic, offering corresponding images to the transcendental and ontological layers, respectively.

As obverse considerations of world images — one oriented from the interval toward the sensory-motor system and another from the collapsed sensory-motor system toward the interval — the movement-image and the time-image operate at a regulative level, offering the conditions for the emergence and legibility of cinematic images. Deleuze refuses to understand cinema as an apparatus of representation because the cinema does more than represent bodies, their qualities and their actions or passions. For Deleuze, the cinema is an apparatus that creates images of its own.

The semiotic layer involves the creation of these cinematic images. Some of these images take the name of world-images (the perception-image, the action-image, the affection-image, the recollection-image, the dream-image), whereas others have no correspondence to world images (chronosigns, lectosigns, noosigns). Although some cinematic images are named after world images, these are distinct kinds of images: unlike world images, cinematic images consist of three signs (a genetic sign, which accounts for the constitution of the image, and two signs that refer to the poles of the image's composition).[11]

In following Deleuze's discussion about each particular image, one should pay attention to the layer in which each image is located. If Deleuze uses the same terms to refer, on the one hand, to the transcendental and the regulative layers and, on the other, to the ontological and semiotic layers, it is only to stress that the cinema utilizes world images as its signaletic material.[12] In the cinema, the image's double system of reference divides itself into two possible readings of the connections among images, not only turning world images into signs but also creating images that would not exist in a world without cinema. Throughout the rest of the essay, I will be evoking these distinct layers to evaluate Rancière's argument.

II. THE EMANCIPATED PHANTOM

This section discusses a thesis Rancière utilizes as a building block for his argument about Deleuze's problematic mapping of an ontological distinction onto a historical distribution. The thesis, which is in fact correct, is that the movement-image prefigures the time-image. I aim to specify in which sense we should understand this prefiguration, making clear which layers are involved in this foreshadowing of the time-image.

Rancière begins his critique by conceiving of Deleuze's theory of cinema as the solid philosophical foundation of André Bazin's intuition about a distinction between classical and modern cinema. Like Bazin, Deleuze locates the break between classical and modern cinema in Italian neorealism and in the films of Orson Welles. Deleuze replaces Bazin's distinction between imagists (filmmakers who believe in the image) and realists (filmmakers who believe in reality) with a distinction between the movement-image (organized according to the sensory-motor schema) and the time-image (characterized by the rupture of the sensory-motor schema). Despite this difference, Rancière argues, both Bazin and Deleuze fall into the circularity of modernist theory to the extent that their conception of modern cinema is prefigured already in classical cinema. The rupture both Bazin and Deleuze propose is simply "a required episode in the edifying narrative through which each art proves its own artistry by complying with the scenario of a modernist revolution in the arts wherein each art attests to its own perennial essence."[13]

Deleuze himself seems to embrace this modernist thesis when he writes that "[t]he direct time image is the phantom which has always haunted the cinema" and that "it is never at the beginning that something new, a new art, is able to reveal its essence."[14] At the transcendental level, the time-image inheres the movement-image

almost from the very beginning. Deleuze follows Bergson in presupposing a plane of immanence that would constitute the infinite set of all images. At this point, time does not yet exist. As Deleuze writes, the variants of the movement-image "depend on new conditions and certainly cannot appear for the moment."[15] These variants appear with special kinds of images, which create intervals by absorbing an action and delaying a response. These intervals constitute, by means of this incurvation of the universe, both time and the three basic images of the movement-image. At this point, the ontological layer unfolds upon the transcendental layer. In a certain sense, the interval that interrupts the plane of immanence is the phantom that has always haunted the cinema.

However, time doesn't yet become apparent to the extent that the interval becomes immediately occupied by one of these images—the affection-image. Clearly, it is not as the transcendental plane of immanence that the movement-image prefigures the time-image. In the passage from the transcendental to the ontological layers, we can only speak of an occlusion of the interval, occlusion necessary for the emergence of world images. This double process of interruption and occlusion only serves as the transcendental/ontological condition for the two obverse readings of the orientation of world images.

We can speak of prefiguration proper only within the cinema, that is, between the semiotic and the regulative layers. The cinematic image that prefigures the time-image is precisely the affection-image, precisely because affection is "what occupies the interval, what occupies it without filling it in or filling it up."[16] The affection-image ceases to appear in terms of its degree of specification, orienting itself instead toward the interval it occupies. This prefiguration amounts to the possibility of creating images that are no longer extended into the sensory-motor schema within the rarefied spaces of the affection-image. In other words, the affection-image ceases to be considered in terms of its weakened sensory-motor schema to become

considered in terms of its virtual relation to other images that such weakening enables. The affection-image lies at the heart of the time-image not as a phantom but as the rarefied space that makes possible a reversal toward the interval.

III. FROM WORLD TO CINEMA

Another thesis that underlies Rancière's argument about Deleuze's mapping of an ontology onto a historical design is concerned with the relationship between world images and cinematic images. According to Rancière, Deleuze's thesis that the world is composed of images implies that cinema is not an art but the name of the world.[17] From this purported identity between world and cinema, Rancière derives an apparent contradiction in Deleuze's argumentation: If images are the things of the world, how does this natural history of images become expressed as "a certain number of individualized operations and combinations attributable to filmmakers, schools, epochs"?[18]

However, Deleuze's argument is not that cinematic images are identical to world images or that the history of cinema would magically recount the natural history of world images. His thesis is less counterintuitive: the cinema creates its own images by using world images as its plastic material. Cinematic images take their name from the dominance of a specific variety of world image. Deleuze explains the distinction between world images and cinematic images in terms of camera distance and montage. In regard to the movement-image (considered as a regulative image), he explains that a film's montage is composed of the three varieties of images but that a type of image inevitably becomes dominant. Accordingly, the montage of a given film becomes active, perceptive or affective. For this reason, as the signaletic material of film, the three kinds of images correspond to

spatially determined shots: the long shot corresponds to the perception-image, the medium shot to the action-image and the close-up to the affection-image. Considered in terms of montage, each of these images constitutes "a point of view on the whole of the film, a way of grasping this whole."[19]

The dominance of each world image generates a particular cinematic image. For instance, as a world image, an affection-image refers to the interval between perception and action, that is, to an image that absorbs movement instead of reacting to it. As a cinematic regime, the affection-image involves an idealist or spiritual cinema constituted by three signs — its signs of composition (icons of feature and icons of outline) and its genetic sign (qualisign) — and a degree of specification sustained by the pair affects/any-space-whatevers.[20] Rancière's case against Deleuze becomes possible only by confusing two interrelated arguments in *Cinema 1*: first, that the cinema makes apparent the double reference that constitutes world images; and, second, that this double reference makes possible a series of cinematic images organized around signs of composition and genesis. The cinema is not the name of the world but the art that uses world images as its plastic material.

IV. IMPOTENT IMAGES

In the previous sections I have begun the groundwork to examine Rancière's suggestion that Deleuze maps an ontological distinction onto the history of cinema. First, I showed that the movement-image's prefiguration of the time-image does not involve the ontological layer; more precisely, a cinematic image within the movement-image opens the space for the emergence of the time-image. Second, I explained why the cinema is concerned with the ontological level only to the extent that world images constitute cinema's plastic mass of expression. Despite that

Deleuze's argument does not involve the ontological layer of images, we must still address why Deleuze evokes social and political history as a transcendent element that would account for what should be an immanent development of images. If the Cinema books involve not a social history of cinema but a natural history of images, how can this natural history of images depend on events external to cinema? This question is paramount to Deleuze, who considers transcendence the main enemy of philosophy. In this context, transcendence implies an element foreign to the transcendental field from which all images are supposed to emerge, threatening the purported immanence of the project.

The first line in both prefaces to the English and French editions of *Cinema 1* should make clear that the distinction between a natural and a social history of cinema is essential for Deleuze's project: both prefaces begin with the assertion that the study is not a history of cinema.[21] The organization of both books confirms this disclaimer. Let us consider the organization of the first volume, which is divided into two distinct parts. The first three chapters address the differentiation through which the movement-image expresses the whole: Chapters 1 and 2 make the argument for the Bergsonian character of cinema; Chapter 3 maps four conceptions of the whole onto four pre-war national film movements.

The remaining chapters involve the specification of the movement-image in different images. Chapter 4 returns to Bergson, deducting the three varieties of the movement-image from the plane of immanence. The following chapters substitute auteurs for national schools as privileged examples. In Chapter 5, Deleuze exemplifies the perception-image with Pasolini, Rohmer and, more centrally, Vertov. In Chapters 6 and 7, Griffith, Eisenstein, Dreyer and Bresson serve to articulate the affection-image. Chapter 8, dedicated to the impulse-image, features Stroheim, Buñuel and Losey as the utmost naturalist filmmakers.

The chapters dedicated to the action image are organized mainly around

Hollywood genres. Chapters 9 and 10, which discuss, respectively, the large and the short form, explain how most genres move within either form. Chapter 11, dedicated to the reflection-image, returns to auteurs such as Eisenstein, Herzog and Kurosawa. Finally, Chapter 12, which makes the argument about the crisis of the action-image, is concerned mainly with Hitchcock. It is only in this last chapter where the question of social history appears, parallel to a crisis inherent in cinema. Clearly, the volume follows no historical logic and includes examples from the post-war era, that is, films that appeared after the break between classical and modern cinema. The concern with social history doesn't involve the whole of the Cinema books but only the passage from the movement-image to the time-image.

To understand how social history intervenes in this passage from one regulative image to another, we should keep in mind the four layers I outlined above. What Deleuze maps onto the history of cinema is the crisis of a specific cinematic image (the action-image). The distinction between classical and modern cinema corresponds neither to the transcendental difference between the plane of immanence and the interval that interrupts it, or to a difference among world images. What explains the passage from classical to modern cinema is the insufficiency of the movement-image (as a regulative image) to account for the possibilities of cinema. The proper question, then, is not how an ontological distinction becomes a historical one but rather how the two regulative images might correspond to a distinction between classical and modern cinema.

This distinction shifts the question but does not yet address it satisfactorily. Deleuze himself seems aware that he introduces a transcendent element in explaining the crisis of the action-image. He distinguishes between external factors (the war, the unsteadiness of the American dream, the new consciousness of minorities) and more internal factors (the rise of images both in the external world and in people's minds, the influence of literature's experimental modes of narration

on cinema).[22] Clearly, none of these factors emerge purely from the natural history of images that Deleuze outlines. We might find the key to the parallelism between the natural history of images and social history elsewhere, in a passage toward the end of the section on any-space-whatevers. Deleuze explains that, after World War II, the world became populated with any-space-whatevers: the war produced waste grounds, cities in shambles, undifferentiated urban tissue, vacated places and heaps of useless girders.[23] The proliferation of these any-space-whatevers questions the social relevance of the action-image.

Deleuze's argument is not about the magical coincidence between an ontological and a historical distinction but rather about the impotence of the action-image to account for the state of world images. The argument is not concerned with the natural history of images but with the social relevance of cinematic images. By citing external factors, Deleuze attempts to explain why we ceased to believe in the action-image and how the time-image allowed us to continue believing in cinema. The war offered not the ontological conditions for the emergence of the time-image — which are already given by the interval that interrupts the plane of immanence — but only the social conditions for its legibility and relevance.

V. ILLUSTRATING TIME

Rancière moves from the tension between ontology and history to the tension between concepts and their exemplification. He stages his argument in two parts. First, he takes issue with the lack of accord between example and concept. If the movement-image and the time-image are in fact distinct, how can the same films illustrate aspects of both? Second, he takes exception to the shape of these examples. If there is a difference between the movement-image and the time-image, why does

Deleuze resort to fables to allegorize the break between them? These last two sections are dedicated to these questions.

Rancière forcefully argues that it is impossible to isolate "any 'time-images,' any images endowed with properties that would distinguish them from the 'movement-image'."[24] He notes how Deleuze analyzes Bresson's cinema in almost identical terms in both volumes. Paradoxically, Deleuze seems to analyze the same images as constitutive of both the affection-image and the time-image. In exhibiting this contradiction, this argument manifests its own reliance on a metaphysics foreign to Deleuzianism. Rancière's unquestioned premise is that films should not belong to both the movement-image and the time-image; otherwise, the two types of images would be indistinguishable. Rancière expects that films behave as what I have elsewhere referred to as *instances*, that is, as particulars contained under a concept. The concept should behave as a *class*, collecting a set of films that share the same quality.[25] Clearly, the movement-image and the time-image do not behave as classes that would somehow contain all the films discussed under each of them.

Deleuze rejects this relationship between particulars and universals in terms of containment. In Deleuzian metaphysics, films and concepts implicate one another; their relationship is one of proximity. Films and concepts only differ by degree, that is, both are images expressing the whole world from their point of view. Films behave as cases, which implicate everything in the world (including both regulative images), expressing distinctly those parts of the universe that are nearest or more extensively related to it. From this perspective, it involves no contradiction that a certain film expresses both the affection-image and the time-image. The movement-image and the time-image involve obverse readings of the whole of cinema, readings that proceed in opposite directions. In this sense, any film, regardless of its dominant images, expresses, however confusedly, both regulative images.

The affection-image and the time-image only differ by degree. What appears as

a difference in kind refers not to incompatible natures but rather to avatars and layers of one and the same nature. For this reason, Deleuze insists in calling everything an image, regardless if he is speaking of the transcendental field from which world and cinema emerge, the world itself, the regimes that regulate the creation of cinematic images, or the cinematic images created within these regimes. At the transcendental level, the movement-image and the interval are not of a different kind. The interval, which will be occupied by the living image, is merely subtractive, reflecting the world in one of its facets. At the ontological level, that is, as world images, perception, action, and affection involve differing perspectives of the same nature, expressing living images in terms of substance, action, or quality, respectively.

At the semiotic level, the difference in degree is clearer in the movement-image that in the time-image. The cinematic regimes within the movement-image differ from one another in regard to their degree of specification of their respective space, body and passion. The affection-image consists of an any-space-whatever, an affect, and an expression; in the impulse-image, these three elements are more specified, becoming, respectively, an originary world, a fragment, and an impulse; in the action-image, these elements become almost fully specified and appear as a determined milieu, an object, and an emotion.[26] This classification in terms of degree of specification distinguishes a spiritual, a naturalist and a realist cinema, a classification Deleuze evokes to make the case that realism is a station among the regimes that the cinema creates. Cinema's apparent vocation for realism is merely one of the expressions of cinema's vocation for the creation of images.

By expressing the crisis of the action-image in terms of specification, we can better understand the purely regulative nature of the movement-image and the time-image. In the relation-image — the last avatar of the movement-image — images become symbols and no aspect of the world escapes this symbolization. We

could in fact conceive of the sophisticated Hollywood melodrama as the epitome of this upmost degree of specification. One of the theses of Elsaesser's "Tales of Sound and Fury" is that the action that characterizes American cinema comes to a halt in these melodramas.[27] Elsaesser writes, "The characters are, so to speak, each others' sole referent, there is no world outside to be acted on, no reality that could be defined or assumed unambiguously."[28] The world in melodrama — particularly, the domestic space — becomes saturated with symbols that ultimately devolve into the characters' immobility and helplessness.

In relation to the pressure created by objects, Elasesser mentions the first sequence of the World War II melodrama *Since You Went Away* (1944), in which Anne (Claudette Colbert) wanders around the family home after taking her husband to the troop-train. All the objects in the family home remind her of marital bliss, "until she cannot bear the strain and falls on her bed sobbing."[29] We can compare this sequence to a celebrated sequence in *Umberto D* (1952): in the course of a series of mechanical gestures, Maria's (Maria-Pia Casilio's) eyes meet her pregnant belly "as though all the misery in the world were going to be born."[30] Deleuze's point is that a pure optical situation arises when Maria has no response to the violence and misery of the everyday world. In *Since You Went Away,* what Anne can't bear is not the senselessness or brutality of the world but rather the degree to which the world has become specified. What explains the difference between the two sequences is the effect of the war on images: whereas images in *Since You Went Away* are saturated with nostalgic signification, they have become emptied of their everyday meaning in *Umberto D*.

Once we understand the movement-image in terms of escalating degrees of specification culminating in the saturated relation-image, the distinction between the time-image and the affection-image becomes clearer. The movement-image is a plastic system of specification that reaches its melting point in the relation-image.

The newness of the time-image entails the regression (in terms of specification) in which plastic matter enters; this plastic matter unfolds no longer toward a fully specified universe but toward the interval from which the double system of reference emerges. We can say, then, that the time-image must revisit the affection-image — must pass through it — to reveal the interval that affection occupies. This revisiting clarifies an obscure passage in "The Affection-Image." Deleuze distinguishes between two kinds of any-space-whatevers: disconnected spaces in which links and orientation have lost their determination and empty spaces that have eliminated "that which happened and acted in it."[31] Deleuze explains that these two spaces imply each other and retain the same nature but that "one is 'before' and the other 'after'."[32] This 'after' attests to the effect of the time-image on the affection-image; the time-image enables the reading of disconnected spaces as spaces that have been emptied of their specification.

Rancière correctly points out that no single element distinguishes the time-image from an affection-image. What allows us to read a hardly specified milieu as a reverse unfolding is the experience of the action-image's crisis, that is, the experience of an almost total specification. In a certain sense, Rancière is closer to Deleuze than it might appear at first sight. Rancière writes, "movement-image and time-image are by no means two types of images ranged in opposition, but two different points of view on the image."[33] We should add that what appears as a difference in type is always a difference of perspective, a difference made possible, in this case, by the crisis generated by the image's saturation. We should, however, avoid Rancière's conclusion that the difference between the movement-image and the time-image is "strictly transcendental because it does not correspond to an identifiable rupture."[34] As I have been arguing, the difference is more properly regulative, enabling the legibility of cinematic signs that would otherwise remain invisible.

VI. THE FABLE-IMAGE

Rancière takes exception not only to the extension of Deleuze's examples but also to their shape. Deleuze cites fables—and not images—as evidence that the sensory-motor schema is in crisis, locating the signs of this crisis in the characters' own paralysis [most notably, in the paralysis of the characters James Stewart plays in Hitchcock's *Rear Window* (1954) and *Vertigo* (1958)]. Rancière considers Deleuze's argument strange to the extent that the characters' paralysis does not in any way "hinder the linear arrangement of the images and the action from moving forward."[35] Because the fictional situation does not paralyze the logic of the movement-image, Rancière believes that these fictional situations of paralysis are merely allegories emblematic of the rupture of the sensory-motor link.

This argument about the allegorical nature of fables relies on an opposition between image and fable foreign to Deleuzianism. Rancière misconstrues Deleuze's argument about two different regimes of the image (and two corresponding narrative regimes) as an argument about image and fable. This misconstruction is most apparent in Rancière's suggestion that Deleuze and Godard perform the same operation on the images of Hitchcock's cinema.[36] In *Histoire(s) du cinéma* (1997-1998), Godard lifts shots of objects from their narrative function; in Deleuze's argument, images are not arrested from a narrative; more properly, characters are arrested from their sensory-motor situations. The characters' immobility is supposed not to generate a narrative paralysis but to point toward a different relation between characters and images — that is, a different relation among images because characters are nothing other than images. As Deleuze writes, we are an assemblage or a consolidate of perception-images, action-images and affection-image.[37] The characters' inability to act on images and to react to them points to relations among images that are no longer dominated by actions and reactions. This relationship

continues to generate fables even if the sensory-motor schema no longer regulates these fables.

Rancière's claim about the allegorical nature of Deleuze's argument intersects with his more general criticism of Deleuzian aesthetics. Rancière identifies two moments or gestures in Deleuze's studies on art: first, Deleuze extracts a radical materiality of artistic expression from the realm of representation; and second, Deleuze returns to the realm of representation to analyze particular texts as allegories emblematic of the aim of art.[38] In regard to Deleuze's studies on painting and literature, this analysis is correct for the most part. *The Logic of Sensation* begins by explaining how Bacon avoids the figurative (the representative), illustrative and narrative character of painting through what Deleuze calls the Figure, an extraction of the visual whole from its figurative state. The technique consists in isolating the figure from its landscape, establishing "nonnarrative relationships between Figures, and nonillustrative relationships between the Figure and the fact."[39] However, the Figure maintains a complex relationship to figuration. The Figure flees from figuration only to generate a second figuration, but between the two "a leap in place is produced, a deformation in place, the emergence-in-place of the figure: the pictorial act."[40] Deleuze detects in Bacon's paintings a hysteria, whereby the body imposes its own presence and escapes from the organism. But this hysteria is also a more general characteristic of painting to the extent that painting "directly attempts to release the presences beneath representation, beyond representation."[41] The artist marches into the desert to undo the world of figuration.[42] As Rancière puts it, Deleuze turns Bacon's work into a hysterical formula that keeps schizophrenia "within the framework where it creates again and again the work of art and the allegory for the task of producing the work of art."[43]

In relation to literature, Deleuze begins by uncovering blocks of precepts and affects beneath classical narration, emancipating a molecular world from the law of

mimesis.[44] The second gesture consists in returning to the realm of representation, in which Deleuze privileges "narratives about metamorphoses, passages onto the other side, about becoming indiscernible."[45] Rancière suggests that, as in the paintings Deleuze selects, these fables must reveal "what literature performs in its own work."[46] Bartleby's formula ("I would prefer not to") and Gregor's warbling allegorize within the fable how a minor literature carves "a kind of foreign language within language."[47] Paradoxically, despite privileging molecular multiplicities and haecceties over representation, Deleuze ultimately returns to the fable to support his argument.

Rancière extrapolates this analysis to the Cinema books without much qualification. He cites the example of Rossellini's *Europa '51* (1952), a film through which Deleuze illustrates how the time-image involves "a cinema of the seer and no longer of the agent."[48] According to Rancière, Irene's (Ingrid Bergman's) paralysis functions as an allegory not only of the birth of the new image but also of the artist, "the one who has gone to the desert, the one who has seen the too strong, unbearable vision, and who will henceforth never be in harmony with the world of representation."[49] However, a shift in terms of the fable Deleuze privileges in literature and in cinema becomes apparent: *Europa '51* is not a fable of becoming as much as of paralysis.

Deleuze does discuss fables of becoming in the "The Powers of the False." However, these fables do not allegorize cinema's own artistic emancipation from the realm of representation as much as they exemplify a type of description and narration freed not from representation but, more specifically, from the sensory-motor schema. In fact, *Cinema 1* is partly dedicated to dispelling the notion that the movement-image is necessarily representational. Precisely because the movement-image already stratifies degrees of specification, the time-image is able to suspend its dependence on the sensory-motor schema. We can identify two gestures in this

argument, but they do not correspond, point by point, to the ones Rancière identifies in Deleuze's works on painting and literature. The first gesture consists not only in extracting the plastic material from what appears as a representational medium but also in understanding representation in terms of specification, that is, as a matter of degree. The second gesture does not return to the realm of representation to offer a paradoxical allegory of cinema's own emancipation from representation. More properly, this gesture consists in detailing a narrative system that operates without the restrictions imposed by the sensory-motor schema.

The fables of paralysis, on the other hand, do identify the crisis of a regime and the transition to another. But why would these fables be allegories about the crisis of one image and the birth of another? Why would these fables not involve directly the crisis and birth of images? At the heart of these questions is the status of narration in cinema. Is narration a transcendent introduced into the cinema through language systems or is narration in itself an image?

Deleuze himself seems to regard narration as a transcendent element in cinema. In arguing against a linguistic conception of cinema, Deleuze claims that "utterances and narration are not a given of visible images" but a consequence that flows from the transformation that the plastic mass suffers from the action of language systems.[50] In this sense, "[n]arration is grounded in the image itself, but it is not a given."[51] Should we conclude that narrative involves a purely transcendent imposition of language systems on the plastic mass of images? If we accept this conclusion, Rancière's argument about the allegorical nature of fables seems indisputable. Why would the natural history of images and its legibility depend on the transcendent imposition of language systems?

However, this conception of narrative as an element foreign to images would be at odds with Deleuze's own argument that the movement-image and the time-image implicate two different regimes of narration. The movement-image implicates

a truthful and organic narration, which develops in a Euclidean space and in accord with the sensory-motor schema. The time-image implicates a falsifying and crystalline narration, which exists in disconnected, empty or amorphous spaces in which the connections among parts are not predetermined.[52] In other words, narration expresses the difference between the movement-image and the time-image. From this perspective, narration appears neither as a given of world images nor as an effect of the transformation images suffer as a reaction to language systems. More precisely, narration develops in agreement with the connections among images that the movement-image and the time-image establish as legible and legitimate.

We can speak, then, of a fable-image, which would consist simply of the images considered from the perspective of the links among them. A fable is nothing but the series of links among images and the reading of images that arises from the perspective of these links. The fable-image arises not from world images themselves but from a reading of their connections that the movement-image and the time-image make possible. For this reason, fables in the *Cinema* books do not function as a transcendent device that would allegorize a difference among images, a difference that would be ineffectual at the level of images themselves. Fables exhibit a difference that pertains to the movement-image and the time-image, even if this difference does not inhere world images.

For Rancière, on the other hand, the relationship between image and fable is eminently dialectical rather than expressive. He begins *Film Fables* with an argument about how film theoreticians (specifically Epstein and Deleuze) "extract, after the fact, the original essence of the cinematographic art from the plots the art of cinema shares with the old art of telling stories."[53] Paradoxically, Rancière argues, the fable about the essence of cinema must be extracted from the stories that supposedly obscure this essence. Rancière puts Epstein's and Deleuze's procedure on its head:

rather than discounting the fables cinema tells to extract the essence of the medium, he suggests that fables internalize what appears to reside outside cinema. The film fable is thwarted to the extent that the passivity of the image offers a "counter-movement that affects the arrangement of incidents and shots."[54] In Rancière's reformulation of the medium specificity thesis, the medium no longer reaches its zenith when its fables and forms express the essence of the medium. Instead, film fables dramatize whatever thwarts the cinema. For this reason, in each of the chapters in *Film Fables*, Rancière locates a thwarting game in the films he analyzes. Particularly, in the first three chapters of the book, he stages cinema's encounter with theater ("Eisenstein's Madness" and "A Silent Tartuffe") and with television ("Fritz Lang Between Two Ages").

In each of these thwarting games, an apparently external limit to these fables proves to be an internal limit. What appears as an external limit of cinema (theater, literature, or television) is in fact its internal limit. As Rancière writes, "Cinema can only make the games of exchange and inversion with its own means intelligible to itself through the games of exchange and inversion it plays with the literary fable, the plastic form, and the theatrical voice."[55] It is difficult to miss the Hegelian game between internal and external limits in this argument. In Hegelian terms, the specificity thesis would claim that cinema should transcend its external limits to become what it ought to be. The Hegelian maneuver — and this is Rancière's maneuver as well — consists in recognizing these external limits as inherent to cinema, that is, in reflecting these limits into cinema itself.

This dialectical conception of the relationship between fable and image derives not from a different ontology as much as from a political philosophy that privileges aesthetics. For Rancière, aesthetics distributes the sensible, delimiting "spaces and times, of the visible and the invisible, of speech and noise," simultaneously determining "the place and the stakes of politics as a form of experience."[56] Cinema

is caught between two different regimes of art: the representative and the aesthetic. Guided by the mimetic principle, the representative regime distributes "ways of doing, making, seeing, and judging," a distribution that figures "into an analogy with a fully hierarchical vision of the community."[57] Accordingly, the representative regime privileges dramatic action to the detriment of the image. The aesthetic regime counters this hierarchical distribution by proclaiming the identity of conscious and unconscious, active and passive, exterior and interior, sensible and intelligible. The aesthetic regime frees art from any hierarchy, distinguishing instead a mode of being particular to art "inhabited by a heterogeneous power, the power of a form of thought that has become foreign to itself."[58]

Rancière's argument about the imbrication of the representational and aesthetic regimes in cinema follows a sinuous line of thought. By recording images that offer counter-movements to dramatic progression, cinema appears to undermine the hierarchy inherent in the representative regime of art. Cinema would seem to fulfill one of the promises of the aesthetic regime of art, namely, the union of contraries whereby "the activity of thought and sensible receptivity become a single reality."[59] Paradoxically, although cinema recovers the pure presence of the image, cinema also restores the representative regime with its genres, arrangement of incidents and defined characters. Finally, Rancière argues that, despite this restoration of the representational regime, cinema is necessarily informed by the gap between the arrangement of incidents and the image's automatism. For this reason, film fables are essentially thwarted; in cinema, this automatism imposes a counter-effect that always accompanies the arrangements of fictional incidents.[60]

From this perspective, Deleuzian aesthetics — as well as the *Cinema* books — appears firmly inscribed within the destiny of the aesthetic regime of art, which submits the sensible (and the work of art) to the heterogeneous power of the spirit.[61] Rancière views Deleuzian aesthetics as a continuation (in an inverted configuration)

of the Romantic model of thought. For Rancière, the Romantic model "highlights the immanence of logos in pathos."[62] Accordingly, whereas Romanticism "goes from stone and desert to the spirit," Deleuzianism attempts to seize instead "the spirit at that point of arrest where the image becomes petrified and returns the spirit to its desert."[63] Furthermore, Deleuze fulfills "the destiny of aesthetics by suspending the entire power of the work of art to the 'pure' sensible," paradoxically destroying the substance of aesthetics by turning art into an allegory for the destiny of aesthetics.[64]

The tension between *Film Fables* and the *Cinema* books resides in the substitution of the representative regime for the movement-image. Refusing to acknowledge cinema's restoration of the representative regime, Deleuze understands representation as a station in the specification of images. This refusal creates a curious status for the time-image, which is inscribed within every image yet only fully appears as a regime after external conditions allow for its legibility. Rancière's substitution of the representative regime for the movement-image locates an ongoing dialectic at the heart of cinema, which struggles from its very inception between its call to restore the fading representative arts and its affinity with the pure sensible that characterizes the aesthetic regime.

This substitution ultimately inverts the relationship between image and fable in the *Cinema* books. In *Film Fables*, the image no longer transforms the fable into one of its expressions; instead, the fable transfigures the image's passivity into one of the fable's dramatic elements. For this reason, Rancière privileges fables that allegorize the representative regime's negotiations with its limits and the absorption of these limits. Not surprisingly, Rancière locates in the *Cinema* books the opposite allegory, a fable about the aesthetic regime's struggle against representation. What appears at first as a matter of theoretical commitments — a choice between a strict ontology of images and a political theory founded on aesthetics — devolves into a matter of taste — a choice between a becoming-image of the fable and a becoming-fable of the image.

NOTES

1. Jacques Rancière, *Film Fables*, trans. Emiliano Battista (Oxford: Berg, 2006), 108-109.

2. Rancière, *The Flesh of Words*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 154.

3. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 58.

4. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 159-171, 176-192.

5. For a brief discussion of Deleuze's transcendental empiricism, see Slavoj Žižek, *Organs Without Bodies: On Deleuze and Consequences* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 3-9.

6. See Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Zone Books, 1992), 99-111.

7. Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, trans. Robert Hurley (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1988), 122.

8. Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 61.

9. Ibid., 56-62.

10. Ibid., 62-66.

11. Ibid., 69.

12. Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 28-30.

13. Rancière, *Film Fables*, 108.

14. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 41 and 43.

15. Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 60.

16. Ibid., 65.

17. Rancière, *Film Fables*, 109.

18. Ibid., 110.

19. Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 70.

20. Ibid., 97, 110.

21. Ibid., ix, xiv.

22. Ibid., 207.

23. Ibid., 120.

24. Rancière, *Film Fables*, 112.

25. See Agustin Zarzosa, "The Case and its Modes: Instance, Allusion, Example, Illustration and Exception," *Angelaki* (forthcoming).

26. Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 102-111, 123-125, 141-143.

27. Thomas Elsaesser, "Tales of Sound and Fury: Observations on the Family Melodrama," in *Home Is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film*, ed. Christine Gledhill (London: British Film Institute, 1987), 54-58.

28. Ibid., 56.

29. Ibid., 62.

30. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 2.

31. Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 120.

32. Ibid., 120.

33. Rancière, *Film Fables*, 112-113.

34. Ibid., 114.

35. Ibid., 115.

36. Ibid., 116.

37. Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 66.

38. Rancière, interview by David Rabouin, "Deleuze accomplit le destin de l'esthétique," *Magazine littéraire* 406 (Febrary 2002): 38-40.

39. Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 6.

40. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 79.

41. Ibid., 45.

42. Rancière, "Is there a Deleuzian aesthetics?", trans. Radmila Djordjevic, *Qui Parle* 14:2 (Spring/Summer 2004): 7.

43. Ibid., 7.

44. Rancière, *The Flesh of Words*, 150-151.

45. Ibid., 153.

46. Ibid.

47. Deleuze, "Bartleby; or the Formula," in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 71-72. See also Deleuze and Felix

Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 16-27.

48. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 2.

49. Rancière, "Is there a Deleuzian aesthetics?", 8.

50. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 29.

51. Ibid., 29.

52. Ibid., 126-129.

53. Rancière, *Film Fables*, 6.

54. Ibid., 15.

55. Ibid., 15.

56. Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, trans. Gabriel Rockhill (London and New York: Continuum, 2004), 13.

57. Ibid., 22.

58. Ibid., 23.

59. Ibid., 27.

60. Rancière, *Film Fables*, 7-15.

61. For discussions of the aesthetic regime of art, see Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 20-30; Rancière, "Is there a Deleuzian aesthetics?", 8-11; and Rancière, *Film Fables*, 7-11.

62. Rancière, "Is there a Deleuzian aesthetics?", 10.

63. Ibid., 10-11.

64. Ibid., 13-14.