

# CINEMA 6

JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY AND THE MOVING IMAGE  
REVISTA DE FILOSOFIA E DA IMAGEM EM MOVIMENTO

GILLES DELEUZE AND MOVING IMAGES  
edited by Susana Viegas

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## CINEMA: REVISTA DE FILOSOFIA E DA IMAGEM EM MOVIMENTO 6, "DELEUZE E AS IMAGENS EM MOVIMENTO"

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*Capa:* *Perigo Iminente* (Blade Runner, 1982), real. Ridley Scott

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## EDITORIAL: GILLES DELEUZE AND MOVING IMAGES

The present issue of *Cinema: Journal of Philosophy and the Moving Image* was born in praise of the thirty years passed since Gilles Deleuze's *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* was published in 1983. With *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (1985), they remain seminal works in the philosophy of cinema, film-philosophy, and in film studies in general. His thought on moving images occupies the centre of contemporary debates on cinema, video art, and visual culture, and informs central debates in metaphilosophy as well.

In 1997, David N. Rodowick devoted the spring issue of *Iris* to Gilles Deleuze as "a philosopher of the image". With the assembly of essays he edited, Rodowick's aim was to unify two very different approaches to Deleuze's *Cinema* books. He noted that there was an inconsistency between his commentators: those from film theory had insufficient knowledge of Deleuze's unique conceptual and philosophical work, and at the same time, those from the philosophical field who were familiar with his larger conceptual and philosophical thought, had insufficient knowledge of film theory itself.<sup>1</sup> Bringing both approaches together into a consistent and "sustained dialogue" seemed to be a crucial and mandatory step for Deleuzian studies as Deleuze's own cinephilia was always closely connected with his philosophical method. Both fields should keep neighbouring territories, not only because of the extrinsic and intrinsic interferences between them, but also to guarantee those types of interferences that are not localized.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, in the 80's, Deleuze's own *philosophical project* included an elaboration of a *philosophy-cinema*.<sup>3</sup> However, we realise that while much of the current research within film studies is interdisciplinarily informed, cinema's relevance for philosophy itself has been generally ignored. In what sense is Deleuze's *Cinema* work important to philosophy? Our aim with the present volume is to find alternatives to this circumscribed debate by opening it up into the specific philosophical field, namely through dialoguing with *Difference and Repetition* (1968), *The Logic of Sense* (1969), or with his work with Félix Guattari. Other important thinkers with whom we may dialogue within a systematic hermeneutics of Deleuze's texts and references include Plato, Kant, Bergson, Artaud, Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, and Heidegger, amongst others — even, we might say, to contradict them.

For this issue, we intend to bring together original essays that, from a philosophical point of view, specifically explore the moving image(s) and time, and its many connections with metaphilosophy and metacinema (and consequently with self-reflexive films). We seek, in particular, to analyse the link between moving images and other kinds of images (from its materiality to its technological origins and viewer's perception) and the way that an image may be a version or a variation of another image in an intermedial network. Our aim is to encourage the metaphilosophical debate on these themes with a scrutiny on the direct and indirect interferences between both philosophy and film, and philosophy and non-philosophy (as a logic of sensation: of percepts and affects).

I was a student of philosophy, and although I wasn't stupid enough to want to create a philosophy of cinema, one conjunction made an impression on me. I liked those authors who demanded that we introduce movement to thought, "real" movement (they denounced the Hegelian dialectic as abstract movement). How could I not discover the cinema, which introduces "real" movement into the image. I wasn't trying to apply philosophy to cinema, but I went straight from philosophy to cinema, the reverse was also true, one went right from cinema to philosophy.<sup>4</sup>

How should we understand the surprisingly unattainable character of what could be a philosophy of cinema considering the importance that cinema had in his philosophical work? Deleuze declares that he never wanted to create a philosophy of cinema taken in one sense: as thinking *about* cinema, by applying a pre-established philosophy to this artistic field material. "What we should in fact do, is stop allowing philosophers to reflect "on" things. The philosopher creates, he doesn't reflect."<sup>5</sup> Thus, Deleuze's own intention was to go *directly* from one field to the other through what both philosophy and cinema share in common — through their common problems. He did want to create a philosophy of cinema, but one that would be based on conceptual (philosophical) practice or conceptual (philosophical) creation. At the beginning of *The Movement-Image*, he says that he wanted to create a philosophy able to reveal that it was cinema itself requiring and imposing a *new way to think* images. To *think with* moving images, not to think on them.

The oft commented upon final words of *The Time-Image* echo the consequences of this philosophical and methodological delimitation of the differences between a film theory (as a

reflection *on* cinema) and a philosophy of film (as a *conceptual practice*). We may say that surreptitiously it also permeates the affinities that we are looking for within Deleuzian philosophy itself: “there is always a time, midday-midnight, when we must no longer ask ourselves, ‘What is cinema?’ but ‘What is philosophy?’”<sup>6</sup> We are far, however, from a chronologic point of view of time as a measurable dimension controlled by the 12-hour clock. The measure for the temporal transition from morning to evening and from one day to another, raises questions regarding the frame of reversible elements. The abbreviations “12 a.m.” and “12 p.m.,” before midday (*ante meridiem*) and after midday (*post meridiem*), are not but conventions. It lacks precision concerning its beginning and ending. Nevertheless, this indiscernible element also seems to characterize the relationship between cinema and philosophy — we can easily go from one to another and the reverse, without losing any sensations or any conceptual work. Their boundaries are slippery. As an event, precarious, contingent, ephemeral, we feel obligated to think it — in-between.

Even so, philosophers do not see cinema just as a mechanical reproduction or a modern version of Zenon’s paradoxes resumed in “two irreducible formulas”<sup>7</sup>: a) Real Movement → Concrete Duration, and b) Immobile Sections + Abstract Time. For decades, cinema was a useful ideological tool used with optimism towards the possibility of social and political change through the shock activated by montage: the positive effect of thought-images was reflected on the “spiritual automaton,” a version of the Spinozian deduction of one thought from another.<sup>8</sup> But, cinema is also its images and its content, not just a thought-machine. *Who* was in control of that mechanism? The spiritual automatism means autonomy and the affirmation of the power to think, but also means its privation, the lack of a spirit, the *impower* of thinking. Thus, diverse types of dangers haunt cinema<sup>9</sup> — the massification of an art form such as cinema can have a utilitarian use by serving a politicization of art, but also can be used by totalitarian states that aestheticize politics.<sup>10</sup> To sum up: “The great directors of the cinema may be compared, in our view, not merely with painters, architects and musicians, but also with thinkers. They think with movement-images and time-images instead of concepts.”<sup>11</sup> The future of the two-way street that goes from a philosophy of film towards a film-philosophy is written with this conscientiousness.<sup>12</sup>

The problematic of time, its (re)presentations and perception, the quest for the connection between 20<sup>th</sup> Century history, politics and ethics, and the role of film and images within a philosophy of time are common problems shared by the eight essays published in this issue

on *Gilles Deleuze and Moving Images*. Between the interchanging movement from cinema to philosophy and back, all share the effort to think this complex relationship and to clarify thought-images, the conceptual thinking of images, as well as thinking with the moving images. Although there have been numerous exegeses on Deleuze's books on cinema and also on his pre and post-*Cinema* period, we think that the following essays will be of interest to both beginners and experts of Deleuzian studies. *Cinema 1* and *Cinema 2* are still philosophical milestones to (re)discover and time a central topic of his philosophy. Think, for instance, of David N. Rodowick's clarification of the two philosophical approaches to both time and thought in the pre and postwar period that will result in the tension between the two imagery regimes with different notions on time, movement, and whole. If the movement-image has a strong influence on the Hegelian will to truth, the time-image follows Nietzsche's idea of fabulation and falsified narrations.<sup>13</sup> The two regimes present different images of thought. Or in David Martin-Jones' idea to expand the taxonomic conceptual work of *Cinema* for processes of re/construction of new national identity in cinema, thus overcoming the well-known concept of minor cinema.<sup>14</sup> Or even in Patricia Pisters' concept of the "neuro-image," a questioning of the supposed strong and clear connection between Deleuze's previous philosophy of time (from *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*) and his philosophy of cinema.<sup>15</sup> These are but a few examples that reveal the vitality of the Deleuzian work and of his systematic methodology towards a creative practice.

In this line of thought, we are delighted to begin with a translated version of Mirjam Schaub's essay on Deleuze, time and images, "Cinema: the 'Counter-Realization' of Philosophical Problems." In this work, the author analyses how Deleuze's interest in time was conceived during his philosophical work by explaining his pre-*Cinema* silence on that issue as well as his rupture with an infinite, one-directional successiveness concept of time. By analyzing the asymmetrical relationship between the visible and the utterable, she defines the Deleuzian conception of "image" as a process, and by that, it becomes clear that Deleuze's interest remained on the virtual presence of images: if we perceive sound successively and if we see simultaneously, in a paradoxical way images may waive any form of temporality. Thus, Mirjam Schaub develops the Deleuzian concept of the interval, the in-between two images, in its immeasurable and imageless features.

"Visual Effects and Phenomenology of Perceptual Control" by Jay Lampert, questions the effects compositor as a true artist that "paints with time." In what could be considered a



contemporary version of Dziga Vertov's own idea of separating the camera eye from the flesh eye, the author defends the notion that synthetic perception does not intend to replace consciousness but to give it a kind of perceptual experience it could not have in any other way than expanding the spectator's experience from a phenomenological point of view. Thus, avoiding the more common discussions on the aesthetics of digital images, the author is driven by a phenomenology of the act of compositing through its technological origin, which was ignored by Deleuze. Therefore, Lampert explains how digital editing manipulates natural images as they are registered, but can also create original perceptions.

Bernd Herzogenrath's essay "Double-Deleuze: 'Intelligent Materialism' Goes to the Movies" is an essay on Morrison's film *Decasia* (2002), a film made exclusively of both found footage and archive material in different states of deterioration. As a ruinous film, *Decasia* is beyond Deleuze's movement-images and time-images as for the author it creates a *matter-image*. It poetically shows the historicity of film itself, that it is a fragile temporary material, by nature subject to deterioration and mortality. Herzogenrath writes an essay of time, decay, and materiality: in *Decasia*, the complexity of representing time in film is explained by its own filmic material and not by the projected film, nor by narration time, neither by narrated time. By focusing mainly on time, film, and its materiality the author ends by concluding that the representation of time *in* film is weaker when compared to the effects of time *on* film.

In "Bringing the Past into the Present: *West of the Tracks* as a Deleuzian Time-Image," William Brown enlarges the Deleuzian concept of the time-image outside the cinematic field claiming that this film's own episodic structure ("Rust," "Remnants," and "Rails") is a direct presentation of time that breaks with the official history of China constructed by conventional narrative films. As a Deleuzian analysis on Wang Bing's documentary of spaces of ruin and decay, it questions history and temporality. The author problematizes Deleuze's general vagueness on documentary films by questioning the specific connection between space *and* the time-image. Thus, the passage of time is not only visible by its ruinous documented spaces, neither by its nine-hour duration, but also by the spectator's own *experience* of the passage of time.

Jakob Nilsson's essay "Thought-Images and the New as a Rarity: A Reevaluation of the Philosophical Implications of Deleuze's Cinema Books" aims at reversing the common idea that Deleuze's *Cinema 2* marked a shift from the earlier concept on "thought without image" to a multiplicity of "images of thought." Through the genealogy of the concept of "new," a necessary methodology that does not imprison the author in a supposed linear narrative line

of thought, Jakob Nilsson philosophically argues for the rarity of the new by questioning the different forms of crystal-images as lines of flight that open to the unthought in thought.

We continue on questioning the creative production of the new (in philosophy, in visual arts) with Joseph Barker's "Visions of the Intolerable: Deleuze on Ethical Images." The author posits the priority of ethics and questions the general idea that Deleuze privileges the process of creation. By questioning it from an ethical point of view, Joseph Barker analyses Gilles Deleuze's own images of the intolerable and reverses the argument: these type of intolerable images are the real aim of creativity itself.

"Artaud *versus* Kant: Annihilation of the Imagination in Deleuze's Philosophy of Cinema" by Jurate Baranova, is an essay that compares the influence of such different aesthetical thinkers as Kant and Artaud in Deleuze's thought. Jurate Baranova starts by revealing how the two thinkers had a strong impact on Deleuze's thought in order to compare the dogmatic image of thought and thought without image. The author questions the role of imagination and the doctrine of faculties in Deleuze's philosophy of cinema by developing his cinematic conception of the "sublime" in Kant and the "impower to think" in Artaud.

Nuno Carvalho's "Para além da Imagem-Cristal: Contributos para a identificação de uma terceira síntese do tempo nos *Cinemas* de Gilles Deleuze" ("Beyond the Crystal-Image: Contributions towards the Identification of a Third Synthesis of Time in Gilles Deleuze's *Cinema*"), evaluates the function of the third synthesis of time in *Cinema 2*. According to the author, the crystal-image is key to understanding the genetic element of the time-image. However, Orson Welles' dissolution of the pure past that seems to inscribe the third synthesis of time in the filmic images is not openly assumed by Deleuze.

We close this issue with two book reviews: "*Ecologies of the Moving Image: Cinema, Affect, Nature* by Adrian J. Ivakhiv (Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2013)" by Niall Flynn, and "*Brutal Vision: The Neorealist Body in Postwar Italian Cinema* by Karl Schoonover (University of Minnesota Press, 2012)" by Adam Cottrel.

I do hope that readers, beginners or not, enjoy this issue and find some practical value for their own personal work.

THIS ISSUE'S EDITOR

Susana Viegas

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1. D. N. Rodowick, "Gilles Deleuze, philosophe du cinéma/Gilles Deleuze, philosopher of cinema," *Iris* 23 (1997).
  2. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 216-218.
  3. Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness, Texts and Interviews 1975-1995*, ed. by David Lapoujade, trans. Ames Hodges and Mike Taormina (New York: Semiotext(e), 2007), 66.
  4. Deleuze, "The Brain Is the Screen: An Interview with Gilles Deleuze," in *The Brain Is the Screen. Deleuze and the Philosophy of Cinema*, ed. Gregory Flaxman (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 366.
  5. Deleuze, *Negotiations*, trans. by Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 122.
  6. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (London: Continuum, 2008), 269.
  7. Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: Continuum, 2009), 11.
  8. Deleuze, *Spinoza et le problème de l'expression* (Paris: Les éditions de Minuit, 1968), 117.
  9. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 159: "The spiritual automaton became fascist man."
  10. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968), 217-251.
  11. Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, xix.
  12. For a synthetic analysis on the differences between "film-philosophy" and "philosophy of film," see Robert Sinnerbrink, "Disenfranchising Film? On the Analytic-Cognitivist Turn in Film Theory," in *Postanalytic and Metacontinental: Crossing Philosophical Divides*, ed. Jack Reynolds, Ed Mares, James Williams and James Chase (London/New York, Continuum, 2010), 173-189.
  13. Rodowick, *Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 175-186.
  14. David Martin-Jones, *Deleuze, Cinema and National Identity: Narrative Time in National Contexts* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 6.
  15. Patricia Pisters, *The Neuro-Image: A Deleuzian Film-Philosophy of Digital Screen Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012).

## ABSTRACTS

## CINEMA: THE "COUNTER-REALIZATION" OF PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS

Mirjam Schaub (University of Applied Sciences (HAW) Hamburg)

The article offers a survey of Deleuze's interest in images throughout his career. It suggests that his enduring fascination with time is the driving force behind his relatively late preoccupation with images, which started with an essay on Lucretius, followed by his book on Bacon's paintings, his two famous books on the cinema and a brief piece on Beckett's TV-plays. During the ten years of not discussing time at all, time has changed the medium of reflection: Deleuze stops conceiving time — as most structuralists do — as infinite, one-directional successiveness, similar to how utterances work. After the gap years, time gets involved in an "evental logic" that is designed after the role-model of images. From now on, time incorporates divergent flight lines (to a past, that never existed, to a future, that will never come true etc.). Far from being *only* chronological, time becomes a code name for a "reservoir" of simultaneity that undermines and overrides the actual process of sense-making through the consecutive use of words. Here, the visible and the utterable step in: as the graphic "counter-realization" of philosophical problems that have remained unsolved since Kant linked the sublime to a conflict between successive apprehension and its simultaneous comprehension. Mirjam Schaub explains why the moving image helps to understand the troubling effects of this discrepancy: Through Nouvelle Vague techniques such as false connections, boredom or ostentatious sight-and-sound-gaps it becomes obvious, that time remains a *disruptive force*. For Deleuze the asynchronical use of sight and sound in film reveals the inner logic of time as universal differentiator. While the utterable *naturally* generates contractions (such as A and Non-A cannot exist simultaneously), the visible in film *easily* embraces divergent events (such as Citizen Kane being old in the foreground and young in the background). What is to be believed? The moving-image as a "fusion of the tear" is celebrated as a process of exchange between intertwined time lines, virtual and actual images that become mutual look-alikes.

*Keywords:* time, event-logic, sight and sound, false connections, simultaneity.

## VISUAL EFFECTS AND PHENOMENOLOGY OF PERCEPTUAL CONTROL

Jay Lampert (University of Guelph/Duquesne University)

Can we derive a new model of perception based on digital visual effects programs like Adobe After Effects? Philosophers of film have discussed the aesthetics of digital cinema, but not the phenomenology of the act of compositing. This paper will consider three topics: the art of perceptual control; compositing perception by layers and transparency; and implications for phenomenological structures like time, perspective, and reflexivity.

*Keywords:* digital editing, phenomenology, philosophy of time, visual effects.

## DOUBLE-DELEUZE: "INTELLIGENT MATERIALISM" GOES TO THE MOVIES

Bernd Herzogenrath (Goethe-University Frankfurt am Main)

This essay will focus on the nexus of film, time, and materiality. I will begin by introducing film's constitutive | constituting move as the attempt to *represent* time *in* film which was already being discussed at the birth of the medium. Taking my cue from Bazin's influential article on the "Ontology of the Photographic Image," I will shift my focus to the *materiality* of film: time leaves much more direct traces *on* film than any representation of time *in* film could ever achieve. Taking Bill Morrison's film *Decasia* (2002) as example, I will direct a more "materialist" approach to the filmic *material*.

Material Culture is based on the premise that the *materiality* of objects are an integrative part and parcel of culture, that the material dimension is as fundamentally important in the understanding of a culture as language or social relations — but Material Culture mainly focuses on the materiality of everyday objects and their *representation* in the media [literature, film, arts, etc.]. Thus, a further and important step would be to re-direct such an analysis to the materiality of the media *itself*, to put the probing finger not only at the thing *in* representation, but the thing *of* representation. The medium "film" seems to me most fitting to test

such an interface of Material Culture and Media Studies, since film has entertained a most complex relation to *time* from its early beginnings onward: film promised to [re]present temporal dynamics — and the temporality of things — *directly, unmediated*, a paradox that gives rise to the different “strategies” of what Deleuze calls the *movement-image* and the *time-image* respectively. Such a representation, however, is not only an effect of a perceptive illusion, but also of the *repression* of the very materiality of film itself.

If such an interest in the possibilities of the celluloid had already driven much of the 60s avant-garde [Brakhage, Jacobs, etc.], *Decasia* in addition does not only focus on film’s “thingness,” but also its own, particular “temporality.” Put together from *found footage* and archive material in various states of “dying,” this film reveals the “collaboration” of time and matter as *in itself* “creative,” and ultimately produces a category that that I will call the *matter-image* and that, I argue, neither Deleuze’s *movement-image*, nor his *time-image* completely grasp: here, time and matter *produce their own filmic image*.

*Keywords:* materialism, matter-image, Deleuze, Bill Morrison.

## BRINGING THE PAST INTO THE PRESENT: WEST OF THE TRACKS AS A DELEUZIAN TIME-IMAGE

William Brown (University of Roehampton)

In this essay, I shall offer up a Deleuzian reading of Wang Bing’s epic documentary, *Tie Xi Qu: West of the Tracks* (2003), suggesting that the film functions as a time-image that prioritises memory over history, and that it depicts to us multiple different temporalities. I shall also relate *West of the Tracks* to other Chinese movies in order to demonstrate that Wang’s film not only reflects in part upon globalisation, but that what constitutes contemporary China and/or Chinese cinema is itself multiple, heterogeneous and globalised. In this way, Deleuze’s concept of the time-image is one that applies not just to films, but which constitutes a framework through which to understand the contemporary world as a whole.

*Keywords:* documentary, time-image, Wang Bing, Deleuze.

## THOUGHT-IMAGES AND THE NEW AS A RARITY: A REEVALUATION OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF DELEUZE'S *CINEMA* BOOKS

Jakob Nilsson (Stockholm University)

Contrary to what is often argued or implied — whether by antagonists like Badiou or the most important Deleuze scholars — events that lead to the creation of the new are in many regards a rarity in Deleuze. The rarity of the new, this article argues, is increasingly emphasized from Deleuze's 1970s and forward, culminating with *Cinema 2* which in large parts deals with the new as an intricate difficulty. This article reexamines Deleuze's taxonomy of cinematic thought-images from this perspective. The established view is that the cinema books reflect a shift from Deleuze's earlier call for a thought without image to an affirmation of a plurality of images of thought (as argued for instance by Paola Marrati). This article argues against this notion of a shift while revealing two things: 1. Deleuze's early ideas of image-thought were more complex and the cinema books rather extend most of them and 2. The examinations of thought-images in *Cinema 2* reflects changes instead in Deleuze's treatment of the problem of the new, changes that has basically been overlooked by scholars. As anticipated in *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* and Deleuze's book on Bacon, "the new" has ceased to be naturally associated with the outcome of an ontology of constant differentiation (which tended to be the focus of his work in the 1960s). The term has now more clearly come to concern creations that are *rare* and that are the object and possible outcome of aesthetic-political-philosophical struggle. This article charts the flowering of this problematic throughout the cinema books in relation to varying conceptions of the new across Deleuze's work as a whole.

*Keywords:* film-philosophy, thought-images, rare events, the new, Deleuze.

## VISIONS OF THE INTOLERABLE: DELEUZE ON ETHICAL IMAGES

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This paper calls into question the privilege granted to creativity by most commentators on Deleuze by demonstrating the priority of ethics over creation in relation to the concept of

the image. It takes up Jacques Derrida's "grumble" about the central place of creativity in Deleuze, showing how this grumble is applicable to influential readers of Deleuze including Anne Sauvagnargues, Ronald Bogue and John Protevi. Another reading of Deleuze will be given which calls the priority of creation into question, rescuing Deleuze from Derrida's grumble. Deleuze's notion of the image will be put into a tradition of thinking the relationship between light and appearance which runs from Plato through Bergson, Heidegger and Derrida. The notion of the image as the basic material of existence is then explained to be a passive fusion of external elements and shown to be made more consistent from *Difference and Repetition* to *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*. The paper will then show how the "good" image in Plato is fundamentally constructed based on a moral motivation, on Deleuze's reading in *Difference and Repetition*. The "good" image is one which resembles the Idea which remains identical to itself over time. *A Thousand Plateaus* will then be called upon to demonstrate how this self-same Idea is in fact the universalization of that which remains the identical to itself in the world, that is, the Idea universalizes a purely conservative social organization which eliminates all that differs from itself. In this way, Plato institutes the moral interpretation of the world which forms a moral image of thought. Deleuze's ethical images will be precisely those which force thought to see the intolerability of the exclusionary social organizations it universalizes. After outlining Deleuze's notion of the splitting of time in *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, we will show how the body links humanity to this splitting of time because it causes the present to collapse when it is exhausted. The bodies which are fatigued and wiped out in the present organization of social space must be given voice in a speech-act which forces thought to see the impossibility of living in the present for certain bodies. Ultimately, thought must be made to see its own embodiment, in the brain, and thus see how the boundaries it imposes upon bodies prevent its own operation outside of the strict boundaries of the dominant reality. However, it will be shown that the vision thought has of its own impossibility is constantly being buried in the past, whilst new intolerable worlds are continually arising anew. In this light, we will end with Derrida's sensitive insight that, for Deleuze, the best thought, the best philosophy, the best writing is not concerned with the creation of the new in itself, but rather is continually haunted by the impossibility of thought and the ethical horrors of stupidity.

*Keywords:* ethics, images, thought, Deleuze, Plato.



## ARTAUD VERSUS KANT: ANNIHILATION OF THE IMAGINATION IN THE DELEUZE'S PHILOSOPHY OF CINEMA

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Kant and Artaud present two different poles of the possibility of philosophical thought: critical sharpness and an inability to concentrate on thinking at all. In his book *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze compares Artaud to Lewis Carroll as two possible alternatives: one of the surface, the other of depth. Deleuze also develops further Artaud's concept of *body without organs*. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze leads a discussion with a Kantian image of thought, paradoxically considering it dogmatic. On the other hand, Deleuze deeply reflects the Kantian notion of imagination in *Kant's Critical Philosophy*. Do these lessons on Kant's concept of imagination play any role in the later Deleuzian aesthetics? What is the role of imagination in the philosophy of cinema, in the two volumes of *Cinema*? In his philosophy of cinema, Deleuze returns to Kant and Artaud.

In the first volume, when discussing the aesthetics of German expressionism, Deleuze refers to the Kantian idea of the two kinds of Sublime: mathematical and dynamic, the immense and the powerful, and the measureless and the formless. In *Cinema 2. The Time-Image*, Deleuze is seeking to trace the faculties of the mind, which organize the cinema art as the specific art in comparison with the others. Why does Deleuze rely not on imagination, but on the thought? In the chapter entitled "Thought and Cinema," Deleuze following the Kantian idea of sublime, but not mentioning his name, suggests a *sublime* conception of cinema.

The idea of shock as an effect of the spirit, which forces it to think and to think of the Whole is not an invention of Deleuze, but suggested by Sergei Eisenstein. It seems Deleuze simply refers to this notion of Eisenstein, who considered that the internal monologue in the cinema goes beyond a dream, which is too individual, and constitutes segments or links of a truly collective thought. On the other hand, he developed further the Eisensteinian insight of the shock which annihilates the imagination and gives birth to new thought, but he has chosen a different version expressed by Antonin Artaud. Artaud wrote that a dream, as it appears in European cinema inspired by surrealism, is too easy a solution to the "problem" of thought. Artaud believes more in the appropriateness between cinema and automatic writing, considering that automatic writing is not the absence of composition, but a higher control which brings together critical and conscious thought and the unconscious in thought: the

spiritual automaton. Deleuze, following Artaud, noticed that, mainly in cinema, thought is brought face to face with its own impossibility, but draws from this a higher power of birth. In this conception it is no longer thought which confronts repression, the unconscious, dream, sexuality or death, as in expressionism (and in surrealism); on the contrary, they confront thought as a higher “problem” when it enters into relation with the indeterminable, the unreferable. According to Deleuze, only bad (and sometimes good) cinema limits itself to a dream state induced in the viewer an imaginary participation. But the essence of the cinema has thought as its higher purpose, nothing but thought and the functioning thereof. It seems that Artaud’s influence on Deleuze’s philosophy of cinema is stronger than Kant’s.

*Keywords:* Cinema, imagination, thought, Antonin Artaud, Immanuel Kant.

PARA ALÉM DA IMAGEM-CRISTAL: CONTRIBUTOS PARA A IDENTIFICAÇÃO DE UMA TERCEIRA SÍNTESE DO TEMPO NOS *CINEMAS* DE GILLES DELEUZE  
 [BEYOND THE CRYSTAL-IMAGE: CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS THE IDENTIFICATION OF A THIRD SYNTHESIS OF TIME IN GILLES DELEUZE’S *CINEMA* BOOKS]

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The influence of the Bergsonian theory of images and philosophy of time in Deleuze’s *Cinema* has received a lot of attention by the best commentators and has contributed to establish the fundamental role played by the crystal-image in the internal architecture of *The Time-Image*. Without diminishing its importance this article will try to show, in the context of the threefold theory of time-synthesis and the correlative doctrine of faculties — developed by Deleuze, for instance, in *Proust and Signs* and *Difference and Repetition* — that there is evidence of a third synthesis of time in the second volume of the *Cinema*. The aim of this reading is to draw the line between the philosophies of time of Bergson and Deleuze: if, in the crystal-images of modern cinema, the author of *The Logic of Sense* found the visual incarnation of the paradoxes of time of the author of *Matter and Memory*, that doesn’t mean that the last word belongs to this image as it is also demonstrated by the residual Platonism that Deleuze criticizes, across his entire work, in Bergson’s philosophy of time. We will try, therefore, to prove that in *The Time-Image* Deleuze, repeating the arguments of *Proust and Signs* and *Dif-*

*ference and Repetition*, aims to overcome Bergson by creating an ultimate and terrible form of temporality, a form that the notion “power of the false” consecrates and that is followed, at the level of the doctrine of the faculties, by a movement in which Memory gives place to Thought.

*Keywords:* cinema, image, immanence, time, Deleuze.



CINEMA:  
THE “COUNTER-REALIZATION” OF  
PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS

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THE VISIBLE AND THE UTTERABLE

The visible cannot be expressed in words; what is said in words cannot be seen. The question is: Is it *because* of this particular exclusion and unique condition that the visible is seen, and the utterable uttered? Despite being *completely disjunctive*, perception and language remain part of human reality, referring constantly to one another and, as with Wittgenstein’s famous dictum, that of which we cannot speak should be passed over in silence. Is it true that what can be said and thought is completely dependent on the visible and audible, *in order for us to say anything meaningful at all?*

For Gilles Deleuze, the utterable is slightly distanced from itself because it has to actualize its meaning successively, syllable by syllable and word by word, while the visible provides a “reservoir” for what can be uttered. The visible and the audible have an unrelenting virtual presence compared with what can be extracted from it in thought and language. Of interest to Deleuze are the laws that govern the visible, which, for him, is temporal in nature. The visible needs consciously and continuously be updated too, but it is not subject to the process of succession and successivity that is inherent in language. Images, unlike linguistic signs, are not exoreferential. What is particularly meaningful about images is that they are visible, unmediated, exerting of their presence in every moment. “Nothing is every secret, even though nothing is ever immediately visible or directly readable.”<sup>1</sup> Each image is always full, “a saturated system”<sup>2</sup> that can never be exhausted by the statements that can take it over.

We know that an image [...] involves several levels of perception, and that the reader of images has at *his disposal a certain amount of freedom in his choice of the level* (even if he is not aware of this freedom). [...] [In other words], *the meaning of an image is never certain*. Language eliminates this freedom, but also this uncertainty [if you’re on the “optimal

level" of the observed image, M.S.] [...]. Thus, every written word has a function of authority insofar as *it* chooses — by proxy, so to speak — instead of the eye. *The image freezes an endless number of possibilities; words determine a single certainty. [...] [W]hen combined, the latter serves to disappoint the former.*<sup>3</sup>

An image offers up, promises, meaning, but never at a cost, because sense-making itself is never simple. It is always complicated and always in the process of becoming. An image does not itself "speak," not to anything or anyone. But it does give rise to utterances, interpretations that always lag behind the superabundant meaning of images.<sup>4</sup>

#### DELEUZE'S CONCEPT OF THE IMAGE AND ITS IDENTIFYING FEATURES

When we turn to how Deleuze conceptualizes the image, we can note the following peculiar features. He rejects the idea that we ought to think of them *in general terms* or *as generalities*, and shockingly, he does not provide a definition for them, not even a "working" definition. The uncertainty about how to define images is rooted in classical accounts that prefigured in the Latin term "imago," referring both to the *image* of the (sensual, volatile) appearance as well as its likeness (sculpture, painting). It refers to the mirrored reflection, the reflection, the ancestral portrait (the wax masks kept in the closets of atriums), portrayal (likeness of the image), as well as the silhouette (*imago mortuorum*, the shadows of the dead), dreamlike vision (*somni*), chimera (*simulacrum*), the phantom image (*imago vana*), the echo (*imago vocis*), the delusion (*imagine pacis decipere alqm*), the smokescreen, the appearance, the glance, the gestalt, the verisimilitude, the comparison, the depictive representation as well as the image represented in perception, the representation, the apprehension (*imago recentes rerum*), thought and the imagination.

The actual instantiation of images, for Deleuze, can only obtain on a case by case basis. They are not to be discovered by a common or similar "medium." Accordingly, a photograph, painting or film is merely a *cliché* if it neglects to have certain particular "effects" on the perceiver. To put it positively, an image can be described as a *process (of exchange)* between its actual and virtual components, a process that precisely through the "*fusion of the tear*" ("*fusion de la déchirure*")<sup>5</sup> is at the height of its own, proper, manifestation. (Deleuze

hopes that this process of visual instantiation is reminiscent of the successive actualizations of the utterable, without repeating its shortcomings.) This is not about the technical ways in which the film image comes into being through its projection. Rather, it is the process by which an image brings out the markings of the visible in order to come into contact with what is not visible. The visible trades places with the invisible, becomes enriched by it. Within each image lies a potential difference between how it manifests itself visibly and what can be said about it. The *asymmetrical* relationship between the perceptual and the linguistic entails that they do not mirror each other, but rather stand in singular, divergent, relation to each other (like in Leibniz's impossible parallel worlds, there is an irreducible difference in intensity between them, but no contradiction). For Deleuze, this theme has persisted ever since *Difference and Repetition*. A key feature is what may *coextensively be possible, compossible*, in each image, given the abundance of what is invisible. Anyone who – like Deleuze — is sensitive to *temporality* as the epitome of the unfathomable, singular becoming of any object (its potential, power and virtuality) will be curious to find out if and how time in the moving image coincides with a philosophical approach towards time as a universal clue to differentiation.

#### MACHINES, FOLDS, BECOMINGS, GENESES AND STRUCTURE: NEW CODES FOR OLD THEMES?

Is it too far fetched to suggest that the problematization of time has replaced how we are to conceptualize film images within Deleuze's own philosophical reflection? Have philosophical issues to do with time suddenly and uniquely being addressed in the name of the moving image?

Deleuze's path to the mysterious idea of "a morsel of time in the pure state" (*un peu de temps à l'état pur*),<sup>6</sup> leads one to a curious thought. In the 70s, he remained silent about any issues to do with time. For him, the problem of time arose only ten years later, with Francis Bacon's experiments with chromatic colours, which provided Deleuze with the title for his second Cinema book. We need to explain why Deleuze omitted engaging with time philosophically, despite the publication of his highly successful *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* during that time. If time is really as central to his work as is often suggested — like I

suggest in *Deleuze in Wonderland: Time as Evental Philosophy* (*Deleuze im Wunderland: Zeit-als Ereignisphilosophie*)<sup>7</sup> — one might postulate that it's been encoded in his text. How else are we to assess this silence about time, despite its import to his philosophy?

The omission of the use of the word *time* must not therefore mean it is out of sight. "To *always* omit one word, to employ awkward metaphors and obvious circumlocutions, is perhaps the most emphatic way of calling attention to that word."<sup>8</sup> If this is true, we need to find other key terms that can capture our reflections about time. Two of these terms include "structure" (in *How to Recognize Structuralism* 1967/73) and "machine" (in *Anti-Oedipus* 1972, *Kafka* 1974, *Proust and Signs* 1964/70/73).

The phase during which Deleuze omitted discussions of time would not be so interesting had he not returned to it at the very end, when his reflections about time were fading, as though nothing had ever happened. The code words, or keywords, mentioned above are important only *if* they are linked with an anticipated change or shift in the very subject matter itself.

Had the silence of any explicit discussion of time, and the sudden appearance of his 1981 book on *Bacon*, in addition to the following two Cinema books, been the basis for a change in Deleuze's perspective on time, he would have considered his rejection of it through the propagation of his "thought without image (*pensée sans image*)" in *Difference and Repetition*.<sup>9</sup> *The language-based, logically-successive perspective on time would shift towards a logic of simultaneity based on images*. This is because sense, as Deleuze understands it, is simultaneously both sense and nonsense as the case may be, depending on which level of reality one occupies.

This discovery may at first seem premature, but *Anti-Oedipus* expresses a deep distrust of the *mental images* that figure in psychoanalysis: "Images, nothing but images,"<sup>10</sup> "[d]eath is not desired, but what is desired is dead, already dead: images."<sup>11</sup> The "image-concept" is important for Deleuze insofar as it stands in sharp contrast to the *mental images* generated by consciousness. The images that are scattered through space and time, that have the possibility of being collectively experienced (photographs, paintings, film images) enjoy no immunity from the danger of becoming clichés.<sup>12</sup> Deleuze willingly and arbitrarily explores the substantive differences between individual types of images. Images are of interest to him only when they exert a specific *effect* on the viewer, when they are able to make the *invisible* forces visible, in short: to bring into contact those great realms of virtuality whose exposure his philosophy is committed to.



## ENTANGLING THE PROBLEMS OF TIME AND IMAGE

As mentioned above, the meaning and medium of images has a long tradition of sense expectation and sense experience associated with it. However, Deleuze goes one step further and passionately re-injects and reintegrates within ephemeral, cinematic images, the aura of his own productive understanding of the philosophy of time.

Deleuze develops his recurring question under the aegis of the richness of the cinematic surface: How meaning is constructed, how truth is thinkable, what it is that binds philosophy, science and art together. One might subsume all of these questions under a further category of questions: How is thought drawn to its own image, what apparatus does it deploy in just one glance? In addition to this, what role does a change in medium play, from a “time when things were said and written” to a “time when things are visible through images”? Of concern was this change in medium, defining the contemporary discourse about the “pictorial turn” and rehabilitating the visible. Deleuze thus escapes the common understanding of time as succession like Derrida emphasized it in his concept of “différance,” drawing attention to the need for a “simultaneity of what is succeeding in order to understand the process of succession” where sense-making is concerned. What, then, is to be gained with this entanglement of time with image, except that it leads to properties being exchanged from one realm to another, blurring the boundaries between them?

This entanglement of time and image opens up two problems with Deleuze’s argument: on the one hand are quite a number of metaphysical speculations about what it is that allows time and image properties to hang together, what it is that grounds their family resemblance. Here I include things like the explanations about the heterogeneity of time, the division of the three temporal modes, the purity of the past that has never been made contemporary, the chronification of the present and the elimination of those opportunities that allow for the fact that the embodiment of events may not be infinitely realizable in a line of flight, and so forth. Other features that belong to these theoretical preoccupations, which are strange and awkward and had until then not been placed alongside them in practice, include the seeming spirituality of images (as the sum of appearances and their dissipation) in the book on *Beckett*,<sup>13</sup> which has so far found few supporters.

However, what’s more disturbing in Deleuze’s thought may be found where he searches for the evidence, the paradoxical effects of nonsense in sense, where it contributes to Kant’s

problem in the third Critique: the representation of what is not representable. For his rejection of the representationalist model entails that it's not the allegorical model of representation that will be found, but that time instead captures a counterfeit of every form represented. It is for this reason that the entanglement of simultaneity with successiveness is only interesting in relation to film and television.<sup>14</sup>

What interests Deleuze about the image is its virtual presence, the collection of powers that enable its appearance and disappearance.<sup>15</sup> (His theory for why *every* image, whether painted or filmed, is essentially *virtual*, belongs to his most interesting speculations.<sup>16</sup>) This is where he finally recognizes the effects of temporality, which goes for his own thinking and the possibilities he is hoping to exhaust. It next seems as though it is the simultaneity of diverging effects on meaning that paints the image before language can grasp it; but it is also this temporal exclusion of any relationship with language (*something that is either present, past or future*) that is insufficient to characterize what an image offers for us to "visually" experience and reflect on. According to Deleuze it is only when time is no longer incorporated in movement (to include the image) that its effects as pure virtuality can be felt. This is where the concept of the interval, the intermediate image, plays an important role.<sup>17</sup>

For Deleuze, every image manifests itself, emerges, at the conceptual crossroads that bring together *movement*, the visible and the invisible. Like Bergson, Deleuze develops the idea of *chaos out of light and painting* in his account of the *moving-image*,<sup>18</sup> an echo of which is also to be found in his essay on Epicurus and Lucretius, which he had already published in the mid-60s and later in *The Logic of Sense*. An image is the "moving cut of a duration," within a Bergsonian maelstrom of floating images. It introduces a delay between two possible movements, it is the "in between." The relationship between image and movement, sight and sound in the *time-image* is even more striking, when this in-between stage becomes *immeasurable* and for its part *imageless*. The visible then becomes "false," shallow, unsatisfying, through the artificial means of withdrawing the image through "false cuts" (*faux raccords*), cuts that make themselves apparent and denounce the montage for what it is: "false" — unnaturally staged — movement.

In his cinema books, Deleuze conceives of a *historical initiation of time*, where he allows classical accounts of time to flow into the hundred years of film history that moves at a faster pace. Just as there exist both a classical pre-war cinema and a modern post-war cinema, one difference between the two that arises for Deleuze is the difference in which time is mani-

fested. He decides between two philosophical approaches: classical philosophy, with its grandiose theories, and modern philosophy, that focuses on singular concepts. For Deleuze, a momentous change that occurred in philosophy began with Kant and his *fundamentum in re* in the internal and (apparently) linear approach to time. Herein persists the challenge for Deleuze to save philosophy as a system by attempting to base it on a singular conceptual approach that would function so much the better with a heterogeneous set of concepts.

The “*présentation directe*” of time in images, promised us by Deleuze in his second Cinema book, is perceived as none other than that which can be felt — not seen — through time which is not realized in the visible or audible image, but is placed, nestled, exactly in *between* the separately staged visible and invisible systems. The kind of invisible difference, *which thus appears without a concept*,<sup>19</sup> already addressed in *Difference and Repetition*, is presented in modern cinema as an interval nestling between two images that are linked together by an illogical cut. This shows — on condition of its location in the successive order of the image sequence — the incursion of different simultaneous times that generate the production of meaning. The relations of successiveness/utterability and simultaneity/imagery are in their strictest forms too schematic to describe the totality of temporal effects that can be produced as a staged commodity within either system.<sup>20</sup> A first glance on the new medium sharpens the senses for the specific possibilities of old.

#### DELEUZE CHANGES THE MEDIUM: FROM LANGUAGE TO IMAGE

The lack of any “ex-cathedra discussion” of time in the years between 1970 and 1980 is interesting because a change of mind related to how the problem of time should be handled was in the offing, *en passant*, due to the seemingly unnoticed use of keywords. In other words: time emerged in 1980 under very different circumstances than those under which it disappeared. The change from the medium of the written (language) to the medium of the image (film) does not escape blame. He concurrently hints at a theoretical dilemma. Is it possible for the image to open up the “parallel world” of the visible to the utterable, to successfully achieve the conditions required for what can be said?

Why else would Deleuze change the medium he discusses, if he hadn't hoped, after some reflection, to reach the "other side" of language, that which takes place "behind" our backs, so to speak, when we speak, think and write? For Deleuze, there is a *virtual totality* (here: of language itself), "beyond" the successive actualization of any uttered word. That is, the totality of differentiations, that shapes the actual and embeds it, surrounds it with a "world" in which it only makes sense. Those barely existent simultaneous and coexistent thoughts, that accompany what is successively said, are crucial to the process of making sense during the consecutive actualization of linguistic signs. For this time of contradictory synchronicity, does there exist a better model than the visible which exists as any kind of form, *as image*?

This strategic approach to disguising and denying the concept of time its place among other concepts is interesting because this — as it were secretly — signaled a change in Deleuze's understanding of time. No longer was it the succession of the utterable and the written, but the simultaneous meaning of the visible that was an epistemically-constitutive model of thinking about time. While Deleuze was initially preoccupied with more conventional notions of time in French philosophy, where for him time was *successively logical*, understood as "the epitome of a differential order," which produced yet further differences, his reflections on the "image of thought" (*l'image de la pensée*), which he rejected in his 1968 *Difference and Repetition* alongside entrenched dogmatic philosophy, led him to modify how he came to think about the properties of time.

On his search for a way to secure a conception of the "image of thought" in his own philosophy, he would take seriously the *simultaneous relationships* between sense and nonsense in (real) images and provide the concept of time with a completely different meaning in the 1980s. He would not only radicalize the image-concept in the sense that it synchronously presented possible systems of thought, but he would also inject the concept of time with the same considerations. In his later writings it turned out that the unit of time was the archetype of a possible world, whose potency was not only successive, but to be understood to have developed in *parallel* — at least in images, especially those films of the European post-war cinema, which with their false connections and ostentatious image-and-sound-gaps would become the ideal performance venue for his new model of time.<sup>21</sup>

THE CINEMA AS A “FUSION OF A TEAR”:

SUCCESSIVE MEANING OF THE UTTERABLE (TENSES) VS.

THE SIMULTANEITY OF VISIBLE MEANING (TEMPORAL MODES)

For Deleuze, cinema allows for the “counter-realization” (*contre-effectuation*) of philosophical problems. By this he means to introduce a playful way out of an intellectual impasse, that is to say, that the “new” medium of the cinema can lead, through its own means, to overcome ancient philosophical methods by supplying its own performative solutions. “It is not merely coincidental that the crisis in psychology, the beginning of the psychoanalytic method and the questioning of idealistic systems occurred in the period when cinematography was invented,”<sup>22</sup> notes Marie Elisabeth Müller. The “qualitative leap that for the first time theoretically finds its expression” lies not alone, however, “in the radical disclosure of the mere illusion”<sup>23</sup> of representative logic and homogeneous recognition.

Rather more importantly, film provides a model that shows how Deleuze, together with Immanuel Kant, conceives of the *disparate structure of time* events. Disparate as the flight lines of time itself, splitting up in a chronological, successive and aeonic, non-successive mode of events — so the theory goes — resembling the faked and staged synchronicity of sight and sound in film, offering a “fusion of the tear (*fusion de la déchirure*)”<sup>24</sup> that poorly ties together the loose ends of disaster. Or, explained less dramatically and more technically: The utterable articulates its meaning (soundtrack) successively, the visible (image) can simultaneously incorporate sense and nonsense (qua depth of field, like for example in *Citizen Kane*, montage, etc.). Both schematize time and reality differently, with neither being more true nor false than the other: the utterable is based on *temporal modes* and exclusions. It sharply separates actuality and virtuality. In contrast to the visible — to which I add realistic images, paintings as well as film images — changes in time only occur as modulation, i.e. as the “operation of the real” (*operation du Réel*)<sup>25</sup> within the visible. What is it that’s meant by this formula? First of all, that changes (like leaving a room) take place continuously in the image, i.e. *images are never missing*, but every new image (as empty as it may well be) remains full and present. In the early 80s Deleuze is already preparing the ground for the logic of digital film images, their abandonment of visible cuts in favor of invisible image manipulation that will become the new signature figures of the digital era.

This ontological separation of the actual from the virtual gives way to a situational appreciation, as the phenomenal crossovers between both realms remain fluid: one might consider the elegant swing of the mirror image, that strikes us first and then strikes us as such: the actual image is at first recognizable as a bare and virtual mirror image only after the camera's movement — time is articulated in the image such that it is a *continuous dissolution of equally real moments* rather than as the *nuance* of grades of reality (first virtual, then actual, then virtual). Temporality is expressed through the visible as a *continuous modulation* of a yet completely cinematographically construed "reality." It allows for the construction of correspondence rather than contradictions.

The most important discovery Deleuze made during that time seems to be that the visible, in contrast to the utterable, renounces all forms of temporality. A seeming paradoxical impossibility lies behind his consideration. Which one? Well, the virtual, inactual as inactual, the non-contemporary in images can be made visible, *exactly and only because they are themselves inactual and virtual*. Insofar as something is even visible, it is fully present. (That pictures are the only way of showing the *virtual as present*, belongs to the discovery of the *time image*.) While the modular forms of time have become the "no longer-" or not "yet-" real object of the argument, because they prolong the brevity of their own successive implementation, the *modulation of the real* is merely to be found within the visible.

We are reminded of an example of the types of non-contradictory counter realistic relations of image and sound track (with each other), of the cut: Here, Deleuze uses the exception in order to show how the rule functions: Unlike ordinary life, succession of meanings and the simultaneity of making sense of them can nevertheless be staged in film through the asymmetric use of sight and (via false connections, ostentatious image-and-sound-gaps) as simultaneously *separated* and nevertheless *parallel* to one another.

Of course the cut *between* two frames is usually presented as a *seamless connection*, so that we don't perceive it as an interference. It can also be staged as a *false connection*, which we then identify as a cut, where we then also notice the *missing* pictures that would have been *in between* cuts. The visible therefore points to the invisible, vanished image that cannot be — unlike in an ordinary situation — bridged by the imagination. The way the false connection works is irritating, but it makes possible new interpretive chains of thought beyond the visible movement on screen.

Naturally, the cut not only takes place with images, but with sounds, between two tones. Here again, the cut remains mostly inaudible. The sound cut is first felt when it separates the original sound from its image, so that when one hears someone speaking they are not necessarily to be seen in the image, or, when one sees someone speak they are *heard as being silent* (image-sound-gap) as it is famously displayed in Wim Wenders' documentary *Pina* (2011). In the latter case, the cut takes place factually, between two images and two sounds. This will be conceived and understood on a different plane, than that on which it itself takes place. *Between image and sound*, unique and alone because it concerns the *simultaneous implementations of different successive events*: The succession of images functions differently than the one of sounds, a visible cut of an image has a different effect on the spectator than a silent cut in sound etc. When we thus search for a logic of the "self-implementating" instantiation of images, the simultaneity of different events, moves and cuts are decisive factors for the breakdown of its temporal structure. This simultaneity of the divergent in one and the same image is a challenge to the conventions of logic. This is because we are not accustomed to holding mutually exclusive *temporal* and *synchronous possibilities* together. We fear we must opt for the reality of the one or the other. For Deleuze, cinema makes the *occasionally positive experience of divergence* sensible that fails so famously in the Kantian experience of the sublime.

Translated from German into English by Nicole Hall.

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1. Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Seán Hand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 51.

2. Roland Barthes, *The Fashion System*, trans. Matthew Ward and Richard Howard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 13.

3. *Ibid.* 13, 17.

4. This superabundance of meaning, so the theory goes, is due to the time structure of images: the simultaneity of different temporalities in one and the same image, but that we can't think about at the same time.

5. Gilles Deleuze, *The Time-Image. Cinema 2 [L'Image Temps. Cinéma 2]*, Paris: Les éditions de Minuit, 1985], trans. Hugh Tomlinson, Robert Galeta (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 276. For more detail on the role of the "audiovisual" fusion in Deleuze's writing see Marie-Claire Ropars-Wuilleumier, *L'écran de la mémoire, Essais de lecture cinématographique. Antonioni, Bresson, Godard, Losey, Pasolini, Resnais, Varda* (Paris: Seuil, 1997), 256-266.

6. Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs [Proust et les signes]*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1970], trans. Richard Howard (London: Athlone, 2000), 61 [Fr., 76].

7. Cf. Mirjam Schaub, *Gilles Deleuze im Wunderland: Zeit-als Ereignisphilosophie* (München: Fink, 2003).

8. Jorge Luis Borges, "The Garden of Forking Paths," trans. Andrew Hurley, in *Fictions* (London: Penguin Books, 2000), 85.

9. Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition [Différence et Répétition]*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968], trans. Paul Patton (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 217.

10. Gilles Deleuze/Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia 1* [*Anti-Édipe, Capitalisme et schizophrénie 1*, Paris: Les éditions de Minuit, 1972], trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane, (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), 347.

11. Deleuze/Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 384. In Deleuze's book on *Bacon* the thoroughgoing concern prevails about how possible it could be that the canvas can be rescued from the epitome of cultural clichés, in order to live up to Godard's formula: *Pas une image juste, mais juste une image*, that is cited not only by Deleuze, but also by Barthes in *Camera Lucida* [*La chambre claire*, Paris: Seuil, 1980]. In the later Cinema books contempt for the "dead," clichéd images like the dream can be felt. "Civilization of the image? In fact, it is a civilization of the cliché where all the powers have an interest in hiding images from us, not necessarily in hiding the same thing from us, but in hiding something in the image. On the other hand, at the same time, the image constantly attempts to break through the cliché, to get out of the cliché. There is no knowing how far a real image may lead: the importance of becoming visionary or seer." Deleuze, *Cinema II, The Time-Image*, 21.

12. "One can fight against the cliché only with much guile, perseverance, and prudence: it is a task perpetually renewed with every painting with every moment of every painting." Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon – The Logic of Sensation* [*Francis Bacon – Logique du Sensation*, Paris: Seuil, 1981], trans. Daniel W. Smith (London: Continuum, 2003), 96.

13. Every image is, for Deleuze, describable as "an intensity" or "potential energy" that it "drags along in its autodissipation." Gilles Deleuze, "The Exhausted" ["Épuisé," Paris: Les éditions de Minuit, 1992], in *SubStance* 24.3.78 (1995), 3-28), 19. The "vector of abolition" (ibid. 21) is the problem of the — electronic and cinematographic — image that might *vanish* at any point; however — unlike in Virilio or Baudrillard — it assumes that an image's extinction exhausts its own possibilities. "But the image has greater depth, because it disengages from its object so as to become in itself a process — a possible event that doesn't even have to realize itself in the body of an object any longer: something like the Cheshire Cat's disembodied smile in Lewis Carroll. [...] The visual image is dragged along by music, the aural image that rushes towards its own abolition. Both rush toward the end, all possibility exhausted." (ibid. 18). One sometimes has the impression that the image is the counter-realization of all that real events themselves are not able to realize, so that the cinema is the greatest of all possibilities and constellation in the process of realization, that would otherwise not occur.

14. Lorenz Engell is the first to put forward the provocative thesis that it is the televisual image, with its inputs and transitions, that realized the "time-image" as designed by Deleuze. Lorenz Engell and Oliver Fahlé, *Der Film bei Deleuze/Le cinéma selon Deleuze*, (Weimar/Paris : Verlag der Bauhaus Universität/Presses de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1997), 469-479.

15. In this context, Deleuze's text on Beckett is particularly informative, precisely because this is where he addresses the images of television in particular. Beckett's film — titled: *Film* — already plays an important role in the first Cinema book; he marks a backward movement: Deleuze's unfolding image types — perceptual, affective and action-image — roll back up together and try at the same time to escape the camera and the reign of the image itself, just by exploring or exhausting them and the space created by the image completely. Deleuze makes a number of reclassifications that are unusual in the second Cinema book too. He theorizes time as pure virtuality rather than memory or dream, as a feature that curls and closes itself up as a "Realie."

16. Deleuze gives it a very interesting theory of discrimination between real and virtual images: Basically only virtual images can be recognized as images, while real images are recognized by visualizing the "referenced objects" (people, objects) that are not apparent or do not only exist as an imaging medium. In film the real images obscure the presence of the camera, while the mentioned virtual images — as images (mirror images) — at least retrospectively can be recognized as images.

17. "It is the method of BETWEEN, 'between two images' [...], between the sound and the visual [...] The whole [montage] undergoes a mutation, because it has ceased to be the One-Being, in order to become the constitutive 'and' of things, the constitutive between-two of images (*l'entre-deux*). The whole thus merges with that Blanchot calls the force of 'dispersal of the Outside' [...]: that void which is no longer a motor-part of the image, and which the image would cross in order to continue, but is the radical calling into question of the image (just as there is a silence which is not longer the motor part or the breathing-space of discourse but its radical calling into question). False continuity, then takes on a new meaning, at the same time as it becomes the law." Deleuze, *Cinema II: The Time-Image*, 185.

18. "La matière pour nous, est un ensemble d'images. Et par 'image' nous entendons une certaine existence qui est plus que ce que l'idéaliste appelle une représentation, mais moins que ce que le réaliste appelle une chose, — une existence située à mi-chemin entre la 'chose' et la 'représentation'." Henri Bergson, *Matière et Mémoire. Essai sur la relation du corps à l'esprit* (Paris: PUF, 1993), 1.

19. Cf. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 16.

20. Borges addressed how it would be to deprive the language of its successiveness at least at the level of production in his "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" in Jorge Luis Borges, *Fictions* [*Ficciones*], trans. Andrew Hurley, (London: Penguin Books, 2000).



21. The 1988 book, *Le Pli. Leibniz et le baroque* — which is often (back)dated to earlier history of philosophy — belongs to the line of flight of Deleuzian thinking. Leibniz stands — theoretically, practically, and with his theoretical reflections on compossible worlds, within the conceptual idea of the fold — for a spiritual universe, that searches for the possibilities of inauthentic “representability” of infinitely many perspectives on the world. (*Safeguarding of infinity, without sacrificing the unity of the universe.*) The peculiar schism of the concept of time in the cinema books is not therefore a simple repetition of the difference theory agenda that he was preoccupied with in the 50s and 60s, but the — possibly utopian — attempt to share differences out onto different (spatial) levels, without dividing them. His project was thus about searching for an “inclusive disjunction,” for a non-representative “illustration” of the concept of time, that was immersed in virtual and compossible time. The desire for “a little time in a pure state” is therefore also virulent in the 80s.

22. Marie Elisabeth Müller, *Passagen des Sinns: eine medien-ästhetische Theorie serieller Darstellung* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1999), 82.

23. Ibid.

24. Deleuze, *Cinema II: The Time-Image*, 278. Cf. further details of the role of the “audiovisual” in the “fusion” can be found in Ropars-Wuilleumier, *L'écran de la mémoire. Essais de lecture cinématographique. Antonioni, Bresson, Godard, Losey, Pasolini, Resnais, Varda*, 256-266.

25. Deleuze, *Cinema II: The Time-Image*, 28.

## VISUAL EFFECTS AND PHENOMENOLOGY OF PERCEPTUAL CONTROL

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### INTRODUCTION

I am interested in phenomenology of perception for digital visual effects programs like Adobe After Effects, and editing programs like Avid Compositor, and Final Cut. There is discussion in philosophy and film of the aesthetics of digital effects, but little on the perception of compositors.<sup>1</sup> The best resource for phenomenologists is to try out the programs, read training manuals, online tutorials<sup>2</sup> and trade magazines like *Cinefex*, or to take a few Introductory film school courses in these programs.<sup>3</sup>

There are many models of perception, in the sense that various parts of the process of perception have structures, some of which might be generalizable. Neurophysiology, information processing, perspectivism in painting — each offers categories for a theory of perception. These are only parts of perception, so they are models, not descriptions of perception. My question here is how visual effects editing provides a distinctive model of perception.

One could ask how the viewer perceives visual effects, or about visual effects as intentional objects. Instead, I will ask how compositors who make visual effects control their perceptions. This paper has three sections: the art of perceptual control; the After Effects model of perception, namely perception by layers and transparency; and implications for time and perspective.

### THE ART OF PERCEPTION CONTROL

We are the cause of our perceptions in many ways. We draw pictures and then perceive them. We take a few steps and see things we did not see before. We concentrate, squint, drink beer, and hum. We colorize old movies. If digital effects were just a way of looking for new images or altering old ones, images which we then perceive with our sense-organs in the

usual way, then it would tell us little that is substantially new about perception. However, there are *prima facie* reasons to think that digital editing might constitute a new kind of perceptual control.

First, if we believe Malabou's hypothesis in *What Should We Do with Our Brain*,<sup>4</sup> then if we monitor and manipulate our brains while we perceive, we might end up with a different consciousness of perception, as well as a different set of perceptions. Digital effects editing might be like that. And if we believe Andy Clark in *Supersizing the Mind*,<sup>5</sup> a person's perception includes not only what is in her brain (or mind), but also includes perceptual resources like libraries and other people. By analogy, the work an editor does at the editing suite might count not just as cognitive pre-production, after which perception would take place, but as perception itself.

Second, non-linear digital editing models real perception more closely than the old linear editing of filmstrip did. It is faster, so it generates perceptions in realtime, yet because it never alters the original footage by cutting it physically (that is the sense in which it is non-linear), it preserves past images in a way that neither linear film editing, nor human memory, can do. In short, there is reason to think that non-linear editing genuinely models real perception, but with new features. Insofar as an editor not only offers perceptions to a subsequent audience, but also controls her own primary perception in realtime, there is something novel for phenomenology.

Perceptual compositing and image-machines suggest Deleuzian assemblages<sup>6</sup>: composited images always have one more level to add, and one to subtract. However, Deleuze's own analyses of cinema do not cover two of the key elements in compositing.

First, as has often been remarked, Deleuze rarely discusses the technological side of filmmaking. He does remark on events like the introduction of inexpensive video cameras into 1970's film culture. Nevertheless, his whole approach to cinema is founded on the argument, contra Bergson, that one central element of technology is irrelevant to the nature of cinema: the fact that film is projected in 24 interrupted frames/second, none of which moves, is for Deleuze irrelevant to whether film images "move." While many features of Deleuze's treatments of cinema presuppose technology in various ways, his concerns are more about viewing and thinking cinema than making it.

Second, while Deleuze's research is guided around the two types of cinematic image — movement and time-images — there is an ambiguity over what Deleuze means by "image."

An image is certainly not limited to what we sometimes call the composition of a frame, namely the spatial arrangement of figures inside a 4:3 rectangle. But is an image in general more like framing or more like a cut? Is an image more like a percept, an affect, or a thought? It is hard to say whether the overlap of image-layers is more like any-layer-whatever depth of field, or more like a grain-of-the-voice semiotic, or more like a history-of-effects hermeneutic.

Most important, once Deleuze says that an image is a function of sheets of time, and mounts past and future, i.e. non-present times, simultaneous with the present, an image cannot be the sort of thing we perceive at a given time. And if an image, for Deleuze, is thus not present, to any one at any time, then images need a kind of phenomenology outside the region of perceptual fields, passive syntheses, foreground figuration, and all the other categories that go with the action-image. If the idea of an “image” in the time-image is less about the content of awareness and more about the repetition of de-synchronizable collectives, and less about perceptual givens than perceptual freedoms, then the paradigm image is not on screen at the moment, but something like the time-consuming teamwork of layer-building.

Now, if editors did not create primary perception, but only tinkered with natural images in media received from external sources, then Bazin and Cavell would still be right: film would be a realist medium. Of course, lenses, lights, framing, and animation shape recorded images, and editing alters them, but whatever gets recorded would really have been there in front of the lens, from the perspective where the cinematographer’s eye was, and where the audience will take up the point of view. However, it is not always the case that the editor sees the images first by natural perception and subsequently manipulates them. For example, an editor can manipulate images by algorithms without seeing them first. Indeed, when an effect is computationally expensive (some individual frames of visual effects in *Iron Man 3* (2013)<sup>7</sup> took over ten hours for the computer to render), the editor will likely previsualize the effect image in shortcut “preview” form;<sup>8</sup> on her workstation, she perceives only a sketch of the effect (more blurred or jittery than the polished render). She might in preview mode increase the exposure to see it more clearly — known as “slamming the comp.” This high exposure image is part of the decision workflow but will not appear in the final perception, which exists only later on. In short, digital editing does not just manipulate natural images, but also builds original perceptions.

In fact, controlling perceptual syntheses is neutral as to whether perceptual objects are real, since synthesis constitutes both real and unreal intentional objects. Digital cinema is in

principle neither more nor less realistic than celluloid. To take one complex example, photo-realistic computer animation of human faces is now possible for still images, but too expensive for moving images. The problem in assessing degrees of realism raises what robotics calls the “Valley of the Uncanny”: as images of faces become more realistic, they look better, until they get very close to fully real, at which point they look creepy, unless they get perfect. To make facial movements look perfect, some animators think,<sup>9</sup> would require artificial intelligence software, to simulate subtle preconscious cognitive micro-gestures on an artificial face. Of course, the issue of what looks realistic on screen is different from what is real. Obviously, an animator knows his creatures are not real; but after effects moves, like re-lighting elements or layering visual fields, can equally be in the service of the real, or the unreal, or some hybrid. Indeed, the ontological vocabulary in the digital effects industry takes some getting used to. “Reference” does not mean denoting real objects, but using pre-existing images to build CG versions, as someone animating Air Force One “references” Google images of it from many angles to build a 3-D animated version. To make an image look realistic is to “sell” it. Normally, images look realistic when they are dirty (in human perception, clean looks fake), so there are realism-generating programs that add smudges, cracks, and fumes. There are exceptions: “reference” shows that the real Air Force One is kept cleaner than all other airplanes, so animators cannot use the dirt-is-real trick to sell it.<sup>10</sup> In sum, when one composites perceptions for oneself, these have the same likelihood of realism as one’s other perceptions.<sup>11</sup>

If it were possible to generalize from the phenomenology of compositors to the phenomenology of live perception, we might begin to want to control and edit our everyday perceptions. Nevertheless, the challenge in a topic like this is to drive the conclusions to the limit, yet without exaggerating. I want to analyze interesting features of effects work without the metaphor of a grand transformation of the human species. For example, green screen imaging reveals interesting features of background contingency, but there is no green screen inside the mind. There is no way to control all perception and still be in the world. However, digital editing does control some perception, and that by itself might without exaggeration be called the biggest event of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century so far. The idea is not just that the audience decides what is in the film (as when focus groups influence editors, or the way an Expo ’67 audience voted on which pre-filmed ending they wanted to see), or that open-source footage

allows viewers to edit their own versions or sequels (the way Harry Potter fans make puppet shows on Youtube.<sup>12</sup>) The idea is to pin down the specific art of control in visual effects.

Analyzing user phenomenology is complicated, since programs like After Effects are designed for varied users: for Old School flatbed editors and mixers, the screen shows icons of dials; for math-averse artists, it shows paintbrush icons to click and drag over images; for programmers, numerical calculations; for Deleuzian assemblers, layers and strata.

Of course, there are limits to perceptual control. In the big picture, the CG sensorium offers less diversity than a carbon-based life form gets walking through a forest. And in those parameters where digital control can tune image detail more finely than eye control can, it can become too fine to be perceived at all. No doubt we are conscious of finer detail than we normally attend to, so there is room to benefit from artificial perceptual fine-tuning. Still, there is no value, for example, controlling sense-content beyond our peripheral vision. Roland Barthes discusses something analogous: not every tiny phonetic difference can make a difference in meaning. Barthes calls this the “security margin,”<sup>13</sup> or the “edge of the field of dispersal.” By analogy, in digital editing programs, the view screen shows a “TV safe” border: before TV’s were flat screen, their rounded sides would fail to show what was on the edges of the composition, so the editor would not put important content in that unsafe zone. Part of analyzing the control of perceptual parameters is to know where to stop.<sup>14</sup> The arguments of Dreyfus and Dennett still hold: the more we can do, the more we cannot do it. The fastest programmers cannot keep up with the speed of consciousness. It took a thousand programmers a year to make visual effects for a lousy movie like *Lord of the Rings*. But my point is not that consciousness can be replaced by controlled digital editing, just that editing can give consciousness a perceptual experience it could not have on its own, the way Vertov said the camera eye can see what the flesh eye cannot. A special effect-perception is almost a shimmering signifier in Barthes’ sense,<sup>15</sup> and almost a saturated intuition in Marion’s. Too perceptual for hermeneutics, too imagistic for *différance*, synthetic perception is a dialectic of also and insofar as, as Hegel says.

Béla Balász wrote in the 1940’s<sup>16</sup> that cinema still needed a theoretical aesthetics even 50 years into its history — in part so audiences would know what is possible, and demand better movies. This is true today for controlled imagery. It is not enough either to be dazzled by special effects, or to reject them on principle.<sup>17</sup> Our youthful dream of smart-brain and virtual reality implants, cyborg extensions, and space travel with contacts never panned out. I

hope some artist implants T-cells into art-lovers' eyes for a new Op art. However, if digital editing programs are the only technological perceptual enhancements we have for now, we can still demand better perceptions. The fact that certain editing styles go out of fashion, like fades and wipes, reminds us that certain perceptions do too. One no longer glances, stares, or does doubletakes as people once did. It is a timeless norm not to blink or cut on the action, but some perceptions are diachronically emergent, and phenomenology needs to be on their cutting edge.

## OBJECTIONS

There will no doubt be reservations about this idea of controlled perception, either on grounds that digital compositing adds nothing new to natural perception, or on grounds that what it adds is false. The former divides into two: that consciousness already does what compositing does, and that older art forms, from painting to analogue editing, already did it.

The first variation is to say metaphorically that consciousness already edits itself,<sup>18</sup> and that at least in imagination, we already vary images on parameters like colour, scale, and motion path, so the new technology producing perceptual variations is no big deal. Phenomenologically, though, it is not certain that we can imagine as many variations as we can perceive, like a hundred shades of green. Furthermore, as Husserl argues, even if we can imagine as much as we can perceive, imagination is not a subspecies of perception, but has different noetic properties. It is not obvious that an imagination content of emerald green looks emerald green in the same way that perception content looks emerald green. In digital editing, we do not imagine a hundred shades of green and decide which one to see; we dial through the shades and see them all, then pick one for the composition, and see it in the comp screen. The fact that After Effects controls perceptions, not imagination, is substantial.

To be sure, this happens too when painters choose among tubes, so even if consciousness does not already vary perception in the same way that effects editing does, perhaps we should admit that painting already does what effects editing does. However, in the view of computer animators, the difference between corporeal and computer painting is that computer painters go straight to making the image, whereas hand painters waste time first "smearing goo on a surface."<sup>19</sup> The point is even clearer if we take the paradigm of house

painting. On this paradigm too, the painter controls what we will perceive, but in this case, the painter first alters a pre-existing object and then perceives it, whereas the computer painter alters the perceptual content itself from the moment it first exists.

It is always difficult to assess the degree of difference between two phenomena (like hand painting and computer animation), just because it is always the case that dichotomies, like physical and virtual imaging, or like image-production and image-perception, or like active and passive, or control and receptivity, can be deconstructed. But that does not mean that all phenomena are ultimately the same, or that novelties are all really classical. Every art form starts with some sensuous material and turns it into something different in its own way. Differences on a continuum, or differences between technologies, or between user interfaces, are significant differences.

And yet it remains difficult to distinguish between digital image control and image control by a range of technologies including hand drawn animation, analogue compositing, or photochemical trick photography. Pre-CG movies like *Blade Runner* (1982), after all, required just as much multi-tasking visualization as digital compositing does. One of the creators of Photoshop, John Knoll, remembers physical editing as if it were already a precursor of digital multitasking:

[Pre-digital] Optical compositing was always a performance. Load this element and this projector head on the [optical] printer, wind to this frame..., set the focus ever so slightly out to soften that, put this color filtration on here, shoot with this exposure, then wind back — and you'd do all of that for dozens of passes! And invariably there would be some mistake; so you'd fix that, and then something else would go wrong.<sup>20</sup>

Nevertheless, one difference between the more physical optical compositing and hand-drawn animation on the one hand, and the more virtual programmable effects on the other, concerns what the user has to know about the motion of objects. In hand-drawn animation, one can make an eye tear up as one wishes; to program the computer to make the eye tear up, one has to know, for example, how the meniscus layer of the eye socket creates liquid suction between the eyeball and the surrounding tissue, so the programmed keyframes will engage corneal controls, eyelid controls, and lid follow-through.<sup>21</sup> In programmed motion graphics, if one wants objects to undergo complex curving movements rotating around one



another, one has to know whether the objects are rotating around a fixed point on the screen or around each other, and where their “anchor points” are. If one misjudges which relative rotations one wants, the algorithms will take the program at its word, and make something unintended. But if one knows what movement one wants to see, the program will iterate it easily. In general, hand-drawn animation allows one to draw what one wants to see without knowing exactly the logic of rotation; but then one has the hard job of making each frame oneself.

In one sense, visual effects are in principle independent of computer animation, since one can put after effects on live action footage. In *Iron Man 3*, for example, Iron Man saves a dozen people who fall out of a plane, guiding them together to the ground.<sup>22</sup> Animating this scene might have worked for long shots, but the director wanted close ups. Green screen might have seemed an obvious choice to produce the scene (one films actors against a green background, then removes the green, and replaces it with a CG environment). But it is difficult to do green-screen on people whose hair is blowing in the wind, since the green light of the background bends around and gets reflected in the hairs, so when it comes time to “key” or remove the green, green-removal leads to hair-removal. As an alternative, a typical stunt would be to wire actors to a wind tunnel; but wind-tunnels limit camera movement. So instead of these options, they filmed the Red Bull Skydiving team actually jumping out of planes (digitally painting out their parachutes later). The difficulty was that one jump yields only 45 seconds of film, so they filmed 60 jumps over 18 days. But then the weather and light reflections had to be consistent, so the live-action film had to be modified with effects: effects, but not full CG. Admittedly the line between computer graphics and effects editing is a fine one, since for this scene some depth cues did have to be animated.<sup>23</sup> The line is blurred even more in the technology of performance capture, where live actors’ facial expressions are marked, digitized and transferred to computer, after which animators paint images over top of the geometry of the marks. This blurring of distinctions has created a problem for the Oscar category for “Animation.”<sup>24</sup> And all this applies not only to big-budget special effects, but also to barely noticeable perceptual enhancements, when digital effects are used to add just a touch more twinkle to a live actor’s eye, or a touch more reflection in the metal on a car door.<sup>25</sup>

Because the phenomenological lines are blended and the technologies are interactive, much of visual effects work consists in troubleshooting unintended consequences of interacting perceptual parameters.<sup>26</sup> For example, moving an object has implications for blurring,

though control of movement and blurring may require two keyboard operations.<sup>27</sup> Edgar Burcksen, who runs *CinemaEditor Quarterly*, says: “When I flop a shot to fix an eye line problem, it can compromise the light source the director of photography has established. When I blow up, reframe or zoom in on a shot, I’m messing with the depth of field. When I slow down or speed up a shot, I’m screwing with motion blur.”<sup>28</sup> Parameter control can be a reveal, as they say in mystery movies, for phenomenology. Just as a close-up may create problems for a scene — it may, for example, create a tempo conflict (since listening to a long speech is reasonable, but watching the speaker’s face for a long time is not), or it may create a lighting conflict (since lighting an actor for glamour often conflicts with the diegetic light) — in the same way, a layered-on visual effect may sit uneasily in its composition. In consequence, the distinction between independent pieces and non-independent aspects may not be fundamental ontology, as Aristotle and Husserl thought, but a dial to turn up or down. Controllable perception needs new categories of wholes and parts.

The second objection is that computer programs for digital effects do make a new technology, but tell us nothing about conscious perception. Effects technology might be criticized for technocentrism, in wanting to direct every detail.<sup>29</sup> It is true that there used to be hundreds of uncontrolled improvisations by crew members, from focus pullers to lighting grips, which can now be micro-controlled in post-production. But control is not necessarily opposed to chance or excess. In music, for example, the movements between, on the one hand, total serialism and algorithmic assists in composition, and on the other, aleatory composition and improvisation, no longer seem so exclusive. Like visual effects compositing, the point of both is to de-naturalize the balance of control and freedom. When it is said that these visual effects programs are “deep,” it means that the user can go into any parameter and make decisions. The program does do some things automatically: if the animator tells it to smooth out a jerky camera movement, it will, without telling her, introduce a little motion blur, so as not to leave gaps as it alters perspective. But one can turn off any program heuristic. For every element, there is a dialogue box between consciousness and the program that controls its perception.

Still, it is true that perception control applies not to the film watcher, but to the compositing technician, and in that sense it might not apply to all forms of consciousness. Composer phenomenology takes to the limit Kant’s thesis that we get out of perception what we put into it. Of course, as the technology gets cheaper and invades all our electronic devices, and

we come to edit our perceptions through the windshield of the car and into the back of the fridge, we might all composite images with the same programs. But so far, digital compositors perceive differently than others. If we look at controlled perception in Adobe After Effects as a project file, we can see the edits on screen, examine the layers on the timeline panel, and see all the marks of the effects. We might even think of the project file as a work of art independent of the movie scene that renders it, just as Balász argued that a film script is a work of art independent of the film, or in the way that musical scores can be appreciated independent of performances (249). Once we turn the project file into a movie, we see the image as a completed perception, as a ready-built artifact without its layered sediments, and then, paradoxically, throwing away the ladder, it appears as a raw, immediate perception. The movie watcher sees, but the compositor alone looks. For that matter, there is often no one screen where the whole image exists until the last minute. *Iron Man 3* employed seventeen different effects studios, who could not always wait for the others' results, so three different effects vendors animated Iron Man's suit in various stages of destruction. Just as there is no one maker of a film even when the director is aptly called its "author," so perception control is a team effort.

One way to isolate the compositor's experience is to compare different programs: in Adobe After Effects, the compositor layers clips of footage over each other and sees the blend. In contrast, programs like Nuke use nodes<sup>30</sup>: the compositor sees on screen a flow-chart of boxes representing clips of footage linked by the names of visual effects. She sees the image of the final mix, but does not generally see the layers show through each other one at a time.<sup>31</sup> The results can be the same across different programs, but the building process is different, which means the perception of perception-control comes during the control, not after it has been controlled. This is somewhat true of natural perception too, and also true of reason, decision and other noeses. (Perception itself may be a kind of decision.<sup>32</sup>) The experience is in the construction, not just the conclusion, and most of perception takes place before we are aware of the pictorial representation. One has to do math to know what it is, and so one has to composite images in order to evolve perceptually. Most viewers cannot tell whether an effects scene is based on miniature photography (as in *Skyfall*, 2012) or motion capture (*Iron Man 3*) or graphic animation (the goblins in *The Hobbit*, 2012). Look at a Bollywood dance scene; are the perfectly synchronized dancers in the back rows live performers, or digitally mass-produced by a program called Massive? The gap between compositors and movie

watchers is larger than the gap between painters and connoisseurs (just as the gap widens between tweeters, whose capacity for connected thought withers, and programmers of tweeting software, who hone those skills). It is not unreasonable that Making-of movies are often more interesting than the movies themselves, and philosophers may share more with the how-did-they-do-it geeks than with film critics.

#### THE AFTER EFFECTS MODEL:

#### LAYERING AND TRANSPARENCY

There are many digital operations in cinema: animation, rotoscoping (cutting objects out of the background and moving them around), colour correction and image distortion, not to mention digitally controlled camera movements, and data recording. I focus on just one compositing operation: the stacking of layers of image-materials. This model may turn out to be decade-specific. We may have to theorize a new art form every few years. Perhaps the novelty of layering art is not as radical as the change from print to silent movies,<sup>33</sup> i.e., from print to picture, since it controls sense-organs but does not switch to a new one.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, the category of layering has the potential to add new and essential elements to phenomenological description in general.<sup>35</sup>

The essence of the visual effects model of perception is that we manipulate visual material by letting one layer show through another. If theatre presents the whole stage, and film cuts the stage by angles,<sup>36</sup> layer art blends sheets. “Blending modes” produce overlapping colours, lightings, and motions. One can take footage, copy it, and blend it with itself in layers; if one blurs one layer and sharpens the other, one gets dreamy effects. If one lets an underlying layer of light show through, one can re-light a scene differently from the way it had been shot. In *Iron Man 3*, the character whom the effects team called “Volcano Man” was composited in layers of bones, nerves, muscles, veins, and skin; bright lights were built into the lower-down muscle layers, and the upper skin layers had degrees of transparency, so the hot light would burst out from inside his body. Animators do study natural light, like the way it penetrates under human skin and scatters around the blood before it is reflected. But there is a difference. Hitchcock physically placed a lightbulb inside the milk in a glass in *Suspicion* (1941), to make the glass glow suspiciously of poison, but he could not have placed a

lightbulb inside Volcano Man's stomach. A traditional director of photography treats light as natural perception; he places a physical lightsource at a certain angle and distance from an object, then compensates for pools of shadow by adding studio lights, or enhancing natural sources like sunlight, or practicals like table lamps, compensating again for degrees of warmth with blue or orange filters, gauze and gobos. The visual effects compositor, in contrast, makes light and shadow by stacking bright and dark layers with pools of transparency to allow, or block, blending. Studio lighting takes place largely from the outside, whereas layering light takes place in the inside, and this for phenomenology is crucial.

Layering and transparency are effectively the same concept, since layering is not possible without the transparency of the layer on top. Phenomenologically, we see things only when the things between us and them are transparent. We see Coke through a glass, the glass through water droplets on its surface, the glass and droplets through our eyelashes. Normally, transparency is by definition unnoticed. But in perceptual control, we can either make an opaque object (or the shape around it: the mask) transparent by assigning it to the Alpha channel rather than to RGB (red-blue-green) channels, or make a transparent shape opaque. We decide what degree of transparency to make the shape, and what degree of the layer underneath will show through. And then we control the transparency of that underlying layer, so the layer underneath it can show through in turn. Many features of perception (colour, brightness, sharpness, graininess, etc.) can be manipulated by doing nothing more than manipulating transparency.<sup>37</sup>

Generally, perception by layers is determined by which layer is on top, due to the render order of the program. A layer closer to the surface may undo an effect that was on a lower layer, so one may have to make a group of layers into a "Nested Comp," or "Parent" certain layers to others. Or one can parent a nest of compositions to a "Null object" or an invisible layer, a hierarchy without a parent, so the synthesizing element will be empty and not get in the way. One example is the effect called Find Edges, which accentuates edges on an object; it will not find the edge of an object that has replaced a different object on a lower layer. If one wants Find Edges to find its edge, one has to render the effect on the lower object before it was replaced.

At the onset of cinema, some filmmakers pushed for uniquely cinematographic ideas, not just to use cinema as photographed theater. It did not matter whether cinema had first been designed for scientific analysis, military surveillance, or diverting the proletariat: it de-

served novel aesthetic treatment. I do not think there should be a rule against using one art form merely as a prop for another, and not all book-to-film adaptations are wrongheaded. But even if it is not the only legitimate goal, it is clearly worth experimenting with uniquely cinematographic features to see what they can yield, and so by analogy it is worth trying to design layers and blending modes for their distinctive properties, perhaps to reveal characters and dramas, or clues and backstories, concealed and revealed in the layers. Instead of merely adapting traditional film stories for layer-art, it would be interesting to see what happens both to perception and to narrative if we were to design some films specifically for layers, in the way certain films were designed specifically for split screen, or Technicolor.<sup>38</sup> When Cinemascope was introduced, for example, it had the effect that when the camera panned quickly across a wide landscape, the background was blurry. One response was to mitigate the effect and conceal the artifact; some directors decided to pan more slowly, or to put nothing important in the background, to avoid the blurred background effect. In contrast, Douglas Sirk's alternative was to have people in the background move more quickly, accentuating the blur,<sup>39</sup> making the side-effect into its own aesthetic idea.

Up to this point, I think, layering itself has not become an aesthetic idea. Superimposing images, of course, goes back to the early films of Méliès. But layering image-elements is not the same as superimposing whole images. What will a layered image, qua layered, look like, so as not to pander to existing eye-usage?<sup>40</sup> Could we layer extreme foregrounds against extreme backgrounds without depth continuity in the middle, to force the eye to provide its own mid-tones,<sup>41</sup> or live without the middle, to see the layered prose of the world? We could, of course, thematize the fact of layering by disentangling the layers in a perceptual field and showing them in succession, or on split-screen, but that would show *that* there are layers, without actually layering them. The challenge is to make the layers visible, without separating them in a non-layered presentation. The current eye wants one or the other: invisible editing, or separated presentation; the new eye needs to see a difference without that difference.<sup>42</sup> One paradigm is Godard's *Histoire(s) du Cinéma* (beginning in 1988), though it was made with videotape editing rather than digital layering. Where normal documentaries about cinema show old favorites and lesser known movie scenes, Godard piles scenes on top of other scenes so we can barely make them out. He darkens irises around the scenes so we cannot make them out at all, or raises the contrast of light and dark so we cannot tell if there

is even a scene on screen — all the while, his voice-over appeals to the fatal beauty of the image. It is infuriating, an acquired taste, and an example of the art of layering.

This is an urgent question, because not many frames of the average film today come straight out of the camera, whether we look at Hollywood movies, or works by video artists like Jennifer Steinkamp, Jeremy Blake, and Takeshi Murata.<sup>43</sup> The visual effects programs are no longer expensive, and Photoshop has already made it as natural to control images as to capture them.<sup>44</sup> Cameras themselves are now designed for in-camera and subsequent image-control. The visual effects post-production team does pre-visualization during pre-production that shapes what the director shoots live in production. No doubt something is lost with any new technology. When silent films gave way to sound, dialogue scenes became static by comparison with action scenes in silent movies; and to prevent the loud noise of strong lights, high contrast expressionistic lighting of silent films gave way to a softer “glamour” aesthetic. But just as film itself added a new region of phenomenology, namely the camera eye, and talkies introduced the microphone ear, at some point layering art will extend phenomenology into the editor eye.

## TWO PHENOMENOLOGICAL CATEGORY SHIFTS

### *Time*<sup>45</sup>

Visual effects on space are obvious. William Brown’s book *Supercinema* shows, for example, how digital cinema no longer needs cuts. The traditional 700-foot reel of 35 mm film only lasted ten minutes, after which there had to be a cut. Digital hard drives can record a feature length film without cuts, but even a digital camera, being physical, cannot pass through walls without a cut. Computer graphics, in contrast, can take an image continuously through walls. Brown suggests that movies today have cuts only to make older audiences feel comfortable.<sup>46</sup>

Following Deleuze, cinema should control not just action in space, and not just action over time, but time as such. Filmmakers have always controlled temporal density, i.e. frames per second,<sup>47</sup> and have added or removed frames to stretch time, for example to synchronize dancers. But effects-makers can now use a function called “Timewarp” to “varispeed” footage. The zombies in *World War Z* (2013), for example, were “re-timed,” so that after the actors

(modern dancers were hired to portray the zombies closest to the camera) were recorded, one eye or limb was digitally delayed relative to the other, to enhance zombie-likeness.<sup>48</sup>

Compositors also control a graphic representing only the temporal features of a moving image. For example, if an object moves for ten seconds along a spatial path at a fixed rate of speed, the graphic time-line will appear as a straight diagonal. One can put the cursor over the line and drag and twist the curve — not twist the motion path, but the time-path.<sup>49</sup> This changes the patterns of acceleration and deceleration, which the time-curve now forces to fit the ten seconds. The effects compositor does not just stretch the painting over time, she paints with time, the way traditional Directors of Photography say they “paint with light.”<sup>50</sup>

As always, technical difficulties arise, and each one points to an overlooked aspect of time. For example, an optical illusion arises when an object moves along a jagged path: when the object comes to a point on the jag and bounces back out, it appears to accelerate, even though its speed is constant. Heuristically, this is partly because in the physical world, we slow down when we approach a wall, and accelerate when we bounce. We expect to see deceleration at the point, and when we do not, it seems too fast. The effects compositor compensates by using a feature called Easy In/Easy Out to lower the object’s speed at the point. We can control the entry and bounce-back ourselves, or we can let the program do it with a feature called Easy Ease. But this creates a further problem; if the clip is still ten seconds long, and the object slows at the jag points, then it will move faster between the jags to get to the end at the right time. Trouble-shooting is inherent to the stages of computer-assisted perception: control, meta-control, and tinkering with unintended consequences. Sometimes there are too many to compensate for. If there are too many jags, the object may stutter, or the speed between jags could be too fast for the audio track. In such cases, we need to rethink what we want: to omit some jags, or change the clip length. It is when we work with it plastically that we discover attributes of time, like Easy Time.

To me, the most interesting function is time-blending to control motion blur, which amounts to layering different times simultaneously over time. Blur is a natural effect of camera recording; a fast object will change position while a single frame is being exposed: hence blur. But sometimes the editor wants more blur than the camera gave (e.g., if the camera had to be set at very fast shutter speed while the actor was running in front of a green screen, to prevent the green from seeping into his hair, then normal blur will be absent). The way to digitally add blur is by “calculating intermediate positions between frames, then blending



together these multiple copies of the layer.”<sup>51</sup> Or as an alternative to extrapolating intermediaries, the program can take any number of frames before and/or after a given frame and blend these past and futures into the present. This way of smearing time is called “Echo Time,” or to call it by my favorite brand name, “Wide Time.” Manipulating simultaneity and succession reveals that time has the property of width. There are many time-control plug-ins for sale, but time can run into real money.

### *Perspective*

What is direction if we can make shadows extend from non-existent objects? What are dimensions if we can paste two-dimensional scenes onto 3-dimensional geography? What is perspective if a program called Vanishing Point can wrap an image around any point or group of points?

Layering frees perspective and depth of field from the focal plane. Normally, depth of field means that from the plane of greatest focus, there is a finite distance in front, and behind, where the object remains relatively focused. Devising ways of detaching depth of field from focal plane has always been a part of filmmaking. Take the famous scene in *Citizen Kane* (1941) of Susan’s suicide attempt. Kane arrives from the back door, and walks forwards, towards Susan in bed; in front of Susan, in extreme close-up, is the glass of poison. Strangely, both background and foreground (Kane and the poison) are in sharp focus, but the middle ground, where Susan is, is out of focus. How is this optically possible? The answer is that this shot is not typical depth of field, made by light and lenses. It is an in-camera matte shot. Robert Carringer explains: “First, the foreground was lighted and focused, and shot with the background dark. Then, the foreground was darkened, the background lighted, the lens re-focused, the film rewound in the camera, and the scene reshot,” and double exposed.<sup>52</sup> This type of trick layering is made into the norm by digital compositing.

Perspectivism in 2-D is illusionistic anyways, as is the distinction between foreground and background, but the issue is complicated when visual effects blur the distinction between 2-D and 3-D imagery. There are what are called 2 and a half-D images, which rotate a 2-D object around three axes, so the object appears to move in front of and behind other objects, but if it rotates, it is revealed to be paper-thin (known as “postcards in space”). Full 3-D imagery allows independent rotation of objects on three axes: Euler rotation. (Lidar scans, using lasers and radar, capture the contours, so every angle is ready to plug into a 3-D envi-

ronment.) One can either use “Auto-Orient” to keep an object facing the viewer, or “Custom view” to preview perspectives of one’s choice. Like every function, 3-D reveals perceptual problems while it adds perceptual content. For example, if a scene has been shot or animated in stereo for 3-D (the parallax view), then if a figure has to be painted out and replaced with something else, it has to be done twice, from the two eyelines, and the resulting images cannot simply be lined up by “corner pinning.” Compositors call this the problem of the “second eye”: there is not just one camera eye, but two. Once again, the compositor is forced to know this, while the rest of us are more or less cyclopic. There are some questions of empirical psychology that to my knowledge have not been studied, but I would like to know whether compositors tend not to see the 3-D images on their screens *as* 3-D, since they are too aware of how they have been built up by layers, or whether they are more like piano tuners who can still hear melodies (though actually, I don’t know if piano tuners’ ears have been studied either). If movie watchers want to look backwards towards the compositor’s experience of layering under the 3-D hood, we can always watch a 3-D movie in 2-D. In any case, in physically embodied life, it is because objects exist in three dimensions that there are backgrounds; in After Effects, it is because there are layer-defined backgrounds that objects exist in 3-D.

If Lacan is right that objects gaze back at us, as Merleau-Ponty says of Cézanne’s painted orange,<sup>53</sup> it should make a difference that objects now gaze back in 3-D. Of course, image 3-D is not the same as reality 3-D. Image 3-D has layers of surface, but no inside (unless the animator has built inside layers).<sup>54</sup> And the backside of an image 3-D object may be missing, but it is not exactly hidden. Image 3-D is in-between cubism on the one hand, where we see the backsides of objects at the same time as we see their fronts, taking up an inconsistent set of simultaneous perspectives, and kinaesthetics on the other, where we have to move our bodies before we see the backsides.<sup>55</sup> In image 3-D, we see front and back successively (unlike cubism), but simply in perception (without embodiment), so the backside is not inconsistent with the perspective we have on the front. The depth of the world is available (albeit successively) to a single consistent perspective. A 2-D painting of an orange, which gazes back by resisting our gaze, is to a 3-D orange, which gazes back by admitting our gaze; as the Levinasian distant other is to the Virtual Reality accessible other. No doubt, both extremes — distance and access — are false ideals. Still, 3-D perceptual control is one point on the side of accessibility without reserve.

In addition to 3-D, there are 4-D images, i.e. 3-D images interacting with time-scale. There are what producers call 5-D images, where space and time parameters are traded off with a cost-dimension. There are 6-D images, where the sixth dimension is the technology's shelf-life.

Compositing also allows for novel meta-perspectives. When footage is dragged into the composition panel, you can introduce a virtual camera into the composition, then see the image inside the panel from the perspective of the virtual camera that is also inside the panel. The scene can be made to see itself from the perspective of the eye inside the scene. The inner camera can be animated to pan, or follow a defined "point of interest" on a virtual dolly or crane, or simulate a handheld camera eye. There are settings for its virtual lenses, zoom, aperture, and any parameter of a natural camera, plus some. For example, the virtual camera can mix focal lengths in the same image, which a lens cannot. The footage, which the virtual camera re-shoots from within, may already have been shot by a physical camera. Whether we call this a repeating camera eye, or mind without eye, it is a distinctive sort of self-reference. It is not like Russell's paradox, a set that includes itself as a member of itself, or like a knower knowing itself; it neither shadows-off to a new perspective nor is it auto-poetic feedback; it is not like a *mise en abîme* reproducing the same image from within, nor a meta-language where signifiers refer to other signifier-signified relations; it is not like framing a photograph, or like filming a filmmaker filming a movie, nor is it like filming a film projected onto a screen using a videocamera in the audience. It is the opposite of an in-camera edit like the one in *Citizen Kane*. This is an in-edit camera. We build a perception, *then* we introduce conditions of possible experience, before we ever perceive the polished image on screen.

## CONCLUDING QUESTIONS

Just as novice photographers walk around with their fingers framing the world in front of their eyes, compositing initiates on a walk may try to peer through the surface of things in the real world to the layers seeping from beneath. To say that compositing is a model of perception does not mean that reality is merely a simulacrum of special effects, but it does pose questions for natural perception. If different properties and elements lie on different layers,

what does consistency mean? What does *Erlebnis* mean, or the transcendental object = X? What do motion and rest, light and dark, live and artificial, mean? Layering blurs the distinction between foreground and background, between direct and indirect, between showing something itself and showing it in a mirror or by its shadow. And if Balász were right that violence ought not to be shown directly (actually, he is probably not right), then layering would also blur the distinction between good and bad taste.

The resources for a phenomenology of controlled perception are still largely wasted. When we watch a film with a lot of visual effects, like the newest *Star Trek*, do we pay attention to the actors in close-up, and half-see the CG background; or do we pay attention to the effects background while only half-seeing the characters, treating the diegetic background as our cognitive foreground? Probably, we most often see things the traditional way, with the characters receiving our attention,<sup>56</sup> which means effects are still in its infancy as art, used as a means to an end, in spite of complaints that movies today have too many glitzy effects and not enough plot or character. Obviously it is true also that films that are supposed to run on plot do not have enough of it, and waste time with visual effects, as Effects Supervisors are the first to insist. But this is not because they are built on effects — they are still built on plot, but badly. After After Effects becomes an art in its own right, we can expect to see things more clearly.

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1. Lev Manovich's *Software Takes Command* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013) contains a subsection titled "Layers, transparency, compositing" (277-282), specifically dealing with After Effects, but even better material on this topic is found in the subsection called "Inside Photoshop" (124-147). Manovich goes a step farther than my thesis that perception is open to graphic design, and argues that perception is commanded by software. Holly Willis's *New Digital Cinema* (London: Wallflower Press, 2005) makes a few comments about layering and After Effects. Relevant issues are discussed in William Brown's *Supercinema: Film-Philosophy for the Digital Age* (New York: Bergahn Books, 2013).

2. This paper is intended to be read in conjunction with viewing two online tutorials of about 10 minutes each: (1) "Sub Surface Skin" in After Effects, tutorial 140, videocopilot.net, and (2) "Blend and Bend Time" in After Effects, by Evan Stern, creativecow.net. If these sources are at some point pulled from the web, other online tutorials on the topics of layering and time blending will do as substitutes.

3. I would like to thank the wonderful instructors at the Pittsburgh Filmmakers School who inspired me: Dean Mougianis, Will Zavala, John Cantine and others. I would also like to thank the editor of this volume and the two anonymous referees for their suggestions.

4. Catherine Malabou, *What Should We Do with Our Brain?*, trans. Sebastian Rand (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008).

5. Andy Clark, *Supersizing the Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

6. Patricia Pisters, in *The Neuro-Image: A Deleuzian Film-Philosophy of Digital Screen Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), interprets Deleuze's neuro-image as cinema that presents the inside of a brain, construing consciousness and interpretation as synaptic remixing and database re-ordering.

7. Jody Duncan, "Rough Around the Edges," *Cinefex* 134 (2013): 12-44.
8. Previews are essential to perceptual working-with.
9. Richard Edlund, *Cinefex* 100 (2005): 74.
10. Just as the real-world White House is covered with a special paint that diffuses light and prevents edges from gathering shadows. Caleb Kelly, in *Cracked Media: The Sound of Malfunction* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2009), shows how dirt, in forms like background noise, can signify realism in sound too. The genre of dirty noise in "music" involves cracking vinyl records, CD's, and turntables, to perform sound events. At the limit, though, such "redirection from signal to noise" (215) removes the sense of reference to the real.
11. Manovich (*Software*, 130) argues very little in software media is "born digital," without any reference to analogue media and/or physical objects. The interesting cases are like the "Wind" filter in photoshop, which creates tiny jagged lines on an image that makes it look windblown. At the micro level, the jagged lines do not look at all like windblown objects; at the macro level, it does.
12. Or the way people remix music videos with their own footage, or the way Duchamp's Green Box encouraged readers to make their own cut-ups with his texts.
13. Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*, trans. Annette Lavers and Colin Smith (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 84.
14. In editing, we normally try to remove pops and hisses, by blocking high or low frequencies. If this is not possible in perception, we learn to live with them in different ways, as certain works of new music drive home. Everyone has thought of Smell-o-vision, but we tend to assume smell will contribute to the realism of the total art form (as Wagner imagined, and Bazin doubted). But we can equally wonder what special effects wizards will eventually do with odour?
15. Roland Barthes, *Empire of Signs*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 14. A shimmering signifier is a signifier that shows almost nothing but the process of its composition, e.g. the Japanese dinner tray, containing food not cooked but only cut up, shifted around, and arranged in a clear, almost transparent medium such as soup.
16. Béla Balász, *Theory of the Film: Character and Growth of a New Art* (1945), trans. Edith Bone (New York: Dover Publications, 1970). Once perceivers know about image-effects, as Balász leads us to hope, then even when perceiving an image that somebody else has effected, they will experience the backgrounds and foregrounds that they know are in the graphic design. I cite Balász on a number of points, though other authors say similar things. One reason is that on many points, Balász said it first. More important, since Balász emphasized the importance of developing a systematic film theory for the first time, his enumeration of the topics in such a theory is useful for an attempt today to develop a systematic theory of visual effects.
17. Besides aesthetic objections, there might be objections based on principles of economic justice. For example, there might be an objection to visual effects editing on grounds that we generally have to buy programs from proprietary for-profit companies. But is that different from the way no scholar can do without Google and its ads? Or the way we have to buy eyeglasses, or house paint and clothing to colour the world?
18. One difference is that consciousness does not have an interface with the world. That is the point of phenomenology: to the things themselves. Another difference is that consciousness relies on pre-conscious syntheses and heuristics, whereas in editing, heuristics have to be made into conscious trouble-shooting devices. Final Cut typically anticipates the user's intention without direct instruction, whereas Avid requires the user to make every decision explicitly. Each program type has advantages and disadvantages. Embodied consciousness and editing programs do have one thing in common: they malfunction when they get old.
19. Kevin Mack, Visual Effects Supervisor, *Cinefex* 100 (2005): 64.
20. John Knoll, *Cinefex* 100 (2005): 24.
21. This program was developed for *The Polar Express*, 2004 (*Cinefex* 100 (2005): 125). To be sure, both representational painters like Meissonnet and impressionists like Degas studied the positions of horses' feet to get each framing right, but it is easier to know what is in each frame than to know programmatically how each position follows from the last.
22. The crew called it the Barrel-of-Monkeys scene.
23. Motion capture blurs the distinction between recording and drawing. A performer's movements are copied into an animation program, which is then animated; which is then sometimes followed by face replacement, pasting her recorded face over the animated body.
24. Tom Sito, *Moving Innovation: A History of Computer Animation* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2013), 214. I do not know if the Academy is thinking along these lines, but perhaps the distinction could be made not on the basis of whether the figures are recorded live, but on the basis of layering structure. Traditional drawn animation was able to use around six layers of coloring; the acetate images were 0.003 mm thick, so layering more than six sheets to photograph in one would lead to blurring backgrounds. There is no limit to the number of digital layers that can be blended without loss of content (Sito, *Moving Innovation*, 251).
25. And indeed whether an effect intensifies perception or de-saturates it.

26. Since perceptions are genetic, and its parameters interact in something like a syntagm, unintended consequences often interfere with what one thought one was about to perceive.

27. Furthermore, we cannot entirely separate perception and understanding. Editors still tend to use the doctrine that editing should “tell a story.” The idea that there is a “language” of film, particularly a language of editing, had some initial appeal. Shot-reverse shot editing looked like a kind of subject-object grammar; zooming to a close-up looked like adjectival description. Though the idea of film grammar has been criticized in convincing detail, there remains some potential in Barthes’ semiology of extra-linguistic systems.

28. Edgar Burcksen, “Capturing Cinematography,” *CinemaEditor Qtr* V 63.2 (2013): 16-17.

29. Balász is concerned that when the camera can see things a “healthy man” cannot, like inside his own stomach (102-103), it is science but not art, since such a perspective cannot be that of a conscious subject. But by now we have seen enough stomach-innards scenes to know they can be subjective too.

30. In an analogous way, classical music composition assistance programs use scores on a staff, whereas IR-CAM’s OpenMusic composition program for electro-acoustic music uses patches.

31. In other cases, two programs for the same kind of effect will produce different resulting images, for example generating fire using a particle program may look different from fire generated with a layer texturing program.

32. Alain Berthoz, *Emotion and Reason: The Cognitive Neuroscience of Decision Making*, trans. Giselle Weiss (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 137-71.

33. Balász, *Theory*, 41.

34. What is at stake is not sensing what is inside the organ (the way one hears the songs one sings inside one’s closed mouth). Here, one controls one’s organ from the screen outside one’s body.

35. Layers in Photoshop were introduced in 1994. Photoshop Help: “Layers allow you to work on one element of an image without disturbing the others” (quoted by Manovich, *Software*, 142), and this has general implications for what an image “means” (142). By opening each frame for micro-control on the small scale (285), the effect of layering is to define all sorts of images by a single “metamedium” (145).

36. Balász, *Theory*, 30-31.

37. Transparency and “negative space,” the place where the image is not, is not empty, but full space in its own right.

38. For example, the first audiences to see close-ups on screen thought they were severed heads, but we got used to seeing in scale.

39. This was discussed by Godard in 1959. Jean-Luc Godard, *Godard on Godard*, trans. and ed. Tom Milne (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972), 139.

40. What would human perception look like if we learned to squint by layers?

41. Balász emphasizes that in film viewing, the viewer has to add his own inferences. For example, the viewer sees lights flash against a man’s face in a train station, and has to infer that the train has started to move and that it is the movement of its window lights that is visible on the man’s face (36).

42. Audio for decades has worked with many tracks (or harmonic layers). But in some specifics of simultaneity-management, the eye is ahead of the ear, largely because while sounds have momentum, echoes, dissolves, and asynchronics, they do not have sides, angles, or shadows. Balász says this explains the problem faced by radio plays (Balász, *Theory*, 213-217). Like Deleuze (*Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 234-241), Balász (*Theory*, 180) highlights the staggering of audio and video “counterpoint.” Layering does not cancel the difference between sight and sound. When video shows irrational images and the audio explains it rationally in words; or when in horror films the ear is given a sound and the camera eye then has to look for its source, layering staggers perception across media, across sense and source, reason and unreason. Here we are not talking about translating visual fluctuations to make different sounds (like oscilloscope imaging, the oldest form of electronic graphics), but the layering of meanings. Layering overrules the distinction between double system filmmaking, where video and audio are recorded by different devices and synchronized later, and single system recording with microphones inside a video camera. On the one hand, in compositing, it is as though every shot is recorded in multiple system; on the other hand, time codes can be matched automatically, so it is as though a single wired system networks across difference devices. It is as if all movies are now dubbed.

43. The latter two are discussed in Manovich, *Software*, 260-266. Work of all three can be found on YouTube.

44. The revolution in inexpensive video cameras in the 1970’s, has been succeeded over the last fifteen years by a revolution in inexpensive digital editing, giving amateurs enormous access to image-control power.

45. Manovich takes the position that opening each frame re-defines images as “composition-based” rather than “time-based” (*Software*, 282-289), but the cases I raise blur this distinction.

46. Brown, *Supercinema*, 42-46.

47. Or frames left out to save disk space. Audio editors use the fact that we notice more changes in high frequencies than low: by sampling fewer pitch changes at the low frequencies, they save disk space with no loss of perception to humans.

48. Jody Duncan, "Zombie Wars," *Cinefex* 135, October 2013: 12-31.

49. There are many ways to control the curve, like the Bezier curves used to control spatial lines in Photoshop.

50. John Alton, *Painting with Light* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

51. Trish and Chris Meyer, *Creating Motion Graphics with After Effects*, fifth edition (Burlington, MA: Focal Press, 2010), 132.

52. Robert L. Carringer, *The Making of Citizen Kane* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1985), 82.

53. Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W. W. Norton, 1981), 75.

54. Of course, a backside is not a Lacanian unconscious; computer graphics do not represent the desire of the other.

55. In controlled perception, the zero point of orientation is not tied to the balanced organism standing upright.

56. To compare art forms' treatments of backgrounds, compare the tree bark in *Shrek*, or the skin hematomas on *Wolfman's* (2010) face, with Mantegna's way of painting the marble bases of statues.

## DOUBLE-DELEUZE: “INTELLIGENT MATERIALISM” GOES TO THE MOVIES

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### INTRO

1995 was an important year for Film and Media Studies in at least two respects. The year when “the cinema” celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Sony, Philips, Toshiba and Time Warner agreed on a standard for a data carrier formerly known as Digital *Video* Disk — the DVD [Digital Versatile Disk] that on the one hand declared war on “the cinema as we know it,” but on the other hand promised salvation: the medium film, having since its early beginnings sworn to “capture” movement and the dynamics of life, had to struggle against its transience more than any other medium. In the year of its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the cinema was not only “old,” an “old-fashioned-next-to-outdated” medium — the films themselves, the collected and archived reliquaries of film history, were in danger of rotting, decaying, and disappearing forever. Judging from the password of film conservationists — “From the conservation of the medium to the preservation of the content”<sup>1</sup> — the DVD [or, in general: digital media] in fact seemed to be the redeemer that “film” had longed for. This force field of the hope of “making the moment stay forever” and the dread of decay, this oscillation of materiality and immateriality, of the animation of the static and the re-animation of *le temps perdu* re-enacts 100 years later the relation of film, time, life, and death that already had marked the first steps of the medium film — history repeats.

1995 also was the year in which the *Journal of Material Culture* was conceptualized, in order to give a public and interdisciplinary face to a field of research that had already begun to take hold in various disciplines such as anthropology, archaeology, geography, etc. During the last 13 years, Material Culture Studies advanced to a new, exciting and highly influential field of Cultural Studies.<sup>2</sup>

Material Culture is based on the premise that the *materiality* of objects are an integrative part and parcel of culture, that the material dimension is as fundamentally important in the understanding of a culture as language or social relations — Material Culture thus adds a



welcomed counterweight and addition to the domination of Cultural Studies by social | linguistic constructivism. Materiality has significance independent of human action or intervention — it is as important to ask how things *do* things [and what kind of things things do], as it is how to do things with words. Objects have a life of their own, a temporality of their own, “objects change over time, in both their physical composition and their cultural salience.”<sup>3</sup>

Since Material Culture Studies mainly focuses on the materiality of everyday objects and their *representation* in the media [literature, film, arts, etc.], a further and important step would be to re-direct such an analysis to the materiality of the media *itself*, to put the probing finger not only at the thing *in* representation, but the thing *of* representation. The medium “film” seems to me most fitting to test such an interface of Material Culture and Media Studies, since film has entertained a most complex relation to *time* from its early beginnings onward: film promised to [re]present temporal dynamics — and the temporality of things — *directly, unmediated*, a paradox that gives rise to the different “strategies” of what Deleuze calls the *movement-image* and the *time-image* respectively. Such a representation, however, is not only an effect of a perceptive illusion, but also of the *repression* of the very materiality of film itself, the film stock, an immensely fragile medium that in the course of its “projection-life” is subjected to scratches, burns, etc. — to signs of the times. I will situate this crossbreed of Material Culture and Media Studies in the larger framework of Deleuze’s *Cinema* books mixed with his “intelligent materialism”<sup>4</sup> — a hybrid that stays in the family, so to speak, in order, as Régis Debray put it, “[t]o proceed as if mediology could become in relation to semiology what ecology is to the biosphere. Cannot a “mediasphere” be treated like an ecosystem, formed on the one hand by populations of signs and on the other by a network of vectors and material bases for the signs?”<sup>5</sup>

The following essay focuses on this nexus of film, time, and materiality. I will begin by introducing film’s constitutive | constituting move as the attempt to *represent* time *in* film which was already being discussed at the birth of the medium. Taking my cue from Bazin’s influential article on “Ontology of the Photographic Image”<sup>6</sup> [a kind of inspiration for Deleuze’s own work on film as well], which also tries to answer the question *What is Cinema?*, I will shift my focus to the *materiality* of film: time leaves much more direct traces *on* film than any representation of time *in* film could ever achieve. Taking Bill Morrison’s film *Decasia* (2002) as example, I will then self-reflexively direct the Material Culture approach to the filmic *material*. If such an interest in the “possibilities” of the celluloid had already driven

much of the 60s “avant-garde” [Brakhage, Jacobs, etc.], *Decasia* in addition does not only focus on film’s “thingness,” but also its own, particular “temporality.” Put together from *found footage* and archive material in various states of decay, this film reveals the “collaboration” of time and matter as *in itself* “creative,” and ultimately produces a category that I will call the *matter-image* and that, I argue, neither Deleuze’s *movement-image*, nor his *time-image* completely grasp: here, *time and matter produce their own filmic image*.

FILM:

TIME | MOVEMENT

*Projection*

Since its birth, the cinema has entertained a complex relation with time. First of all, film was seen as a medium of *representing* time. Marey’s chronophotography here clearly can be seen as one of the “midwives” of film. By creating ever smaller temporal equi-distances in the measuring, fragmentation and representation of time, Marey wanted to lift the veil of the mystery of “living machines.” According to him, chronophotography proved once and for all that “motion was only the relation of time to space.”<sup>7</sup> This puts Marey in direct opposition to Henri Bergson’s philosophy of time — Bergson explicitly understood time *not* in its reduction to movement in space. It thus comes as no surprise that Bergson entertained a skeptical or at least ambivalent attitude towards the cinema. In his 1907 study *Creative Evolution*, Bergson reveals what he calls the mechanistic “contrivance of the cinematograph”<sup>8</sup> — it “calculates” movement out of “immobility set beside immobility, even endlessly.”<sup>9</sup> If, as Marey had claimed, movement is only “the relation of time to space,” then, Bergson argues, “time is made up of distinct parts immediately adjacent to one another. No doubt we still say that they follow one another, but in that case succession is similar to that of the images on a cinematographic film”<sup>10</sup> and this completely misunderstands the fundamental difference between time as becoming, as continuous production of newness in the dynamics of an endless differentiation of life, and time as a “mechanic” succession of moments “cut out” of that very continuum. Bergson’s *durée* has to be understood as a heterogeneous, qualitative duration which is completely at odds with Marey’s quantitative, numeric, and linear conception of

time as *temps* [t] — an opposition that finds its filmic equivalent in the tension between the single image and the projected film.

### *Representation*

The classic narrative film *represents* time *in* film with well-known narrative strategies such as organic montage, rational cuts, continuity editing, flashbacks, hence, with the action-reaction model. Even in its connection with more complex *plots* [see *Back to the Future*, or *Memento*], narrative film is ultimately based on the concept of an abstract and linear time — exactly what Marey had in mind.

Films based on the action-reaction schema are films that in the Deleuzian taxonomy belong to the *movement-image*. Deleuze argues that when the reality of World War II and its aftermath exceeded our capacity for understanding, traditional forms of cinematic “cause-and-effect” strategies became irritatingly inappropriate, resulting in the “crisis of the action-image”<sup>11</sup> and the breakdown of its corresponding “realist fundament,” the “sensory-motor schema.”<sup>12</sup> Here, continuity was basically the effect of the filmic characters’ movement through space — rational intervals ensure continuity, and the actors function as differentials to translate dramatic action into movement, propelling a cohesive narrative forward.

Through this pragmatic arrangement of space, the organic regime of classic cinema established a spatial continuity based on the movement of its protagonists. Action extends through rational intervals established by continuity editing so that the actor’s translation of dramatic action into movement provides the primary vehicle by which a cohesive narrative space unfolds. Since the war, as Deleuze points out, dramatically “increased the situations which we no longer knew how to react to, in spaces which we no longer know how to describe,” the “action-image of the old cinema” fell into crisis.<sup>13</sup>

As a result, the rational cuts and the continuity of the sensory motor linkage loosen and collapse — the emerging interval marks the convergence of discontinuous durations and gives way to “false continuity and irrational cuts.” In post-war’s “any spaces whatever” (xi), the deserted *Trümmer*-wastelands of e.g. Italian neo-realism, movement comes to take on “false” forms, which de-link and uncouple continuity, allowing “‘time in its pure state’ [to rise] up to the surface of the screen.”<sup>14</sup> The resulting time-image emerges as something *beyond* movement,<sup>15</sup> an image not defined as a succession of spatial segments, subverting the sensory-motor schema and not treating time as a simple derivative of space. According to D. N. Rodowick “the founding question” of this second regime is, “how to distinguish move-

ment in time from movement in space."<sup>16</sup> No longer a measure of objects changing their positions *in space*, movement becomes a dynamics of relations *within time*.

#### *Preservation*

A further, no less important relation between film and time lies in film's attempt to *preserve* time, in its promise to not only *represent* time, but to actually *capture* and *freeze* it in its fleeting dynamics. After the first screening of Lumière's *actualities* at the Salon Indien in Paris, 28 December 1895, the daily newspapers celebrated the "fact" that this new medium, with its possibility to record people "in life," made death lose its sting: "We already can collect and reproduce words; now we can collect and reproduce life. We might even, for instance, see those as if living again long after they have been gone"<sup>17</sup> — "When apparatuses like this are available to the public, when everyone can photograph those that are dear to them, not only their posed forms, but their movements, their actions, their familiar gestures, with words at the tips of their tongues, death will cease to be absolute."<sup>18</sup> Death is also the central term in André Bazin's discussion of photography and film in his influential essay "Ontology of the Photographic Image." Bazin here claims an anthropological cause for the arts in general which he calls a "mummy complex." Like the "practice of embalming the dead" which aimed at the "continued existence of the corporeal body," the image was to provide an almost magical *and* material "defense against the passage of time," with the aim of "the preservation of life by a representation of life." For Bazin, "death is but the victory of time."<sup>19</sup> Similarly, as follows from Bazin's "integral realism,"<sup>20</sup> photography and film are the victory over time, over forgetting, the "second spiritual death," conserving time "by means of the form that endures."<sup>21</sup> Art as a means to immortalize man — Bazin is catching up with a traditional *topos* here. But in contrast to traditional painting's "obsession with likeness"<sup>22</sup> — C. S. Peirce would call this "iconological character" — photography rather is a "molding, the taking of an impression, by the manipulation of light,"<sup>23</sup> an index, a "tracing"<sup>24</sup> of a human being or an object. Thus, photography mummifies *the moment* in its "transference of reality from the thing to its reproduction,"<sup>25</sup> but this mummification, due to its very instantaneity, is compelled to "capture time only piecemeal."<sup>26</sup> Still — photography shares with film the "indexical character" — film, like photography, is "the art of the index; it is an attempt to make art out of a footprint."<sup>27</sup> However, film is marked by a surplus advantage — "[i]t makes a molding of the object as it exists in time and, furthermore, makes an imprint of the duration of the object."<sup>28</sup> The mummy of film [like the mummies *in*

film] lives [as every film-lover knows, and Bazin knew as well]!! Bazin's mummy has a twofold function — it conserves the recorded image, and it dynamizes the otherwise static image. By means of the filmic mummy, as Bazin famously put it, “the image of things is likewise the image of their duration, change mummified, as it were.”<sup>29</sup> In the only illustration to Bazin's “Ontology,” we get an image of the Holy Shroud of Turin, which is defined by Bazin as a synthesis of “relic and photograph.”<sup>30</sup>

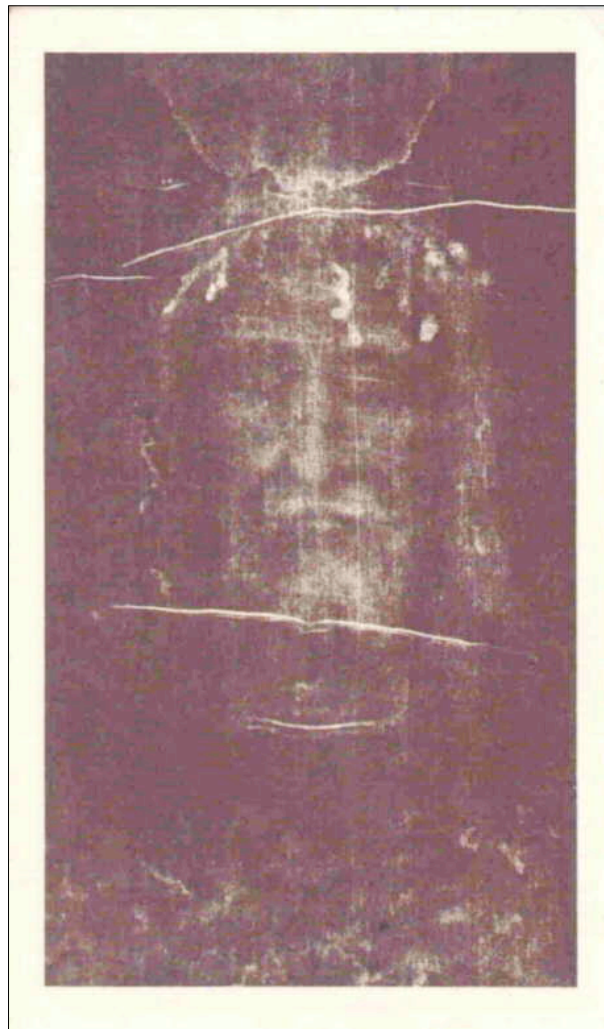


Fig. 1: The Holy Shroud of Turin — a synthesis of “relic and photograph.”

This allows us, I argue, to deduce that Bazin in analogy sees the filmic material, the actual celluloid carrier, as the mummy's shroud or bandage, and the balm or preserving natron as a kind of emulsion that makes possible a direct “fingerprint” of the real, so that precisely photography's | film's “automatism” devoid of an intervening subject [which coincides with

Bazin's idea of realism] makes "the logical distinction between what is imaginary and what is real [...] disappear."<sup>31</sup> As already mentioned, film "embalms" time, "rescuing it simply from its proper corruption."<sup>32</sup> But what if the corruption and entropy proper to time also eat at the mummy's bandages? What if these die and decay, which also means – what if these have a *proper life of their own*?

### *Manifestation*

This Film is Dangerous!<sup>33</sup> I am not referring to the contents of movies that supposedly are corrupting our youths, films containing "scenes of nudity and extreme violence" — I want to focus on the *material* level of film, neither on the level of narration, nor of technology and techniques, but on the fundamental level of the film's *thingness* — the film strip, a.k.a. "celluloid." Until approx. 1950, all movies were shot on nitrate film, on nitro-cellulose [commonly referred to as "celluloid"], a highly inflammable material — just remember the scene in Giuseppe Tornatore's *Cinema Paradiso* [or Tarantino's *Inglorious Basterds*, with its "Operation Kino"], where the cinema gets up in flames. Developed in 1899 by George Eastman, the immense advantage of nitrate film was its high quality — no other material provided such brilliance and high amount of shades of gray. But nitro-cellulose consists of cotton, camphor and acid and is based on the same formula as the so-called "gun cotton" – nitrate film carries loads of oxygen in its own pockets to fend the flames, so that it even burns under water.

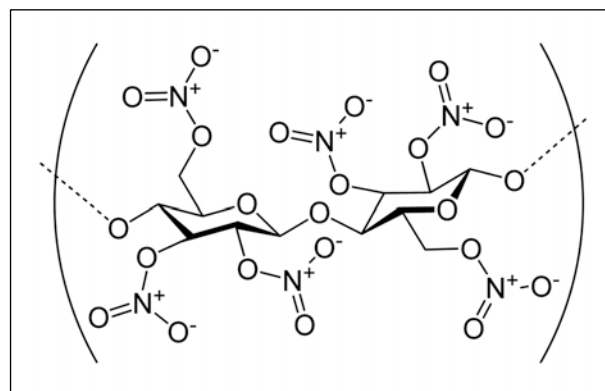


Fig. 2: Nitro-Cellulose Formula.

In addition, once processed, this material is highly sensitive to "environmental factors": it tends to decompose and deteriorate in dependence of time and environment, and it returns to its components — nitro-cellulose, gelatin, and silver emulsion. This process enfolds

in various states; it begins with a sepia/amber “coloration” of the film strip and the fading of filmed images; then the celluloid loses its “shape,” softens, and becomes gooey; in a next step, bubbles and blisters emerge on the surface of the film, the emulsion separating from the nitro-cellulose carrier. In the end, the nitro-cellulose base completely depolymerizes and hardens into the notorious “hockey pucks” and “donuts” so dreaded by film archivists, until what is left is just a highly inflammable reddish powder.





Figs. 3-5: Nitrate film in various states of decay.

Bazin saw the medium of film as a bandage, as a protective skin — in French the material film strip is referred to as *pellicule* [skin]. Since the film [and the skin of film]<sup>34</sup> is also a *thing*, a material object, it is *itself* subjected to time — and to decay — as well. If an actor | actress reaches an age when s | he loses attraction with the audience, s | he either has a “skin job” or quits acting. Likewise films, if time has left too many marks on their surface, are being restored [“embalmed”] or taken out of distribution. The entropic process can be slowed down, but it cannot be stopped — and it is exactly these decaying film skins that Bill Morrison uses as basic material for his film *Decasia* (2002). *Decasia* takes film’s materiality seriously and lends itself to a “materialist approach” to Media Studies — representation of time and things *in* film are complemented by a perspective that takes into consideration the temporality of the medium *itself*.

DECASIA:

THE MATTER-IMAGE

*Film is Also a Thing...*

Morrison’s *Decasia* can be located in the tradition of the American avant-garde or experimental film of the 60s and 70s. A main characteristic of this tradition was its focus on the filmic material and on the structure of film, and not so much on content and narration. Filmmakers such as Bruce Connor, Robert Breer and Tony Conrad worked with the concept of *flicker*-film that undermined classic filmic temporality [and its concomitant continuity-effect] — 24



frames per second — and experimented with various tempi. Andy Warhol re-discovered early cinema's stylistic device of the "static camera" and made *duration* the explicit topic of films such as *Empire*, *Sleep*, and *Eat*. Ken Jacobs, George Landow etc. utilized the concept of *found footage* for the experimental film, while Stan Brakhage produced films completely without a camera, by what Peirce would have called "indexical" procedures — putting objects directly on the film strip to be processed, painting or scratching on its surface, etc.<sup>35</sup> It was Brakhage's self-expressed aim to de-couple the filmic image from its hegemonic relation to memory, to deconstruct the images' representational character, and to create a "sense of constant present-tense"<sup>36</sup> — not a representation of the past, but a presentation of temporalities, of durations. As P. Adams Sitney has put it, American experimental film of the 60s and 70s were facing "the great challenge [...] of [...] how to orchestrate duration."<sup>37</sup> Common to all these experiments was the desire to make the filmic material *itself* — under "classic circumstances" invisible due to the ideal of the transparency of the medium according to which film is "the material base that must be dematerialized in projection" — visible and fruitful as a fundamental component of the filmic process.<sup>38</sup>

Morrison goes a decisive step further — *Decasia* is a montage made from found footage films in various states of decay. He leaves the sequences basically untreated in order to present a *time-image* created not by a human subject, but by time and matter itself — the *matter-image*. In order to get his material, Morrison had been digging his way through various film archives — like Walter Benjamin's "rag picker" (*Lumpensammler*), Morrison searched the archives of the Library of Congress, and the archive of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox Movietone Newsreels at the University of North Carolina, in particular their collections of *actualités*, travel reports, industrial and educational films that all dated from the first half of the Century of the Cinema and that all were shot on nitrate film.<sup>39</sup> In a way, I argue, Morrison's strategy enacts a reversal of classic cinema's subordination of time to movement comparable to the Deleuzian taxonomy. *Decasia's* cannibalization and recontextualization of pre-war "movement-images" according to irrational cuts and false continuities enacts an undermining of the concept of time as the relation of movement and space. Whereas in the classic movement-image, the rational cut served as a "linkage of images,"<sup>40</sup> producing "natural relations (series)"<sup>41</sup> of images, the film of the time-image "disenchain[s]"<sup>42</sup> the images from these series, opening up and expanding an "irrational interval" by which each image, according to Rodowick,

becomes what probability physics calls a “bifurcation point,” where it is impossible to know or predict in advance which direction change will take. The chronological time of the movement-image fragments into an image of uncertain becoming [...] the regime of the time-image replaces this deterministic universe with a probabilistic one.<sup>43</sup>

This is not to suggest that *Decasia* is a random collection of images and sequences — quite the contrary, in an interview Morrison reveals his thorough composition of the film.<sup>44</sup> However, the relation between images and sequences is undetermined, unpredictable, and probabilistic.

*Decasia* begins [and ends] with the image of a spinning Sufi dancer from Egypt — Bazin’s country of mummies. Already at the beginning, *Decasia* accentuates the paradox of what could be called a “static dynamics” — here, movement does not propel a plot by action-reaction, but rather stays “within the frame,” and within the confinements of this frame, movement “happens” only locally, as if space does not exist [or matter], whereas the movement itself deconstructs its proper “motor function” and allows a glimpse of what Deleuze calls “a little time in the pure state.”<sup>45</sup> Thus, as Rodowick explains, “to the extent that time is no longer the measure of movement as indirect image, movement becomes a perspective on time,”<sup>46</sup> a *direct* time-image, independent of montage strategies.



Fig. 6: Sufi dancer in *Decasia*.

After the Sufi dancer, a sequence shot in a film laboratory and rotating film reels follows — the audience witnesses the birth of a film in film.<sup>47</sup>

The dancer’s circular movement is taken up again in this sequence and enacts the constituting paradox of the filmic medium: the “static dynamics” of film — movement and stasis

at the same time, the illusion of movement as the effect of static snapshots is complemented by the “static dynamics” in film [the Sufi dancer], subverting or at least questioning the sensory-motor schema of the classic movement-image. Images of movement and circulation, of birth, life, and death provide a “red thread” in Morrison’s film and are also taken up in the circular structure of *Decasia* itself, opening and concluding with the Sufi dancer. “Repetition” is one of Morrison’s stylistic means — he often uses the same “parent movie” [found footage] in various films. In *Decasia*, he uses sequences already used in his earlier films, such as *The Film of Her* (1997), *Trinity* (2002), etc. However, re-petition — just like re-memberance — is not a repetition of the same [...] this would rather be re-dundancy. Morrison rather “extracts” sequences from their “original” narratives and embeds them in a new context — in the context of time itself. The “return” of certain images returns as difference, and thus has a certain affinity to memory, as Morrison himself points out:

The frame pauses briefly before the projector’s lamp, and then moves on. Our lives are accumulations of ephemeral images and moments that our consciousness constructs into a reality. No sooner have we grasped the present, it is relegated to the past, where it only exists in the subjective history of each individual. <sup>48</sup>

After the two intro-sequences, scenes and images in various states of decomposition and decay follow. *Decasia* does not see the signs of the time as flaws, as material defects — they rather transfer their own aesthetics onto the images. Morrison has deliberately chosen sequences where the representation engages in a direct contact with the material carrier. A boxer is seen fighting against an amorphous blob [once presumably the image of a punching ball] threatening to swallow him. “Flames” are dancing over the close-up face of a woman, “wounding” both celluloid and image. The film’s | woman’s skin cracks and bubbles and seethes like molten lava — the woman’s face gets “out of shape,” melts. The subject | title of the film seems to have transferred | inscribed itself into its material. The resulting tensions create a texture “so porous it recalls “a ‘pointilliste’ texture in the manner of Seurat,”<sup>49</sup> and produce cracks that echo old oil paintings, but also of some of Brakhage’s works. *Decasia* owns a tactile texture, an almost sculptural depth missing from most contemporary film — this is not the utopia of the digital image, as sharply defined as possible, but the idea of an almost three-dimensional geology of surface. Morrison’s approach starts with the materiality of the filmic medium and its own *proper* metamorphosis, rather than its capability to repre-

sent time and things — the temporality and thingness of the material *itself* is the center of his work, not the forms and shapes it *represents*, but the shape and form it *becomes*. The struggle between image and material *ruins* the narration of the “original film,” but produces a new “narrative” that *Decasia* does not *illustrate*, but that emerges out of the ruinous image *itself*.



Fig. 7: Boxer in *Decasia*.

The return of film’s [repressed] materiality makes itself seen as the destruction of the image which it had produced in the first place — yet, as Joachim Paech has poignantly stated, “the death of images [...] is itself an image again, otherwise it would not be representable.”<sup>50</sup> In Morrison’s matter-image, film is revealed as *image-producing materiality*, not as an illusion of reality, as in classic film. Since, for the audience of *Decasia*, the [re-]entry of the material in the medial form appears as the very destruction of that form, the result is a paradoxical *mise-en-scène* of the simultaneity of appearance and disappearance, of destruction and construction. The filmic material is not [only] a *transparent transmitter* of images and meaning, but rather *instrumental* in its construction — the subject of “time” in *Decasia* is *presented* on the filmic material *directly*, by the material’s “treatment” *by time itself*.

#### *Ruinous Film | Filmic Ruin*

Morrison’s films constitute and partake what might be called a “poetics of the ruin,”<sup>51</sup> a poetics of the historicity of film not in the sense of traditional historiography of film, but with regard of the historicity — even “mortality” — of its thingness. From this perspective, film history becomes the history of film’s decay, which, according to Paolo Cherchi Usai, makes a history of film possible in the first place: “Such images [that are immune from decay] can

have no history.”<sup>52</sup> Everything “happening” to a film from its “birth” to its “death” constitutes its history — if all films would be unharmed by time and “survive,” there would be no history of film — “cinema is the art of destroying moving images.”<sup>53</sup> However, *Decasia* does not really fit into the tradition of “images of ruins” of [post] 09/11 cinema — *Decasia* rather presents “ruinous images,” is a “ruinous film | filmic ruin” that does not *represent* the decay of *some other object*, but *enacts* the decomposition of *its own material*.

These ruinous images deconstruct the linear time of classic film — they seem to emerge from the fringes of “readability,” located between pure indexicality and meaning, between a “re-animated present of the past” and time as a complex mystery. Film’s mythical power to “capture time” merges with the tragedy that the medium film *itself* — as materiality — is also subjected to the vicissitudes of time — here, the poetics of the archive<sup>54</sup> is married to the poetics of the ruin, indexicality connects with entropy.

Here, film leaps over the threshold separating the “likeness-factor” of representation from direct “embodiment” — C. S. Peirce has theorized this in semiotic terms as the difference between *icon* and *index* and has pointed out that e.g. in photography, the iconic relation of likeness is only a secondary and forced effect of its indexicality:

Photographs, especially instantaneous photographs, are very instructive, because we know that they are in certain respects exactly like the objects they represent. But this resemblance is due to the photographs having been produced under such circumstances that they were physically *forced* to correspond point by point to nature.<sup>55</sup>

In *Decasia*’s “ruinous images,” the indexicality is not only the one underlying the iconicity of the represented figures and objects, but first and foremost an index that is a chemical reaction of the compounds of nitro-cellulose with the environment. And *Decasia*’s represented figures and forms do not deteriorate because of a diegetically motivated decomposition [as in the Horror Film — see e.g. the early films of David Cronenberg, or Philip Brody’s *Body Melt* (1993)], but because of the decay of its carrier materiality. This logic of matter’s “re-claiming of power” against its forced [in]formation by man is the central topic of Georg Simmel’s essay “The Ruin” (1907). The “[a]rtistic formation” enacted by the creative subject [Simmel refers to architecture in particular] here appears as an “act of violence committed by the spirit to which the stone has unwillingly submitted”<sup>56</sup> — there’s a similar “physical force” at work like the one underlying the iconic aspect of the index. In a ruin, however, “de-

cay destroys the unity of form,"<sup>57</sup> spirit engages in a dialectical struggle with nature and with the "laws governing the material" ["*Eigengesetzlichkeit des Materials*"]<sup>58</sup> — and this material aims at putting a stop to the subject's | the spirit's game. From "the standpoint of [...] purpose,"<sup>59</sup> from the perspective of the "unity of form," this *natural* decay appears as "a meaningless incident"<sup>60</sup> — however, the result of this is not the simple "formlessness of mere matter."<sup>61</sup> The fascination of the ruin — and of a ruinous film such as *Decasia* — is precisely the fact that the destruction of an object [or of an image] makes a new object | image emerge, a "new form which, from the standpoint of nature, is entirely meaningful, comprehensible, differentiated."<sup>62</sup> This "new form" is the result of antagonistic forces, of the interplay of entropy and evolution, of past and present, intention and chance. The ruin — like Morrison's *Decasia* — simultaneously struggles *and* plays with its own destruction, and in this very oscillation a "new form" emerges. Thus, in *Decasia*, scenes in which the amorphous mass threatens to swallow the "diegetic life" are on a par with scenes in which the image precisely seems to emerge out of that blob.



Figs. 8-9: Two images from *Decasia*.

All things considered, the ruin lacks nothing — above all it does not lack any “preceding totality”: the ruin does not only provide its own aesthetic criteria [as Ralph Waldo Emerson put it: “Even the corpse has its own beauty”<sup>63</sup>]. Strictly speaking, only from a human, “purposeful” perspective, one can talk of entropy and decay — the “arrow of time,” as Bergson points out, is the necessary condition of the creation of newness:

[T]he living being essentially has duration; it has duration precisely because it is continuously elaborating what is new and because there is no elaboration without searching, no searching without groping. Time is this very hesitation [...]. Suppress the conscious and the living [of the material world] [...], you obtain in fact a universe whose successive states are in theory calculable in advance, like the images placed side by side along the cinematographic film, prior to its unrolling [...]. Would not the existence of time prove that there is indetermination in things? Would not time be that indetermination itself?<sup>64</sup>

In its continuous folding of past into present and vice versa, with the ruin [as with *Decasia*, with its similar folding of outside [materiality] into inside [image] and vice versa] one cannot simply designate “decay” as the negative, destructive force: like with the Moebius Strip, the outside is simultaneously part of the inside, decay and composition become indiscernible, being destructive and creative *at the same time*. If in the abstract *temps* of Marey [and of Classic Physics and of Classic Film], as Bergson maintains, there can be no creation, and if this statement remains true for the “narrative level” of film, on the level of the materiality of the medium, *newness emerges*.

### *The Aura of the Thing*

When Simmel describes the patina on metal, wood, ivory and marble, it almost seems as if he was talking about the images in *Decasia* and the “mysterious harmony” that “the product becomes more beautiful by chemical and physical means; that what has been willed becomes, without intention of force, something obviously new, often more beautiful,”<sup>65</sup> resulting in a “special something” which “no new fabric can imitate.”<sup>66</sup> This singularity comes close to what Walter Benjamin has famously designated as *aura*, the work of art’s “presence in time and space, its unique existence”<sup>67</sup> which has declined in the age of mechanical

reproduction.<sup>68</sup> “Aura” comes close to being the historicity of materiality. According to Benjamin, aura’s “analogue in the case of a utilitarian object is the experience that precipitates on this object”<sup>69</sup> — the aura of a work of art is a direct effect of its “contact” with time and space. Morrison points out the importance of this “direct contact” as well:

older archival footage [...] [has] this quality of having been touched [...] by time, by a non-human intervention that is organic [...] there are many things happening between the first time they were registered on the 35 mm negative and transferred to a paper intermediary, to being stored, rained on, or being nibbled by rats; the hairs in the specs, the grain and what would have to happen for that to be brought out and to be re-photographed some 60 years later. So each picture has its own dimension of time, its own history. Whether or not you are conscious of this while watching, you are still watching these tiny histories go by [...].<sup>70</sup>

With Morrison “staging” the film as a singular, material object, and with the continuous oscillation of materiality, filmed objects, and time, *Decasia* succeeds, I argue, in the “re-auratization” of film precisely in the age of mechanical reproduction. When Bazin claims that photography [and implicitly: film] “affects us like a phenomenon in nature, like a flower or a snowflake whose vegetable or earthly origins are an inseparable part of their beauty,”<sup>71</sup> we can specify with *Decasia*, that film can affect us as a “natural” phenomenon, because in an important aspect it *is* a natural phenomenon.

*Decasia* follows a conception of “cinematic time” different from that which Bergson saw as the biggest drawback of the cinema — its fundamental linearity and abstractness. *Decasia*’s time is neither the duration of the projected film, nor the one of the film’s narrative, neither narration time, nor narrated time, but the time of its material. *Decasia* contradicts Bergson’s claim that cinema can only endlessly repeat “the same” — *Decasia* rather is the cinematic proof for Bergson’s observation that “[w]herever anything lives, there is, open somewhere, a register in which time is being inscribed [...] duration, acting and irreversible.”<sup>72</sup> We are presented a film that merges the “non-subjective” perception of the camera-eye with the “non-human perception” of matter itself — in its focus on the “perceptiveness of matter,” *Decasia* shows that film is not only a signifying machine, and/or an image-and-sound machine, but because of its chemical composition it is also something like “a chlorophyll — or a



photosynthesis-machine.”<sup>73</sup> The amorphous shapes of | in *Decasia* result from the oscillation of the formation | representation of objects, and the natural and organic processes of the object | matter “film” itself — representation and materiality, image and thing are being folded into each other. In a commentary on *Decasia*, Morrison puts this in terms reminiscent of the terminology of “Embodied Mind Philosophy”: “The images can be thought of as desires or memories: actions that take place in the mind. The filmstock can be thought of as their body, that which enables these events to be seen. Like our own bodies this celluloid is a fragile and ephemeral medium that can deteriorate in countless ways.”<sup>74</sup> In a similar manner, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson argue in *Philosophy in the Flesh* that “[w]hat is important is not just that we have bodies and that thought is somehow embodied. What is important is that the very peculiar nature of our bodies shapes our very possibilities for conceptualization and categorization,”<sup>75</sup> and it is exactly this, I argue, what *Decasia* shows with regard to the filmic *body*, the *materiality* of the medium “film.” *Decasia* is on every level a more complex “history of film,” with concepts of “history” and “memory” that goes far beyond the film archivists’ idea of the “preservation of contents.” Morrison comments —

I’ve shown *Decasia* in archival symposiums, and archivists rushed up to me afterwards and were saying: “But you must document what all these are.” But [...] that would defeat the purpose. And it would make it seem a plea for preservation which I’m not actually doing. Certainly none of this work would exist without preservation. I am greatly indebted to them but I’m not saying it is necessarily tragic that time erodes these things because, hey, that’s what happens [...] the magic of cinema is also its fleeting nature, not only its objectual nature.<sup>76</sup>

As Deleuze, in his reading of Bergson, states — “the past which is preserved takes on all the virtues of beginning and beginning again. It is what holds in its depth or its sides the surge of the new reality, the bursting forth of life.”<sup>77</sup>

*Decasia* takes into consideration that, as Bergson wrote, “memory [...] is just the intersection of mind and matter.”<sup>78</sup> It is this folding of perception into memory and vice versa that defines Deleuze’s “crystal of time”<sup>79</sup> — and in Morrison’s *Decasia*, I argue, the “crystallization of time” allows for a very materialist reading.

As Deleuze has beautifully put it: “the brain is the screen,” cinema is cerebral, but this screen, this brain, this “[c]inema isn’t theater; rather, it makes bodies out of grains”<sup>80</sup> — Bill Morrison’s *matter-image* does exactly that.

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1. Dietrich Schüller, “Von der Bewahrung des Trägers zur Bewahrung des Inhalts,” *Medium 4* (1994): 28-32.
  2. See e.g. Bill Brown, *A Sense of Things: The Object Matter of American Literature* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003).
  3. Dinah Eastop, “Conservation as Material Culture.” in *Handbook of Material Culture*, ed. C. Tilley et. al. (London: SAGE, 2006), 516.
  4. “Intelligent materialism” not because it is more intelligent than other “materialisms,” but because it grants intelligence and agency to matter itself.
  5. Régis Debray, *Media Manifestos* (London: Verso, 1996), 108. Debray further proposes — “We speak about Earth Day. Why not tomorrow, no pleasantry intended, a day devoted to celebrating celluloid, vellum paper, or vinyl records?” (114).
  6. André Bazin, *What is Cinema? Volume 1*, ed. and trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2005), 9-16.
  7. Etienne-Jules Marey, *La méthode graphique dans les sciences expérimentales* (Paris: Masson, 1885), xi.
  8. Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. Arthur Mitchell (New York: The Modern Library, 1944), 332.
  9. *Ibid.*, 331.
  10. Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics* (New York: Citadel Press, 1992), 18.
  11. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1. The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and B. Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 197.
  12. *Ibid.*, 155.
  13. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2. The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and R. Galeta (London: Athlone 2000 Press, 1986), xi.
  14. *Ibid.*, xi.
  15. See *ibid.*, 1-24.
  16. D. N. Rodowick, *Gilles Deleuze’s Time Machine* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997), 79.
  17. *Le Radical*, 30 December 1895.
  18. *Le Radical* 30 December 1895: “On recueillait déjà et on reproduisait la parole, on recueille maintenant et on reproduit la vie. On pourra, par exemple, revoir agir les siens longtemps après qu’on les aura perdus.” *La Poste* 30 December 1895: “Lorsque ces appareils seront livrés au public, lorsque tous pourront photographier les êtres qui leur sont chers non plus dans leur forme immobile mais dans leur mouvement, dans leur action, dans leurs gestes familiers, avec la parole au bout des lèvres, la mort cessera d’être absolue.”
  19. Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, 9-10.
  20. “ [T]he history of the plastic arts [...] [is] [...] essentially the story of resemblance, or, if you will, of realism” (*ibid.*, 10).
  21. *Ibid.*, 10.
  22. *Ibid.*, 12.
  23. *Ibid.*, 12*n*t.
  24. *Ibid.*, 96.
  25. *Ibid.*, 14.
  26. *Ibid.*, 96.
  27. Lev Manovich “What is Digital Cinema?” <http://www.manovich.net/TEXT/digital-cinema.html> (accessed 14 April 2008).
  28. Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, 97; see also Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 24.
  29. Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, 15.
  30. *Ibid.*, 14*n*\*.
  31. *Ibid.*, 15.
  32. *Ibid.*, 14.
  33. See Roger Smither, ed., *This Film is Dangerous: A Celebration of Nitrate Film* (Bruxelles: FIAF, 2002).

34. See also Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000).

35. See e.g. Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 84-85.

36. Stan Brakhage, *Essential Brakhage. Selected Writings on Filmmaking by Stan Brakhage*, ed. Bruce R. McPherson (New York: McPherson & Company, 2005), 210.

37. P. Adams Sitney, *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde, 1943-2000* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 351-352. Deleuze also refers to Sitney's analysis in *Cinema 1* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986) 86; 230n22 and 24.

38. Garrett Stewart, *Between Film and Screen: Modernism's Photo Synthesis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 3.

39. *Decasia* is a collaboration with the American Composer Michael Gordon (one of the founders of the Bang On a Can collective) in association with The Ridge Theater, New York — I won't go into the intricacies of that very peculiar image | sound cooperation, since that would be an essay of its own. *Decasia* was conceptualized as a film (like what you get on the DVD), but as a multimedia event, premiered 2001 in Basel, Switzerland, with the Basel Sinfonietta Orchestra, slide projections, a very special stage architecture, etc. Gordon's symphony ventures into the fringes of sound and works with repetitions, superimpositions etc. — a sonic equivalent to Morrison's visual strategies.

40. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 213.

41. Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 204.

42. Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), 173.

43. Rodowick, *Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine*, 15.

44. See Barnaby Welch's interview with Morrison for *High Angle Magazine* (2002) on <http://www.decasia.com/html/highangle.html> (accessed 14 April 2008).

45. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, xi.

46. Rodowick, *Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine*, 81.

47. Note the parallel to Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* (*Chelovek s kino-apparatom*, 1922).

48. Bill Morrison, "Retrospective," *Cork*, 8-15. Oct 2006, <http://www.corkfilmfest.org/festival/bill-morrison.html> (accessed 14 April 2008).

49. Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 85. Deleuze talks about this texture in the section on "gaseous perception" (80-86). While Deleuze here comments on e.g. George Landow's and Ken Jacobs' use of decaying found footage, quite similar to Morrison's, and the idea of "an image defined by molecular parameters" (85), and the impression that here "the film itself seems to die" (86, quoting from Sitney), Deleuze, I argue, is more concerned with perception and the *projected* image itself rather than its material "coming into being." See also Donald Totaro, "The Old Made New. The Cinematic Poetry of Bill Morrison." *Horschamp*, November 30, 2004, [www.horchamps.qc.ca/new\\_offscreen/morrison\\_rebirthism.html](http://www.horchamps.qc.ca/new_offscreen/morrison_rebirthism.html) (accessed 14 April 2008).

50. Joachim Paech, *Konfigurationen. Zwischen Kunst und Medien* (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1999), 123. My translation of: "das Ende der Bilder [...] ist selbst ein Bild, anders wäre es nicht darstellbar."

51. See e.g. the essays by André Habib ("Thinking in Ruins. Around the Films of Bill Morrison." *Horschamp*, November 30, 2004, [www.horchamps.qc.ca/new\\_offscreen/cinematic\\_ruins.html](http://www.horchamps.qc.ca/new_offscreen/cinematic_ruins.html) (accessed 14 April 2008), or the essay by Eduardo Cadava ("Lapsus Imaginis:" The Image in Ruins." *October* 96 (2001): 35-60.)

52. Paolo Cherchi Usai, *Death of Cinema: History, Cultural Memory, and the Digital Dark Age* (London: BFI 2001), 41.

53. *Ibid.*, 7.

54. See e.g. Emily Cohen, "The Orphanista Manifesto: Orphan Films and the Politics of Reproduction," *American Anthropologist* 106:4 (2004): 719-31, and — of course — Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever. A Freudian Impression*. (London and Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

55. C. S. Peirce, *The Essential Peirce. Selected Philosophical Writings. Volume 2 (1893 – 1913)*. ed. The Peirce Edition Project. (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998), 5-6, emphasis added.

56. Georg Simmel, "The Ruin," in *Georg Simmel, 1858 – 1918. A Collection of Essays, with Translations and a Bibliography*, ed. Kurt H. Wolff (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press), 260.

57. *Ibid.*, 260.

58. *Ibid.*, 259.

59. *Ibid.*, 260.

60. *Ibid.*, 260.

61. *Ibid.*, 261.

62. *Ibid.*, 261-262.

63. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature," in *Ralph Waldo Emerson. Essay and Lectures*, ed. Joel Porte (New York: Library of America, 1983), 14.

64. Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, 93.
65. Simmel, "The Ruin," 262.
66. Nitro-cellulose, just like the "old fabrics" that Simmel describes, is subjected to "dryness and moisture, heat and cold, outer wear and inner disintegration" (Simmel, "The Ruin," 264).
67. Simmel, "The Ruin," 220.
68. However — "[f]or the last time the aura emanates from the early photographs" (Benjamin, *Work of Art*, 224). Benjamin explains this 'persistence' of aura a.o. with the long exposure times of early photography. In the reduction of exposure time — which more than faintly reminds of Bergson's *duration* — from various hours to only seconds, Benjamin sees an important factor of the decay of aura. Correspondingly, long exposure time emerges as a sign of the "technical conditionality of the auratic appearance" ("Small History" 248, my translation of "technisches Bedingtheit der auratischen Erscheinung"), that "strange weave of space and time" (250). Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations. Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. H. Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 217-252.
69. Walter Benjamin, "Über einige Motive bei Baudelaire," in *Medienästhetische Schriften* (Frankfurt a/M: Suhrkamp, 2002), 188. My translation of "so entspricht die Aura [...] eben der Erfahrung, die sich an einem Gegenstand des Gebrauchs als Übung absetzt." The English translation — "[aura's] analogue in the case of a utilitarian object is the experience which has left traces of the practiced hand" (188), I argue, reduces the object's experience to something done to it by a human hand, whereas Benjamin leaves that open. Also, the German expression "sich absetzen" also alludes to the chemical process of precipitation, which comes quite handy in my context.
70. André Habib, "Cinema from the Ruins of the Archives. Matter and Memory: A Conversation with Bill Morrison." *Horschamp*, November 30, 2004, [www.horchamps.qc.ca/new\\_offscreen/interview\\_morrison.html](http://www.horchamps.qc.ca/new_offscreen/interview_morrison.html) (accessed 14 April 2008).
71. Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, 13.
72. Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. Arthur Mitchell (New York: The Modern Library, 1944), 20. When Simmel speaks of "the present form of the past" (Simmel, "The Ruin," 266) — a concept in which "the ruin" and "the archive" seem to merge, this simultaneity or coexistence of temporalities is of particular relevance to Bergson, who defines memory as "the prolongation of the past into the present" (Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 20).
73. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 2.
74. Morrison, Retrospective.
75. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 19.
76. Morrison, qtd. in Habib "Cinema from the Ruins."
77. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 92.
78. Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. N. M. Paul and W. S. Palmer (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 13.
79. See Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 68-97.
80. Gilles Deleuze, "The Brain Is the Screen: An Interview with Gilles Deleuze." In *The Brain Is the Screen: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Cinema* ed. Gregory Flaxman. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 366.

## BRINGING THE PAST INTO THE PRESENT: WEST OF THE TRACKS AS A DELEUZIAN TIME-IMAGE

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### INTERPRETING WEST OF THE TRACKS

*West of the Tracks* (*Tie Xi Qu*, 2002) is about life in and around the decaying factories of Tie Xi, a district of Shenyang, which is a city in China's northeastern Liaoning province, Manchuria. Filmed between late 1999 and early 2001, the film is divided into three parts, "Rust" (four hours), "Remnants" (three hours) and "Rails" (two hours). "Rust" depicts the workings of three factories all in the process of closing down – with an emphasis on not only people at work, but also workers relaxing (as well as fighting) in the factories' various break rooms; "Remnants" follows the lives of several people, predominantly teenagers, in the so-called Rainbow Road area of Tie Xi, which is due to be demolished; and "Rails" is about those workers who man the trains that move up and down Tie Xi's twenty kilometres of railway tracks, in particular an old man, Old Du, and his son, Du Yang, who struggle to eke out an existence by hawking materials, predominantly coal, from the increasingly derelict factories.

*West of the Tracks* has been hailed as a landmark of both Chinese cinema and documentary cinema — as well, of course, as a landmark of Chinese documentary cinema. It features, for example, in Patricia Aufderheide's *Documentary Film: A Very Short Introduction*, as well as in works on recent Chinese film culture.<sup>1</sup> While perhaps more namedropped than studied (owing to its unwieldy length?), the film has nonetheless also garnered some close, if often brief, readings. Bérénice Reynaud, for example, reads the film as being about the loss of a (particularly male) way of life; Lü Xinyu considers *West of the Tracks* through the lens of class and history; Jie Li looks at how the film forsakes narrative for the benefit of showing ruin; Ban Wang reads the film alongside Friedrich Engels' *Conditions of the Working Class in England in 1844*; Ling Zhang considers the way in which director Wang's handheld digital video (DV) style helps to give to the ruins of Shenyang both a temporal and a material dimension; and Luke Robinson argues that contingency — the capturing on film of chance but meaningful events — makes the film powerful as a documentary.<sup>2</sup>

Over the course of these essays on *West of the Tracks*, it is the work of Walter Benjamin that crops up most regularly as a (Western) theoretical lens through which to view the film.<sup>3</sup> Given the way in which *West of the Tracks* centres upon ruins, decay and history, it is perhaps natural that Benjamin should be invoked in relation to Wang's film, since Benjamin was also preoccupied with such concerns. Nonetheless, it also seems strange, given its emphasis on time, its rejection of a clear narrative structure, and its treatment of ruined spaces and the "seers" who inhabit them, that the work of Gilles Deleuze is not also mentioned alongside Benjamin when considering the film. It is only in a footnote that Jie Li says that the "layered" nature of Wang Bing's film brings to mind "Deleuze's concept of 'stratigraphy' or 'the deserted layers of our time which bury our own phantoms,'" but she does not elaborate further on this.<sup>4</sup> In this essay, then, I hope to offer up a Deleuzian reading of *West of the Tracks*, and Chinese cinema more generally, in order to bring to the fore the way in which the film is a powerful meditation on time within the context of global capitalism. To this end, I shall not necessarily be disagreeing with those other considerations of the film mentioned above, but I shall be using Deleuze to draw out different aspects of *West of the Tracks* that have hitherto been overlooked. Furthermore, this approach is not a one-way manoeuvre, whereby Deleuze can draw out meanings that are otherwise "hidden" in a Chinese film. For, as a Chinese film and as a documentary *West of the Tracks* can also help us to refine our understanding of and/or to elaborate upon Deleuze's work, specifically the film-philosophy that he articulates in his *Cinema* books.<sup>5</sup> Before doing this, however, we should look at how Deleuze relates to Chinese cinema more generally.

#### GLOBAL DELEUZE, GLOBAL CHINESE CINEMA

As David Martin-Jones and William Brown have discussed, there is a history of debate surrounding the legitimacy of using Western theoretical paradigms as tools for analysing non-Western, and specifically Chinese, cinemas.<sup>6</sup> Wary as I am of the ongoing nature of this debate, though, I might simply follow the lead of Jean Ma, who applies Deleuze's concept of the time-image to films by, *inter alia*, Wong Kar-wai, Hou Hsiao-hsien and Tsai Ming-liang in her book, *Melancholy Drift: Marking Time in Chinese Cinema*. Indeed, her "description of Chinese cinema as a cinema of time is intended to invoke [...] Deleuze," whose own examples of

films offering us direct images of time might well be mainly post-war and European, but whose film-philosophy nonetheless is “pressing[ly needed] in an age when the industrialising, urbanising, and mediatising forces of global capitalism have spread well beyond the parameters of the West and Japan.”<sup>7</sup>

Now, as we shall see, *West of the Tracks* is a film that focuses intently on not just the industrialising forces of global capitalism, but also the de-industrialising forces that see a city like Shenyang ruined for the sake of profit sought via better margins elsewhere. Even if it is thus a post-industrial city, *West of the Tracks* nonetheless emphasises the way in which Shenyang enjoyed a population boom in the 1930s and onwards when, with Manchuria under Japanese control, many workers came to the city to help build munitions for the Japanese. A second population boom followed in the 1970s and 1980s, when many Chinese citizens who had been “sent down” to rural China during the Cultural Revolution returned to Shenyang. In other words, Shenyang is a city whose identity is predicated upon a largely migrant population, which itself is integrated into a wider east Asian geography (including Japan), whose very war efforts in the 1930s and 1940s came to be integrated into not just a regional conflict, but a world war that covered nearly every continent on the planet. If, as we shall see, *West of the Tracks* depicts the sorry effects of globalised capitalism on a formerly industrial community, that globalisation is in fact long-standing; indeed, it is what allowed Shenyang to gain the industrial identity that it enjoyed from the 1930s until the turn of the current millennium. That is, the processes of globalisation arguably allowed Shenyang to exist as such in the first place.

What is true of the film’s content is also true of its production. *West of the Tracks* is a film that was made in part thanks to the Hubert Bals Fund at the Rotterdam International Film Festival. That is, it is a film made thanks to the global circulation of both capital and cinema. What is more, if, as Reynaud reports, the film was not screened theatrically or on television in China and that its domestic reputation has been won through the circulation of illegal DVD copies of the film, then we might contend that *West of the Tracks* also enjoys a predominantly non-Chinese/Western audience, circulating globally via film festivals and specialist DVD labels.<sup>8</sup> In other words, *West of the Tracks* is not a film that exists in a Chinese bubble, but which was funded by and which circulates in a globalised film and media ecology — and in such a global ecology, so, too, are the theoretical frameworks that we use better to under-

stand it themselves globalised. That is, if cinema is, like capitalism, globalised, then why not put “Western” theoretical paradigms into contact with a Chinese documentary?

It is not that globalisation is without problems; if the film tells us anything, it is surely that globalised capital wreaks havoc on the proletariat, as time and again in *West of the Tracks* we see disturbing images of the impoverished inhabitants of Shenyang, their despair manifesting itself in arguments, even fisticuffs, discussions of prostitution, theft, gambling, and a general sense of enclosure that is fascinatingly reflected in the film’s own slow pace. At one point in “Rust,” the body of a worker, Yang Mou, is found in a fish pond — a seeming suicide. As his body is carted around, some of the locals begin to laugh, so devalued has human life become in the face of the inhuman(e) forces of capital. In other words, if globalisation is supposed to be a “good thing,” then the issue of “whose globalisation?” is an important matter that must continually and attentively be examined and critiqued, since, as Wang Bing’s film tells us, one person’s globalisation is another person’s destitution and/or death. But this issue of “whose globalisation?” is not necessarily one to be understood according to the national paradigm that some critics, such as Nick Browne, might insist upon (globalisation as Americanisation or Sinification).<sup>9</sup> Perhaps more suitable for the globalised era is the critique of global capital across borders by those who, in carrying out such a critique, express more kinship with each other, as critics, than do compatriots who might otherwise stand on different sides of the proverbial tracks (exploiters and the exploited). By illustrating in theory the “connections between politics, aesthetics, and the medium of cinema,” Deleuze thus might conceivably demonstrate as much kinship with Wang, who illustrates in practice these same connections (between politics, aesthetics and cinema), as might another Chinese filmmaker or theorist who understands globalisation in a completely different fashion.<sup>10</sup> These connections, and the kinship that I wish to express between Deleuze and Wang Bing, focus upon the issue of time — as I shall discuss presently.

#### CHINESE CINEMA AND TIME

What does Jean Ma mean when she defines time as the principal characteristic and/or concern of (contemporary) Chinese cinema? What she means is not simply that cinema is an excellent tool for capturing change or movement — although cinema surely is this even if it is



typically made up of static frames taken and played back at a rate of 24 per second. For, Ma also means, after Deleuze, that cinema can capture time itself. How this is so is made most clear in moments of “historical rupture,” or what Deleuze terms “mutation.”<sup>11</sup> At moments of historical rupture — the end of the Second World War, the onset within China of globalised capitalism — cinema demonstrates the way in which different people and different groups of people move at different speeds; that is, while chronometric time might be regular and ongoing (days follow hours follow seconds), the *experience* of time is not; in fact different people move at different speeds and might even try to go backwards or skip forwards in time by immersing themselves in memories of the past and/or dreams of the future. Historical rupture not only exposes these different rhythms, or temporalities, of existence, but these different temporalities arguably bring about historical rupture: one person or a group of people cannot (or decides that they do not want to) live life at the same rhythm as everyone else, and so a rupture happens — they separate from the rest, and that person forges forward at a faster rate through time, or falls behind, moving at a slower rate. With regard to *West of the Tracks*, the film explores how globalised capitalism in post-socialist China figures such a rupture, as the film depicts those who figuratively as well as literally have been left behind, their way of life, their rhythm, their temporality being out of sync with that, or better those others, of the contemporary world. A comparison between the beginning and ending of “Remnants” can serve as a good example of this: at the start of this section, we see a town full of electronic goods, cars, vans and people buying lottery tickets in December 1999: the mod cons of the contemporary world are only a lottery win away. Soon after, however, with the celebratory bunting taken down and Shenyang strewn with discarded lottery tickets, we see what is left behind — men hawking scrap metal, poverty and joblessness. This reaches its climax towards the end of the section, when we see several inhabitants, awaiting relocation, scramble through the rubble of Rainbow Row’s ruins in order to find kindling for fire. As such, the title “Remnants” alone brings powerfully to mind the temporal dimension of this being left behind: not only are the Rainbow Row inhabitants “remnants” of another era, but their pace of life also belongs to a temporality that is different from the one promised at the section’s outset with the mod cons and cars. “Rails” also seems to suggest this when Old Du turns to the camera and tells the story of his brother, who was given away at birth. As he sits in darkness speaking defiantly (young Du is drunk in a bed next to him), Old Du says that “Heaven never lets a good man down,” seemingly in reference to his own life. It is at this

moment that an electronic clock strikes the sombre tones of a late hour. Whether added or recorded by coincidence, this scene constitutes a poetic moment in which we are reminded of Old Du's temporality, his time. Old Du and his son are not ghosts of a past that has disappeared (except inasmuch as voices of people like Old Du are rarely seen or heard on our screens — a disappearance that Wang in part sets straight); these are people from contemporary China, equally a part of its present and not just condemned to live in its past. At a time when China is supposedly "marching toward the world," Wang exposes the flipside of Chinese globalisation, in which people are marching lost through derelict building sites.<sup>12</sup>

To return to Ma's work, this notion of multiple, simultaneous temporalities allows us to understand how she analyses the asynchronies of both contemporary China and contemporary Chinese cinema. This is brought to the fore through the fact that in focusing on Wong Kar-wai, Hou Hsiao-hsien and Tsai Ming-liang, Ma in fact studies as "Chinese" filmmakers from Taiwan and Hong Kong (filmmakers who may not even consider themselves to be Chinese!). It is not that the legitimacy of her study is suddenly undermined by this conflation of Taiwan, Hong Kong and (mainland) China; on the contrary, Ma's discussion of Wong, Hou and Tsai under the umbrella of "Chinese cinema" points precisely to the fact that China is not a homogenous entity, but that it is rather made up of multiple, competing temporalities, some of which may not even be "Chinese" — if a set, unchanging definition of what constitutes "Chinese" is to be desired in the first place. Indeed, discussing the work of contemporary theorist Andreas Huyssen, Ma argues that the present is defined by non-synchronicities and multiple, co-existing temporalities, such that

[t]he globalised world of late modernity brings forth discontinuities of time as well as space; rhythms of crisis, rupture, and repetition; the double threat of amnesia and hypermnnesia. If the interpellation of individuals as social subjects once depended upon a synchronisation of the time zones of public and private life, the construction of a shared past as a ground of commonality, we are now confronted with the fracturing of universal narratives of history into a heterogeneous field of temporalities, as these narratives lose their power to suture memory to the empty, homogenous time of the nation.<sup>13</sup>

In other words, the concept of China, and of the nation more generally, is challenged during the globalised era on the level of time and temporality, because where previously we might

have thought of the nation as one people marching to a single rhythm, now we have a “heterogeneous field of temporalities” — as China (and any nation) is revealed to be composed of multiple, often competing, temporalities — but with China’s modernity in particular being defined by the various temporalities that emerge around Hong Kong, the presence of Japan in Manchuria in the 1930s, the Civil War and the move to Taiwan by the Kuomintang, and other historical factors that make China not a single, unified nation, but a diverse nation made up of asynchronous peoples who are defined not simply by nationality or race, but also by political allegiance and socio-economic status.

#### CHINESE CINEMA AS NATIONAL CINEMA?

If the work of Wong, Hou and Tsai seems far removed from that of Wang (although stylistically all four filmmakers regularly, though not always, employ long shots and long takes), the point to be understood here is that while Hong Kong and Taiwan make clear that there are different “Chinese” temporalities, it is also the case that there are multiple temporalities *within* mainland/the “official” China. However, it is not simply that cinema can or should reflect the way in which there are multiple, competing temporalities in contemporary China (although we can see that this is the case in *West of the Tracks*). Cinema can also play and has historically played a role in *creating* either a unified temporality and/or idea of the nation. Perhaps this is most clearly seen in socialist realism, or what is in effect propagandistic cinema that seeks to convey the nation as a homogenous entity. In the case of China, this might broadly be understood as state-backed cinema produced under Mao’s reign, with, as Reynaud points out, Maoism presenting an explicitly Han-centred China, thereby disregarding those other races and ethnicities that go to make up its diverse population.<sup>14</sup> But such films are not limited to Mao’s regime; even today a film like *Hero* (*Ying xiong*, 2002) tells the story of a nameless assassin (Jet Li) who decides *not* to kill the Emperor (Daoming Chen) because he comes to understand that the Emperor’s role in unifying China is far more important than the ongoing possibility of warring states within China. In a film that expressly deals with different perspectives on the same events, with those differences expressed through the use of colour in the *mise-en-scène* (the same story is in effect told three times, with the different versions being expressed via different colour schemes, with red, blue,

white and green dominating the film's visual field at different points), the film is about competing temporalities — but all of which become subjugated to that of the Emperor by the film's climax. In other words, even today unification of the people under the banner of the Chinese nation is an issue not only addressed in contemporary cinema, but also potentially enabled by that cinema.

Whether by design or not, Zhang's *Hero* is probably more ambiguous than the above synopsis suggests, in that the film does not overtly endorse the suppression of difference that otherwise informs the entire structure of the film (after all, we do see different versions of the same story — even if the film is about creating a unified China in the face of competing claims to what the nation is or should be). What is important, though, is that *Hero* deals with the issue of different temporalities within the ancient China of its setting and the contemporary China of its making. What is more, it is partially a state-backed film that on the whole tells an action-packed story in the *wu xia* genre/tradition (there are plenty of fight sequences in the film) and which involves by and large a fast pace, or temporality, of editing. In short, although it has formal complexities (seeing the same events multiple times but from different perspectives), *Hero* is predominantly a narrative film — and the point that I wish to make here is not simply that it is a film *about* different temporalities (or rather about the suppression of different temporalities for the benefit of a single temporality that is unified under the rubric of the nation), but that formally the film has its own temporality, that of mainstream narrative cinema. Here the very ambiguities that surround the film become important: as a mainland-Hong Kong co-production, the film suggests the need for an integrated Chinese identity in the context of the post-1997 handover era. But as a fast-paced action film that also (eventually — it was released in the USA in 2004) was a global box office success, the film also demonstrates that Chinese cinema can, in effect, rival Hollywood's cinema, by being a narrative film that moves at the fast pace/rhythm as per the latter's more mainstream fare. In other words, while the film seemingly promotes a nationalistic discourse as the nameless assassin calls off his quest for the benefit of the nation, *Hero* is also a film consciously created to circulate within, precisely, the *global* arena of contemporary cinema (“China marching toward the world”).

This discussion of *Hero* may seem removed from *West of the Tracks*, but it is useful for clarifying how film form relates to politics. Ma herself acknowledges this in relation to the films of Wong Kar-wai: “[h]is work,” she says, “brings into view the implications of narrative mutation at a moment when the assurance of temporal continuity erodes under the pressure of historical

rupture, globalisation, and a discrediting of narrative's ability to impose a stable order upon the experience of time."<sup>15</sup> In other words, Ma understands globalisation as a moment of historical rupture in the sense defined above, and narrative cinema, formally and as a global phenomenon, functions as a means to "impose a stable order" via determining the (typically accelerated) rhythm, or temporality, of not just films themselves, but also of those who watch them. In other words, the issue of "whose globalisation?" is written into a film's form, but not necessarily in terms of the nation; instead it is (mainstream) narrative cinema that serves as a force for homogenisation, with its capitalistic impulse to make money revealing that what is being homogenised is globalised, neoliberal capitalism — at the expense of different, typically slower rhythms. In other words, the answer to "whose globalisation?" is, *Hero* would suggest, not really a Chinese globalisation, but the globalisation of neoliberal capitalism as expressed formally through many of the tropes of mainstream narrative cinema (what David Bordwell would term "intensified continuity" — fast cutting, lots of close ups, the camera always moving).<sup>16</sup> In being a nine-hour documentary, Wang's film serves to disrupt the "stable order" that we see *Hero* try to enact. In other words, *West of the Tracks* does not stand alone as a film, but it stands in relation to other Chinese films (including, as Ma might suggest, films from Taiwan and Hong Kong), which themselves stand in relation to globalised capital.

In the same way, therefore, that Ma reads it as a political manoeuvre on the part not just of Hou, Tsai and Wong to make "slow" films that challenge the mainstream narrative style/tempo, and which demonstrate not a synchronous and fast-rhythmed world, but a world of "desynchronised time," so, too, might it be that contemporary mainland filmmakers aim to do something similar, Wang Bing in particular.<sup>17</sup> Within the context of mainland Chinese filmmaking, it perhaps is logical, then, that various filmmakers, a number of whom are associated with the so-called Sixth Generation, such as Jia Zhangke, Lou Ye, Zhang Yuan and Wang, would also make "slow" films, the narrative content of which is minimal — since they similarly want to explore the different times/temporalities of those not just within an expanded "China" that includes Hong Kong and Taiwan, but also within (mainland) China as defined geopolitically in the contemporary world. For this reason, many Sixth Generation films are about the dispossessed, the disillusioned, ethnic minorities, homosexuals, intellectuals, and stories that challenge the official version of recent history. They want to show the diversity of China, not its simplified and homogenised face that is used as a tool both for social control within China and as a means to export China to the rest of the globalised world (the myth of *Hero*). Since these

filmmakers do not march to the official beat of the national drum, it also follows logically that many of these filmmakers have at least historically worked outside of China's official film industry and have had many of their films banned within China.

We should note that this is not a case of calling Sixth Generation films "anti-national" or "anti-globalisation" as a simple result of the fact that they reflect neither the "official" China nor its contemporary adoption of capitalism as it emerges as a, if not the, global power within the context of globalised capital. Indeed, the fact that Sixth Generation filmmaking, as I have defined it above, "logically" challenges the drive to unify China under a single narrative that, cinematically speaking, also moves in time with the fast-paced narrative of contemporary Hollywood, suggests that it (the Sixth Generation) is as much a part of the processes of globalisation as mainstream films like *Hero*. As Paul G. Pickowicz suggests, many independent filmmakers require and seek foreign funding for their projects, something that applies to *West of the Tracks*, as mentioned above (it was funded by the Hubert Bals Fund).<sup>18</sup> In other words, the Sixth Generation relies upon facets of globalisation in the same way that *Hero* does. It is not necessarily that these films are resigned to the process of globalisation; it is perhaps more that we (always) already live(d) in a globalised world — but now the political issue becomes for whom is this globalised world, and why do the forces of globalised capital, including mainstream cinema, seek to homogenise temporality worldwide, thereby suppressing difference? Why is it that that which is different is cast — or deliberately seeks to enter — into economic, cultural and other forms of poverty? And why is it demonised in the very same process (existing underground, sometimes being banned, being about the dispossessed, who themselves are demonised), even though the world has always consisted of multiple temporalities and perhaps could not exist as such without them? This is an issue that extends far beyond national boundaries, meaning that a film-philosopher like Deleuze might well be useful for helping us to think through something so foreign to him as a contemporary Chinese documentary like *West of the Tracks*.

#### DELEUZE AND DOCUMENTARY

Writing about *Peacock* (*Kong que*, 2005), Xiaoping Lin says that "in this new era of Chinese capitalism there is no longer any job security for the working class, not to mention their chil-

dren who have no education or professional skills as they grow up during the turbulent years of the Cultural Revolution.”<sup>19</sup> Even though, unlike *Peacock*, *West of the Tracks* is not set immediately after the Cultural Revolution, Lin’s analysis applies at least in part to Wang’s film, since it similarly speaks of how Chinese capitalism destroys job security for the working class, as thousands of workers are laid off and struggle to survive in Shenyang without education or the learning of new professional skills. However, throughout his book on contemporary Chinese film and video, Lin has a tendency to read all films as allegories: movies tell the tale of China in their smaller, specific stories. I do not wish to rehearse here the debate surrounding Fredric Jameson’s observation that Western (and other) scholars tend to read texts from the so-called Third World (and elsewhere) as “national allegories.”<sup>20</sup> Rather, I wish to say that while Lin’s discussion of no job security and no education does apply to *West of the Tracks*, his analysis of texts as allegories is harder to uphold when we consider that *West of the Tracks* is a documentary film. This is because documentary film is supposedly grounded in a specific time and place: it is hard to generalise from the case of Shenyang as depicted in *West of the Tracks* what life is like throughout China, because the very specificity of Shenyang as a place and 1999-2001 as a period in time arguably prevents us from doing so. However, I should like to say that, when applying a Deleuzian framework to *West of the Tracks*, we can not so much read the film as an allegory per se, but we can see in the film more than simply the specificity of its content. In part this is possible as a result of Deleuze refusing to recognise a hard and fast distinction between fiction and documentary, as I shall explain presently.

Now, ever since John Grierson declared documentary to be the “creative treatment of actuality,” it has been clear that documentary is not (necessarily) a reliable recording of reality, but that it in fact involves input from a filmmaker (it is a “creative treatment”).<sup>21</sup> That is, the distinction between fiction and documentary has been blurred since the term documentary was coined. Indeed, Michael Renov says that documentary and fiction “inhabit each other,” while Bill Nichols, in one of the classic texts on documentary, says that there is “no absolute separation between fiction and documentary,” despite the fact that

documentaries address *the* world in which we live rather than *a* world imagined by the filmmaker, [and despite the fact that] they [documentaries] differ from the various genres of fiction (science fiction, horror, adventure, melodrama, and so on) in significant ways. They are made with different assumptions about purpose, they involve a different

quality of relationship between filmmaker and subject, and they prompt different sorts of expectations from audiences.<sup>22</sup>

When documentary filmmakers have themselves made claims regarding the reliability of their work (proponents of Direct cinema, typically), others have stepped forward to disagree entirely, suggesting that documentary cinema is not detached observation, but that it is infused with its own prejudices. That is, once again, the distinction between fiction and documentary is not entirely clear, since both types of filmmaking involve creative decisions and the input of a filmmaker.<sup>23</sup> This does not mean that scholars like Dirk Eitzen and Carl Plantinga have not tried to give a definition of the term documentary; for the former, documentary is a mode of viewing films, while for the latter documentary is an “asserted veridical representation” that the filmmakers want audiences to take as real.<sup>24</sup> Both can be used to distinguish documentary from fiction in various respects. However, while there is a history of claims regarding what (or, in Eitzen’s case, when) a documentary is, and while more particularly there is a history of scholarship that demonstrates the at-best porous boundary between fiction and documentary, the reason why Deleuze does not recognise a distinction between the two is because Deleuze’s approach to cinema is different. Deleuze considers cinema from one or both of two angles: how a film treats movement, and how a film treats time. From this perspective, the division between fiction and documentary melts away.

To be clear, Deleuze does not much discuss documentary in his *Cinema* books. Jean Rouch and *cinéma vérité*, together with Shirley Clarke and direct cinema, all merit mention, as does Canadian documentary maker Pierre Perrault. Concerning in particular Rouch, Deleuze asserts that *cinéma vérité*/direct cinema should have as its goal “not to achieve a real as it would exist independently of the image, but to achieve a before and an after as they coexist with the image, as they are inseparable from the image.”<sup>25</sup> Deleuze seems therefore to propose documentary should show time itself. The image, even the documentary film image, cannot capture or show reality objectively (“a real as it would exist independently of the image”); instead images, including cinematic images, falsify reality. But this is not necessarily a negative process in that we can be said never to reach the truth through film. For, what film perhaps does best in showing us images of time is also to show us that there is no truth that can be separated from the false. If the temporality of the unified nation obscures and excludes as much as it unites, and if this temporality of the unified nation is put forward as the



“true” nation (Han China is the “real” or “true” China), then clearly we can see that truth-making is a process, and that truth is therefore not eternal, but constructed and then imposed on people such that they become included or excluded in national or other groupings. When a film shows not a truth but how truths are constructed, we have not the putting forward of a particular temporality as the “true” one, but a depiction of how there are multiple temporalities. In short, then, such a film offers a direct image of time, a time-image — regardless of whether it is a fiction or a documentary film.

Deleuze’s argument goes against much documentary scholarship not by asserting that there is no direct access to the truth; as outlined above, many documentary scholars have argued this. But Deleuze’s implicit rejection of the fiction-documentary binarism springs from his rather more daring argument that the true-false binarism is itself misleading. Since it is concerned with time and different temporalities, Wang’s film is perhaps best understood as a time-image film, regardless of whether it is documentary or fiction.

#### WEST OF THE TRACKS AS A TIME-IMAGE FILM

There are several ways in which we can understand *West of the Tracks* as a time-image film, the nature of which also reflects upon the issue of time within the contemporary Chinese context. The first way in which we can explore the film’s status as a time-image is through its relationship to history. This is not simply a question of whether *West of the Tracks* shows a particular moment in history (1999-2001), nor simply a question of whether the film illustrates how history (the Japanese occupation of Manchuria in the 1930s, the Cultural Revolution, contemporary globalised capital) features in the film. Rather, the film also relates to the way in which history is not simply about what happened, but about its own telling. That is, history is a tool for making official the time or temporality of a particular group of people or a nation. In cinematic terms, this means films filled with heroic agents who go out and who conquer enemies and/or the wilderness in order to construct a community or civilisation. In other words, this is narrative as history, as the official version of events, an official version that like all “truths” hides as much as it actually tells. History, therefore, can be compared to memory: people do not actually remember things in the way that the history books or films write them.

This concept of history is important, for it informs *West of the Tracks* on various levels. Firstly, the film is not an official history of Shenyang, as is made clear by the predominantly unofficial circulation of the film in China. Secondly, it is not a film about heroic individuals who go out into the wilderness and who conquer nature and/or enemies in order to institute a new nation or civilisation. On the contrary, we have something more akin to what we see in Italian neorealism, which is perhaps the first major cinematic movement that Deleuze defines via the time-image. That is, rather than agential heroes, we have people in Wang's film who are victims of industrial decay and an increasingly capitalised China following the economic reforms of Deng Xiaoping in the late 1970s onwards – just as the characters in *Rome, Open City* (*Roma, città aperta*, 1945) and *Germany Year Zero* (*Germania Anno Zero*, 1948) are similarly incapable of overcoming the war and post-war situations in which they find themselves. In order to demonstrate how their environment plays a large role in defining their lives – rather than showing his subjects as heroes who control their environment — it also makes sense that *West of the Tracks* often shows its subjects in long shot. This means that the environment's own temporality comes to the fore, rather than simply having the film defined by human temporalities; the factories and other spaces of Tie Xi become “characters” in the film as much as the humans do. In “Rust,” for example, the red-hot metals, the smoke and steam, the grimy relaxation rooms all help to make the Shenyang smelting factories characters as much as any of the humans. The trains that are present throughout the whole film also take on the role of characters, as does Shenyang itself. “On the railroad, I’m somebody,” says Old Du in “Rails,” as if in giving to Old Du an identity, the rails themselves also take on an identity.

Furthermore, the weather plays an enormous role in the film, in particular the snow that we see during the winter sections of all three of the film's parts. Not only does the snow visibly and audibly slow Wang and others down as they try to traverse Shenyang's wintry landscape (in one sequence in “Remnants,” we can hear Wang breathing heavily as he tries to keep with the father of Zhu Bin, one of the youths upon whom that section focuses), but we also literally see the white snow and the white fog cover over and replace the otherwise urban environment, occupying large areas of the film's frame — with the camera lens itself occasionally being covered in snow or rain (as happens in the same sequence when Wang's camera mists up after entering Zhu Bin's father's store). In other words the weather imposes upon Wang and Shenyang's inhabitants its own temporality (it slows them down), while also

invading the cinema screen, lending to the images a foggy, almost unfinished feel that is reminiscent of the late paintings of J.M.W. Turner (e.g. *The Approach to Venice*, 1840). James Williams writes about how Deleuze sees in Turner's work a prescient "catastrophism" — a sense in which catastrophe haunts humanity — and this also seems to apply to *West of the Tracks*: in showing us both the temporality of the environment and those of the human characters as co-existing simultaneously, we not only see a direct image of time, but the film seems both metaphorically and literally to convey the catastrophe of neoliberal, global capitalism that has ruined Shenyang, suggesting that nothing is "safe or static; it is constantly undone and remade," because all is characterised by mutation or rupture.<sup>26</sup>

Now, it is worth making clear at this point that perhaps cinema only ever shows us different temporalities, in that any film will show us a background and a foreground, with a human agent typically occupying the foreground. This is true — but the point perhaps to make is that most (mainstream) films do not encourage viewers to consider the background as important — but instead as a backdrop for heroic escapades (this is in part what Deleuze is arguing when he defines the movement-image). *West of the Tracks*, meanwhile, encourages us to understand the different and differing temporalities of the world precisely because of the prominence that the environment plays in the film; rather than backdrop, the environment becomes a prominent character. This character, or temporality, of the environment is made especially clear during the sequences in "Rust" in which we see the factories iced over following their abandonment during the winter months as a result of the state being unable to pay the workers' wages. As those who write official history aim through narrative to delineate clearly the true from the false, so does the civilisation of nature by (typically) heroic agential men involve the separation of man from nature, in particular via the construction of walls and buildings, and the separation of figure from ground. When we see nature, here in the form of thick ice, invading and disregarding the boundaries imposed by man, such that ground affects figure more than vice versa (with Wang depicting workers trying at length to get rid of the ice), we are again reminded of the fact that nature has its own temporality, that it does not bend solely to the will of man, but that man perhaps also has to struggle and/or try to live in harmony with nature.

The desire for viewers to acknowledge non-human temporalities in *West of the Tracks* extends beyond nature. In placing his camera on the front of the trains that pass along Tie Xi's railway tracks, it is as if Wang wants us to see from the perspective of the train — meaning

that we not only consider the train a “character,” as suggested above, but that we also thereby adopt the train’s temporality — a temporality that is, significantly, slow and ponderous (these are not exciting, high-speed train shots as per mainstream train-based thriller films that viewers might see elsewhere; technology is not here figured as the purveyor of excitement, but itself is somehow disenfranchised). This is contrasted with other moments in the film when visibly we can see that Wang is holding the camera himself, not because he figures in mirrors (although his shadow does come into some shots, and, as mentioned, we also hear his breathing as he struggles across snow-filled and slippery landscapes; what is more, various characters acknowledge the camera’s presence, with one man telling Wang to cut in a factory changing room as he films a fight between two workers), but because of the handheld camera work. In other words, we are shown (slow) train time and what we might term “Wang time” at different points in the film — again suggesting the co-existence of multiple temporalities, moving *West of the Tracks* into the realm of the time-image, the time image now being as much a way of seeing the film (different temporalities are in all films) as it is a quality of the film itself (Wang nonetheless takes the time to encourage us to see the different temporalities).

Although *West of the Tracks* progresses across its three parts from a film with multiple protagonists in the factories in “Rust,” to what seems to be a large group of teenagers in “Remnants,” to predominantly Old Du and his son in “Rails,” this is also a film in which we do not have so much a central character (let alone one who is a controlling agent) as a film in which there are many characters, or people. If history is the writing of official narratives, *West of the Tracks* rather allows memory, unofficial and counter-histories to enter into its form. This is signalled not only by numerous characters recounting their lives and how they ended up in Shenyang (in “Rust,” for example, one retired factory worker explains how he arrived in Shenyang from Hebei province at age 16 because of the war, and then proceeded to work for the Japanese, right up until his current age of 73), but also by the passing comments that many people make about those in power and who seem to have left out to dry those who struggle to get by in Tie Xi. For example, in “Rust” a foreman, Dexing Zhou, describes how the fumes are dangerous in the smelting factory, and that workers don’t earn enough money to go into business for themselves, before a second worker says how 30 years of his life are down the drain, as he remains unpaid, has no security and might get sick. A third worker then complains that the factory is far from “first rank,” since workers regularly have to

spend two months a year in hospital as a result of lead poisoning. That is, we are presented not with an official history of Tie Xi, but with the memories of those who continue to inhabit the space. Their memories are not just testimony to the existence of the past in the present, even of a suppressed past that is not officially discussed. Rather, those who remember, and even those who simply feature in the film, function as what Deleuze might term “intercessors.” Within the context of “fiction” filmmaking, intercessors are “real and not fictional characters” who tell stories in such a way that fiction and documentary become impossible to tell apart.<sup>27</sup> What we have in *West of the Tracks* are intercessors who tell their stories, who speak their minds, and/or who simply feature in the film, not because those stories are necessarily true or false, but because they show us how memory, or their private existence, is also a political existence. As per Deleuze’s modern political cinema, which features as part of the time-image, intercessors trouble the distinction between the private and the political, using personal/private memories to disrupt the official/political narrative or history.<sup>28</sup>

Within *West of the Tracks*, it is not that these characters need to tell stories in the same way as Deleuze’s intercessors do in the films of, for example, Pierre Perrault. Rather, it is simply by being in the film, by seeing their temporalities, that the story of the film is created/told. That is, the film itself is a *fabulation*.<sup>29</sup> This act of fabulation via intercessors functions on several levels. Firstly, the people-as-intercessors trouble Wang’s role as author of the text. Although we recognise Wang as the filmmaker, the presence of so many others, who modify and change the film as it is being made rather than following an official script, means that this documentary by definition acknowledges and shows us many temporalities, which intercede into Wang’s own temporality as the film goes on. Furthermore, because many of Wang’s subjects are conscious of the camera, with the 17-year old Bobo and his gang of friends from “Remnants” being most so (although numerous others make reference to Wang and tell him specifically to film objects and moments as the film progresses), we are never wholly certain whether the characters are “being themselves” or “performing” for the camera. This seems particularly clear as Bobo chases his girlfriend, Shen Shen, near the start of “Remnants.” As she walks away from him, in part because she doesn’t want to be filmed, Bobo turns back to the camera and then asks after her if he can buy her flowers. The turn in particular suggests that he wants to appear romantic for Wang; he is performing as much as he is “being himself.”

Determining whether this moment is an “act” or “genuine” is not our concern here; on the contrary, what is of concern is not knowing whether these moments are “real” or at least in part “false.” They therefore demonstrate the status of the people in the film as intercessors, in that while they may not specifically tell stories, the very possibility that they are modifying their behaviour and are potentially performing for the camera means that they are “fabulating,” or behaving in such a way that we cannot tell if what they are showing us is “true” or a performance. The direct image of time results not from our being able to tell what is true from what is false, but from the disruption of the distinction between the two, and from our understanding, again, that many truths/temporalities co-exist simultaneously. In showing us so many temporalities, or memories, Wang disrupts the temporality of official history as well.

#### EPISODIC STRUCTURE AND FILM HISTORY

Wang also disrupts official history and thus shows us a direct image of time through the film’s structure. For, if narrative is for cinema and history alike a tool for creating an official truth, the rejection of (cause and effect-driven) narrative is part and parcel of showing us not a single temporality, but multiple temporalities, or time itself. Although we are often given dates for what happens when, at other times Wang skips about in time in such a way that we have no idea when events are taking place. By favouring an episodic structure over a clear, cause-and-effect driven narrative, Wang troubles classical narrative techniques. Bereft of a clear temporal marker, often the viewers of *West of the Tracks* regularly wonder if days, hours, even months have passed between scenes — especially those in the factories in “Rust,” since there is rarely natural light to guide us. Combined with the slow pacing of the film and its enormous running time, Wang invites viewers not to measure time chronometrically but to experience time differently, to experience the passing of time itself.

Wang’s insistent use of the long takes and the film’s sheer duration also emerge here as important. As Elizabeth Cowie, in one of the few Deleuzian considerations of documentary, puts it: “Documentary’s ability to show place and space as immanent — as a ‘time-image’ as Deleuze defines this — involves a freeing of depicted time from the temporal causality of cinematic representation.”<sup>30</sup> Instead of being able to relate one episode to the next in a cause

and effect-driven fashion, time unfolds at its own pace — with multiple temporalities also in frame for us to see. As a result, “[h]istorical time and the referential are subordinated to the bodily time of viewing, that is, to an experiential process of memory, cognition, and affect.”<sup>31</sup> Not only does watching *West of the Tracks* become an experience for the viewer of time itself, but for Cowie this would elevate the film (she does not mention *West of the Tracks* in her book) from a “mere” documentary to being a work of art. As precisely an *experience*, the time-image becomes not a quantity but a quality, or an intensity, which again is core to personal memory (intense experiences are remembered, whether or not recorded/given “extension” in official history), and also core to disrupting the official time of history (we cannot experience the film “scientifically,” with time within the film and time watching the film evading measurement according to the calendar and the clock). In this way, the time-image can be re-read not simply as a type of image (or film), but as a lens through which to consider cinema more widely — deliberately paying attention to those alternative temporalities that mainstream cinema often (tries to or simply does) ignore — as well as the world itself.

In favouring an episodic structure over a cause and effect-driven narrative, Wang eschews the temporality of mainstream and/or official cinema. However, formally he also demonstrates how *cinema itself* has many co-existing temporalities. This is signalled by the prominence of the factory and the train in *West of the Tracks*: these two elements are the primary features of the first two Lumière films — *Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat* (*L’arrivée d’un train en gare de la Ciotat*, 1895) and *Workers Leaving the Factory* (*La sortie des usines Lumière à Lyon*, 1895). These, combined with the Hales Tours/phantom ride-style shots from the front of the trains, recall the earliest cinema, a cinema before cause and effect-driven narrative took over and became the dominant and presumed-best form. In other words, even though Wang is using contemporary, lightweight and highly mobile handheld DV cameras, cinema’s own past cannot help but co-exist with its present, just as the past of Shenyang and Tie Xi cannot help but haunt its present, too. What is more, since the Lumière and the phantom ride films pre-exist cinema’s narrative phase, they remind us, too, of cinema’s unofficial history, its memory of itself as not necessarily a narrative form, even if it is as a narrative medium that cinema is most widely understood. Finally, the influence of the earliest actualities from France and elsewhere on Wang and his digital film from China suggest that cinema has always been globalised, even if Hollywood and other mainstream, fast-paced action cinemas

(the Chinese example given in this essay is *Hero*) wishes to promote a certain type of (capitalist) globalisation.

In this way, Wang once again disrupts the official narrative both of China and of globalisation, creating a monumental work that formally challenges official narratives and histories concerning China and the processes of globalisation more generally. Although I have by no means exhausted all that can be said about *West of the Tracks*, I hope to have shown that Deleuze can help to unlock some of the potential that the film possesses, while simultaneously showing that a Chinese documentary can help us to gain insight into Deleuze's work, both with regard to Chinese cinema and with regard to documentary. Indeed, *West of the Tracks* suggests that the time-image might well be a tool not just for seeing certain films, but perhaps cinema — and the world in which it circulates — as a whole.

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THOUGHT-IMAGES AND THE NEW AS A RARITY:  
A REEVALUATION OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL  
IMPLICATIONS OF DELEUZE'S *CINEMA* BOOKS

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There is only a slim chance, so great is the capacity [...] for exhausted life to get control of the New from its birth [...].

— Gilles Deleuze

Contrary to Deleuze, therefore, I think [...] events are rare [...].

— Alain Badiou

## INTRODUCTION

This article reexamines and reevaluates two aspects of Deleuze's cinema books: their hardly acknowledged exploration of the problem of the "new," and their taxonomy of different thought-images. It charts how these two aspects intertwine and how they relate to changes within Deleuze's philosophy as a whole. What changes in Deleuze's thought do the cinema books give expression to? There may seem to be a clear shift, as influentially argued by Paula Marrati and partly by Raymond Bellour, between Deleuze's 1960s call for a "thought without image" and the cinema books' (and *What is Philosophy?*'s) affirmation of a plurality of images of thought. But this article will critically examine and argue against there being a shift in this sense. The explorations of thought-images in the cinema books will instead be revealed to reflect complications and an altered focus in Deleuze's conception of the "new." How does this altered conception of the new manifest itself in the cinema books' examinations of thought-images? And how does it relate to varying notions of the new within Deleuze's philosophy at large?

*Cinema 2*'s intricate treatment of the problem of the new (beyond classical or modernistic notions that "we no longer believe in") has been largely neglected in the research (and certainly by antagonistic readers like Badiou). As anticipated in *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*

and his book on Francis Bacon, “the new” has ceased to be naturally associated with the outcome of an ontology of constant differentiation (which tended to be the focus of his work in the 1960s). The term has now more clearly come to concern creations that are *rare* and that are the object and possible outcome of aesthetic-political-philosophical struggle. This article charts the flowering of this problematic in the cinema books in relation to both its notions of thinking images and the varying conceptions of the new across Deleuze’s work as a whole.

The article begins with the ontological level of the relation image-thought in *Cinema*, and with how the creation of new thought can be understood from this basic perspective and in relation to film. This is followed by a critical examination of Marrati’s (and Bellour’s) ideas of a shift, which will reveal how there is instead continuity between early Deleuze and the cinema books regarding thought-images, and most importantly, regarding the notion of “new images of thought” and their relation to the “outside” that is one of the conditions for the new. The article then proceeds to chart the varying conceptions of the new across Deleuze’s *oeuvre* as well as different ways of understanding the meaning of the term, in order to define in what senses the new is a rarity in Deleuze. The different thought-images of the cinema books are thereafter returned to from this perspective, which eventually leads to the question of how the “outside” can be part of thinking film images, and before that to a close examination of crystal-images. Crystal-images will be revealed to sketch the temporal logic of the new seen as the rare outcome of experimental struggle in situations in which creative intersections between realms of reality are disturbed. This article, then, will examine how the treatment of thinking images in *Cinema* are bound up with a shifted focus in Deleuze’s conception of the new.

## IMAGES, THINKING IMAGES — THE BASIC LEVEL

In *Cinema 1* Deleuze famously rolls out an ontology of “movement-images”: Movement, image and matter are the same thing. The universe is an acentered aggregate of interacting images consisting of matter-movement-light.<sup>1</sup> This unorthodox idea — creatively borrowed from Bergson — is one (particularly radical) way to short-circuit the dichotomy that places images in consciousness (or in other representations) and movements in quantitative space. The “black screens” that constitute subjective consciousness, however, are an interruption and subtraction within and among the universal flow of matter-image-light, which curves the universe and

gives it a center or point of view.<sup>2</sup> From surrounding images reacting on each other, the center selects and interrupts a few that are dragged into a “frame.” This framing process, which is ongoing, is the material base level of subjectivity. It outlines an interval of time, a “living image,” a gap between acting and reacting images. It introduces another register of references between images, in which thinking is made possible. The narrative that spans the two cinema books, on this level, reads like a map of dwindling paths (that crosses any discrepancies between the two books) from chaotic states of matter-images that start to form simple subjective centers, whose consciousness hardly transcends action-reaction, all the way to advanced nonlinear thought.

The idea of matter as movement-images does not make reality less, but “image” more. Things are not merely images “for us,” they are primarily perceptions, images, in themselves and for themselves. This claim about images must therefore not be confused with the variety of familiar theories in which reality/being has become image for human subjects and societies, as a more authentic reality/being has receded. For Deleuze, from this perspective, the authentic real is itself “images” — there is immanence of images, nothing more real behind or beyond — and it has been that way since “the world before man.”<sup>3</sup>

This image ontology should neither be taken for Deleuze’s philosophy of (differenc/ating) intensity-time-matter in its full complexity — although *Cinema 2* in parts closes in on such complexity — nor for an abstraction that is necessarily translatable to every other problem in Deleuze (another problem may require, say, a conception of reality as flow). But it sets up a plane of thought for the working out of a main issue in the cinema books: (different regimes of) immanent relations between images, matter, and thought. Thinking and things, while often distinct, are ontologically of the same stuff, they are found on the same larger plane of immanence (although the latter contains an open array of different planes of thought). The plane of immanence, write Deleuze and Guattari, has “two facets as Thought and as Nature [...]”<sup>4</sup>

The point is ontological, not epistemological or phenomenological — “No doubt there can be more in matter than the image we have of it,” Deleuze writes in his 1966 book on Bergson, “but there cannot be anything else in it, of a different nature.”<sup>5</sup> Human cognition and perception are of course limited, and there is certainly “more in matter.” Regarding the acentered universe of primary “movement-images,” Deleuze writes that it “is not surprising that we have to construct it since it is given only to the eye which we do not have.”<sup>6</sup> However, there are other eyes (to connect with speculative philosophy), other framings of images, found within science, scientific technology and art, which exceed “natural” perception and

cognition.<sup>7</sup> Film has inherent potentials to go beyond human limitations in its ways of dragging selected images into a frame (the material base of film-consciousness in which film thinking is made possible).<sup>8</sup> While human cognitions and perceptions are limited, they are not static, and as films directly affect (however “active”<sup>9</sup>) spectator’s brains, they *may* rewire our (socially and biologically habitualized) images of thought.

As images produced by, or through machines, film and especially filmic montage hold potentials to expand what it means to think, and even allow us to think the (seemingly) unthinkable. But like other framings of moving-image thought in the universe, filmic images can make up any kind of “thinking” in the widest sense of the term. It can be a reptile-brain, an unforeseen film-philosophy, or anything in-between. For Deleuze cinema is like an actual brain a “tracing and retracing of cerebral circuits,” but as he famously adds, this “can be the deficient idiot brain as well as a brain of creativity.”<sup>10</sup>

A truly creative tracing of new cerebral circuits entails, as a first basic step, going beyond what Deleuze labels dogmatic or representational thought. But in *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze seemingly equated such thought with the very term image (“the image of thought”) and called for a “thought without image.” How do the cinema books — with their thought-nature-image ontology and their positive conception of image-s of thought — relate to this previous call for a thought without image? Paola Marrati argues and Raymond Bellour partly implies that the cinema books manifest the following shift in Deleuze’s conception of the relation between images and thought: He used to have a categorically negative conception of “image-thought” but made a series of realizations about the full nature of images and developed a new more positive conception of multiple thought-images (and their relations). The next section critically examines this notion of a shift. It does so in order to reveal that the cinema books actually do not signal a shift in Deleuze’s view of images but rather, as will be gradually shown throughout the article, a set of complications in his views on thought-images in relation to the problem of the new.

#### THOUGHT-IMAGE/S BEFORE AND AFTER THE CINEMA BOOKS

While Bellour’s ideas of a shift are part of a nuanced sketch of somewhat varying concepts of images in Deleuze, he does contend that in the cinema books “the split between image-thought

and though without image posed in *Difference and Repetition* gets reframed purely in terms of differences between images.”<sup>11</sup> Marrati, more strongly, argues that Deleuze’s “encounter with cinema” and a new Bergsonian inspiration led him to “reconsider the ontological status of images” and to the realization that images contain “all sorts of speeds and movements, all sorts of depths of time,” and finally to his formulations of different planes of immanence of thought in *What is Philosophy?*<sup>12</sup> In a footnote, Marrati indicates a complication of the notion of a shift as she states that already since his 1962 book on Nietzsche Deleuze had “hesitated” between “the call for a ‘thought without image [...] and the hope of creating a ‘new image of thought’,” but she goes on to argue that what is “decisive in *What Is Philosophy?*” as following the cinema books, is that “images of thoughts are multiplied” and “endowed with [a new] mobility and depth.”<sup>13</sup> What is claimed here, then, is that prior to the multiplication of images of thought in the cinema books and *What is Philosophy?* there was only either the dogmatic Image of thought, imageless thought, or a hesitating “hope” of a new image.

Three things together speak against that being the case (Bellour interestingly touches on some of these points while still basically maintaining the implication of a shift). First of all, thought-images were already considered to be multiple, even the dogmatic ones, as for instance implied by the concept of “Noology” in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980) as “precisely the study of images of thought, and their historicity.”<sup>14</sup> Secondly, while “private thinkers” like Nietzsche are said to “destroy images,” the word “image” was used in a restricted sense: as dogmatic images, referred to as a “classical image” and as “this image,” not as thought-images *per se*.<sup>15</sup> Of course, this was already the case in *Difference and Repetition* (1968), in which the notion of a thought without image was exclusively about a thought without Image with a capital “I” defined as a “dogmatic, orthodox or moral image” with many variants.<sup>16</sup> Thirdly, and most importantly, these latter specifications of such an Image point to how Deleuze already regarded there to be other kinds of images of thought — not only in art but also in philosophy: In 1962, Deleuze held up Nietzsche as having *succeeded* in “setting up a new image of thought” (in contrast to Schopenhauer who only dreamt of it).<sup>17</sup> And half outside philosophy there is Proust, who — in a particularly “Platonist” manner — as Deleuze writes in *Proust and Signs* (1964) sets up “an image of thought under the sign of encounters and violences” that is “in opposition” to the “essential presuppositions of a classical philosophy of the rationalist type.”<sup>18</sup> These larger categories, representational/dogmatic image vs.

new image, there in Deleuze at least since 1962, remain as a main frame in the cinema books, no matter how plural the images become.

Furthermore, the cinema books do not reflect a reconsidering of “the ontological status of images” where images gain “all sorts of speeds and movements, all sorts of depths of time” since Bergsonian and Nietzschean conceptions of images and thinking were present in Deleuze’s work in the 1960s and 70s. And the “encounter with cinema” that Marrati mentions, had occurred for Deleuze long before he published his cinema books. In an interview with *Cahiers du Cinéma* in 1976 Deleuze makes explicit how many of the constitutive parts of his reading of cinema through a Bergsonian framework, with its plural image ontology — in which the “brain’s just one image among others” — were already in place.<sup>19</sup> And in an interview in 1968, right before the publication of *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze makes clear that this also includes the “new” thought-images of cinema:

Godard transforms cinema by introducing thought into it. He didn’t have thoughts *on* cinema, he doesn’t put more or less valid thought *into* cinema; he starts cinema thinking, and for the first time, if I’m not mistaken. [...] Godard knew how to find both a new means and a new “image” [...].<sup>20</sup>

The claim that the cinema books represent a shift in Deleuze’s conception of thought-images can also be countered from the other direction: the notion of “a thought without image” that Deleuze calls for in *DR* is not left behind in the cinema books. *Cinema 2* discusses films that visually express thought “without image.” At one point literally, through a reference to Jean-Louis Schefer’s analysis of the beginning of Kurosawa’s *Throne of Blood* (*Kumonosu-jô*, 1957) that concludes with describing a section as “thought, without body and without image,” a quote that Deleuze uses to extend to other examples.<sup>21</sup> But more importantly, through a concept that becomes central in the latter half of *Cinema 2*: the “outside.”

In Deleuze, the outside relates to thinking as/through the “unthought in thought” and it is one of the conditions for the new.<sup>22</sup> Cinematic images are not only imbued with “all sorts of speeds and movements, all sorts of depths of time,” they can also have a relationship — beyond the Bergsonian — with an outside. In *Nietzsche and Philosophy* the dogmatic Image is pitted against a new image of thought concerned with “the real forces that *form* thought,” which is to say, the forces of the outside.<sup>23</sup> *A Thousand Plateaus* describes how the concern of a

certain tradition of “counter thought” (e.g. Nietzsche) was to “place thought in an immediate relation with the outside, with the forces of the outside.”<sup>24</sup> In the final section of this article we will deal with how the outside can be part of (film) images and with the role of the outside for the troubled dynamic of the new in time-images.

## FILMIC UNTHOUGHT

The extended plurality of images dealt with throughout the cinema books, however, no doubt adds further nuances and insights to the larger categories of classical vs. new image. And although filmic ways of thinking are specific to film — to have an idea in film is irreducible to having an idea in another art form or in philosophy or science — film nonetheless makes literally visible/audible moving thought-images. In the cinema books, thought-images appear in a potentially endless array of new types, variations, and mixes. Still, the two cinema books are divided to cover two moving-image categories that are based on two different images of thought, which loosely correspond to the classical/representational/dogmatic and (at least the approaching of) the new image respectively.<sup>25</sup>

The category of the classical movement-image — from Eisenstein’s intellectual montage to the American action-image — rests on an image of thought that can be labeled organic representation (including organic emotions and organic conceptions of the subconscious). Classical movement-images and montage indirectly represents — however dynamically, sensorially or subconsciously — an organic totality, a “concept” in the sense of a rational whole. This can be done in different ways but it has three moments in the form of gripping pathetic/affective aspects, “image and the concept as two movements each of which goes towards the other” (the image-parts connected and measured in relation to the concept-whole that they express), and an “identity of concept and images” that Deleuze calls “action-thought.”<sup>26</sup> Action-thought designates unity of thought and nature in the sense of a powerful “sensory-motor relationship between world and man, nature and thought.”<sup>27</sup> This relationship entails a representational form of man — the individual, the mass, the people (the individuated collective that has become subject)<sup>28</sup> — and a coherent whole as a concept already given. We will come back to this aspect below.



But action-thought, and its power to think a whole, can also break down in ways that open possibilities to think otherwise. Describing a fundamental aspect of thought in time-images, Deleuze, with references to Artaud, Blanchot and Heidegger, writes about a fundamental powerlessness at the very heart of thinking, even an “impossibility of thinking that is thought,” which the cinema is particularly suited to express.<sup>29</sup> But this regards only the inability to think a particular kind of thought: representations of an organic totality. The “inability” may therefore simultaneously be the starting point of different kinds of thought. The powerlessness is no “simple inferiority” but a clearer revelation of a fundamental part of thought itself, which we now “should make our way of thinking from [...], without claiming to be restoring an all-powerful thought.”<sup>30</sup> What is this “fundamental part of thought itself”?

Generally, the sense of powerlessness of thought arises in encounters with powerful signs, which we cannot in principle recognize, which more or less violently “force” us to think.<sup>31</sup> Filmically, we are no longer dealing with classical/modernistic political movement-image cinema, which aimed to provide a shock that forced “thought to think the whole as intellectual totality.”<sup>32</sup> There is no longer a whole to think, or not in that sense,<sup>33</sup> and the force to thought and the particular sense of “powerlessness” it produces instead opens up the “reverse side of thought” its “core” or the “unthought within thought.”<sup>34</sup> This is — if not confused with stages in representational thinking, i.e. the labor of gradual recognition of the already given — a realm of potential for the new in thought.

Before going into the treatment of the problem of the new across *Cinema 2*, we need to put that treatment in context in order to understand its specificity. We will do so by going through some of Deleuze’s different conceptions of novelty across his oeuvre.

## THE DIFFERENT CONCEPTIONS OF THE NEW IN DELEUZE

Deleuze considers the transcendental (and biological) conditions of thought to be open, not fixed a priori. Inherent within thought, on the most fundamental level, is generative difference. This is a sub-representational realm of potential within thought,<sup>35</sup> a realm that can be more or less creatively connected — internally/externally — to forces of the outside. This is not to be understood as potential for some grand, obvious mutations of our cognitive capacities, but as potential for new thought, unknown kinds of thought, subtle new circuits in the brain. (And

since thought and nature are ontologically of the same stuff, as we saw above, creation in thought is creation within and through the material real itself.) If thought — indirectly even the most clichéd habitual thought — is fundamentally based on generative difference, is there not also an opening to think and create more systematically with this “unthought within thought”? Here we find the philosophical motives for Deleuze’s interest in non-philosophical material such as “minor” strands within mathematics and the natural sciences and, more pertinent for our concerns, art and cinema. “It seems to me we have the means to penetrate the sub-representational,” Deleuze says, “to reach all the way to the roots of spatio-temporal dynamisms, and all the way to the Ideas actualized in them [...]”<sup>36</sup> But if we have the means to reach these (differential, non-static) “Ideas,” these virtual potentials, we can also ask: how often are they actualized in senses that can be called new? How common is the new in Deleuze’s view? In what senses is the new ongoing everywhere and in what senses is it rare?

Statements by James Williams and Brian Massumi respectively perhaps best represent two interpretative limits regarding this matter. In his impressively detailed book on Deleuze’s philosophy of time, James Williams draws the following conclusion: “Every pace taken by every animal is new. Every roll of every stone is a break with the past”; all in all, “every event is new” even “any habitual gesture and the passing of that gesture.”<sup>37</sup> William’s main point is likely that *even* the lived present (the “first synthesis of time”) of a contracted “habit,” for instance an organism, is the outcome of *ongoing* passive syntheses (as effected by the second and the third synthesis of time). In the most basic ontological sense of becoming=more-fundamental-than-being-effects, these passive syntheses entail constant differentiation from the self-identical (in this sense only differences return in time). But of course, I argue, this does not mean that the organism is in a constant state of extraordinary becoming (which would render meaningless more specific concepts of becoming-x). While everything in reality is in some kind of open movement, this does not mean that all movements are “new” in any other sense than not static or statically predetermined. Very few paces “taken by every animal” can be evaluated as interesting, remarkable or extraordinary (which are all key markers of evaluation for Deleuze). The interpretation that everything is “new” can therefore only refer to a fundamental ontological level: the world, and everything in it, regarded as open (groundless) in its very core — even that which may seem to develop in the most predetermined way or individuated things that appear the most like static identities are the outcome of process that are ongoing and open. But if one has already established

precisely that — i.e. that time is creative, and that change and novelty are irreducible to any *telos* or to (potentially pre-calculable) reorganizations into new patterns of elements implicitly already there, etc. — then other registers of the problem of the new can come into focus.

In Brian Massumi's preface for *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze is described to have come to perceive "the world [as rarely leaving] room for uncommon intensity, being in large measure an entropic trashbin of outworn modes that refuse to die."<sup>38</sup> As this statement finds itself at the other (extreme) end of a spectrum, have we encountered an unresolved contradiction in Deleuze's thought? Or is there an explanation such as Williams' conclusion regards time and Massumi's space? The answer to both questions is no. Deleuze's thought rather encompasses both Williams' and Massumi's respective statements as limit points. Focusing too exclusively on one of the limit points, however, risks dragging out of context two different, but always intertwined, aspects of Deleuze's conception of the real. While Deleuze's full conception of reality spans a complex set of differenc/tial processes — importantly including a third aspect of intensity, or the outside — his conception can be generalized through the virtual-actual pair — and this is not, as in Bergson, a division between time and space.<sup>39</sup> While Miguel de Beistegui for instance describes one of the generalized sides as a hidden "'law' of nature [...] according to which differences only return" he does so in relation to the other side which is described as a "surface of the world" with "empirical laws" in "which things recur identically."<sup>40</sup> Williams can draw his conclusions about omnipresent novelty in his *Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy of Time* only by here focusing too exclusively on the determining power of one of the sides in which more clearly "only differences return" in time. The sense of Massumi's assertion stems from a (too narrow) focus on the other aspect: the realm — spanning a continuum of nature and culture — of the actualized, including "insignificant facts" and "everyday banality,"<sup>41</sup> or processes of stratification that Deleuze and Guattari describe as an "inevitable phenomenon that is beneficial in many respects and unfortunate in many others" and that "consist of giving form to matters, of imprisoning intensities or locking singularities into systems of resonance and redundancy, or producing upon the body of the earth molecules large and small and organizing them into molar aggregates."<sup>42</sup> While intertwined — and, as Williams has importantly emphasized in another book, reciprocally determined<sup>43</sup> — the two realms are distinct and irreducible to one another. One aspect organizes and gives consistency to virtual potentials, the other concerns the actualized realm in which more solid forms or identities are played out. Depending on how one gives emphasis to only one of

these aspects — and their involvement with intensity, their outside — one can read out of Deleuze the proposition that everything is new or that almost nothing is new, without there being any real contradiction.

But there are also changes in Deleuze's thinking over the years that effect how he himself conceives of, or at least focuses on the new. John Rajchman has shown that there is an extent to which Deleuze's work can be divided into three periods. Rajchman is careful to point out that the changes he finds do not make up a linear development or "maturity" curve, but he nonetheless finds Deleuze's thought to become "more complex and multiple in its implications and its reach, as well as its internal relations."<sup>44</sup>

1. The 1960s. The books leading up to and including the "two great works of logic" *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*.
2. The 1970s. The work with Guattari that leads to his first explicitly political book *Anti-Oedipus* (1972) and its sequel *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980).
3. The 1980s and 90s. A time of a burgeoning neoliberal "new world order." Deleuze turns to the problem of "belief" in the world that "reaches its fullest development" in *Cinema 2*.<sup>45</sup>

This periodization, I find, can be used as a reference in charting changes also in Deleuze's conception of the new. Generally, the shift from the first to the second period is more widely acknowledged. It is also sometimes exaggerated — although many of the terms will change and Deleuze's philosophical system will continue to be in constant movement, many of its basic coordinates will remain intact. Kept is certainly the notion of differentiating potential that "subsists" in actualized things and phenomena (although no longer thought of as a "depth"). But the fact that this register of reality is far from always dominant becomes increasingly emphasized. As now more clearly relating to other forces that "imprison" their own, this register finds itself immersed in various struggles. Also in thought: thinking and the formation of concepts becomes "guerilla fighting." Deleuze will increasingly focus on how philosophy and art must more radically co-create *with* the forces of potential — instead of merely (by going in the opposite direction from actualization) revealing them. In his 1981 book on Francis Bacon, Deleuze reiterates his notion of art as making invisible "forces visible" and "capturing forces" that are "nongiven," but he also carefully emphasizes that this is

not enough and that something must also take shape, “emerge” from the “diagram” of such forces.<sup>46</sup> Art, if you will, as conception.

The shift between the second and the third period is less recognized. If the second period dealt with “overcoding,” “apparatuses of capture,” “anti-production,” and various other names for repressive forms of reterritorialization, it was also an exuberant and “joyful” explosion of theory brimming with belief in the creative powers of life, art and philosophy. The third period is marked by a certain wavering in Deleuze’s own “belief” in the contemporary world and the possibility of “creating new forms of life.” Other kinds of forces, not least a burgeoning new logic of capitalist repression, became increasingly overwhelming. Belief in the world more clearly comes to concern struggle. And what the struggle is up against is not merely representational forms, but rather a new kind of modulating, flexible logic of “control.”

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If at one of the extreme limits of Deleuze’s system everything can be said to be new, such a contention certainly has very little to do with Deleuze’s diagnoses of social, aesthetic, and political areas. And for Deleuze of any period, very few *thoughts* are new. Perhaps thinking in the world in general is for Deleuze not a total “entropic trashbin of outworn modes.” But the new in thought is clearly regarded to be exceptional.<sup>47</sup> In a talk given in 1987 on what it means to have an idea in film and in philosophy (respectively) Deleuze said: “having an idea is an event that happens rarely, it is a kind of festivity, it is uncommon.”<sup>48</sup> And in his book on Foucault, he writes about the occasions when thinking “free[s] itself from what it thinks (present) and is able to ‘think otherwise’ (the future)” by making “the past active and present to the outside so that something new will finally come about.”<sup>49</sup>

#### THE SUBTLETY OF THE EXTRAORDINARY

But if the new is such a rarity, what qualifies as “new”? While the new entails an extraordinary event, “extraordinary event” is in Deleuze irreducible to an obvious break or a Grand happening (the revolution, the battle, etc. — and certainly to debased pastiches of them: the ta-dah of the new exciting product). While generative processes primarily occur on subtle and virtual

levels of “Ideas,” the actualizations of the latter into something new does not for Deleuze entail a clear-cut “rupture” with the Past, since what Deleuze conceives of as the “past” is precisely the virtual realm of Ideas found “underneath the large noisy events”<sup>50</sup> — the new entails a differentiation not a break. The virtual past — whose nature we will return to below — upholds a kind of continuity while serving as one of the conditions for the new (a reserve of varying potentials that subsists in things). Although the potentials/Ideas within the virtual past are themselves modified by actualizations and actual events (see note 43), clear-cut breaks only appear, when they appear, on the level of the actual or on the level of linear history.

But although Deleuze, following Nietzsche, aimed to move focus from Grand Events to the subtle significance of every event, the latter concerns the multiplicity of sense of every event, and their layered internal genealogies, rather than a claim that every event is new.<sup>51</sup> At the other end of the spectrum from Grand Events, there is another risk found in the interpretation of the concept of the new in Deleuze: implicitly subsuming banalities and clichés under the heading everything is new. In *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze writes about “banalities mistaken for profundities, ordinary ‘points’ confused with singular points.”<sup>52</sup> In *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze writes about an event “too quickly covered over by everyday banality [...]”<sup>53</sup> Looking back at May ‘68 from 1984, Deleuze writes that “[e]verything that was new has been marginalized or turned into caricature.”<sup>54</sup>

A main antagonist in *Cinema 2* is the “permanent state of daily banality” of post-war capitalist societies. Remnants of the classical movement image and its transcendent values and organic conceptions of history, society, and subjectivity remain as free-floating clichés (they no longer link up as parts of an organic whole). This is a state of modern nihilism that certain time-images, through the “specific power” of the unthought, try to find “a subtle way out” from.<sup>55</sup>

## TWO REGIMES OF THOUGHT-IMAGES, TWO NOTIONS OF THE NEW

The classical movement-image famously gives — through movement and montage — an indirect representation of a whole that changes. But although this whole is “open,” it is simultaneously given on the levels of thought or signification. The whole is given in the sense of a totality of pre-conceived meaning — such as a Mythic past/Universal History/Progress/etc.,

and/or a grand Idea of organic Unity such as Spirit, the Subject, the People, etc. — that the whole of the film (implicitly or explicitly) presupposes, points towards, or gives expression to through organic associations and rational links. Although action in the movement-image regards change and often a sense of being enthusiastically orientated towards the future this is tied to an already given concept projected forwards.

It should be stated that the classical movement-image entails the “new” in two more non-given senses, but only within the confines of a sensory-motor logic that is itself basically fitted within a representational whole. The three most central sub-categories of movement-images are perception-images, affection-images, and action-images, which form around the structure of a center in the interval between perception and extended action (i.e. reaction). The center curves the universe not only as conscious perception but “already from the point of view of action.” Since the new action is not given but the outcome of a subjective analysis of received perceptions, the center is a “center of indetermination” and the action it selects therefore “present[s] something unpredictable or new.”<sup>56</sup> But this is “new” only in the sensory-motor sense of a certain freedom of choice in how to react, and Deleuze therefore writes that this particular sense of the “new will be called ‘action’ strictly speaking.”<sup>57</sup> There is also an affective or experiential form of sensory-motor novelty: The relation perception-center-reaction may also give rise to an affection-image that temporarily lingers within the center and expresses a pure quality or affect — “pure” in the sense of a sign that refers only to itself and that, as Deleuze writes, “concerns what is new in experience.”<sup>58</sup> Within the regime of the movement-image, such qualities or affects are measured in relation to a sensory-motor schema (e.g. a character temporarily shocked by a perception before taking action) and an organic thought-whole (or a “spiritual” whole).

But both the action-image and the affection-image (as well as the perception-image itself) can drag the logic of the movement-image far towards different limits, and, famously, Hitchcock brings the logic of the movement-image as far as it can go, through a “mental image” that introduces “a new, direct, relationship with thought.”<sup>59</sup> Hitchcock does this by externalizing and making abstractions of the sensory-motor relations, and by shifting from character-subjects as the locus of reasoning to a camera that becomes more explicitly “conscious.” Importantly, Hitchcock’s cinema here indicates openings for other kinds of thought-images that go beyond, and not merely stretch, the logic of the classical movement-image —

openings that are partly passed through in some of Hitchcock's later films such as *Vertigo* that belong more to the time-image.<sup>60</sup>

Time-images primarily dwell directly within — or show the actual/virtual relation from the perspective of — the non-linear depths of the virtual past. They inhabit a crystalline time, that is, time that “detaches itself from its actualizations [and] starts to be valid for itself.”<sup>61</sup> Time for itself — in contrast to how it appears as indirectly represented by sensory-motor movement — is shown to have a non-chronological nature, a time of “Cronos and not Chronos”<sup>62</sup> that, reversely, subordinates movement. This complication and deepening of the logic of time in the film image unlocks thought from being necessarily tied to representation and concepts already given — thought, as we saw in the first section above, first arose within an interval of time, and as time complicates thought tends to be forced towards the searching, singular, and non-linear. Corresponding to how time is shown directly, thought becomes increasingly immanent to the unfolding of moving images, in contrast to images that only illustrates preexisting thought or creates associations. This opens the possibility of a “new image of thought” (in which, perhaps, the very idea of “concept” itself must alter accordingly).

As the organic logic of the classical regime (for a complex set of reasons) lost its ability to convince, the open question arose of how to establish new *kinds* of links to (and life-perpetuating, immanent forms of beliefs in) the world. Exhausted with classical cinema (although it extends in ever new forms in contemporary mainstream cinema) was substantial belief in individual or collective action as capable of modifying a situation, and in organic unity as organized around pre-established, transcendent ideals projected onto the past and/or the future. Evident in the first Neorealist films is that such organic links between humans and the world have been lost or seriously damaged. The world has become “unthinkable” or even “intolerable” not least because of a new permanent state of daily banality.<sup>63</sup> This intolerable state, however, forces creative film thought towards new kinds of explorations — towards new ways to think the new beyond classical or modernistic notions.

How does one set up a new image of film thought? It is not enough to merely break with representation, or to wallow in its ruins. It is also not enough with a “pure time-image.” On a more technical level, there is a sort of passage from the mere break with the sensory-motor to a new image, consisting of three — or as we shall see, rather four — steps/levels. The break itself provides only what Deleuze calls the “preliminary condition.”<sup>64</sup> Although the famous characteristics that followed from the break, as Deleuze writes, “did not yet constitute [...]



the new image,"<sup>65</sup> they released an important set of new coordinates which first of all made possible the second step/level that "takes the place of the [merely] faltering sensory-motor connections": pure optical and sound images/signs that make perceptible bits of "time in its pure state." But also the latter "was not enough: the image had to enter into relations with yet other forces, so that it could itself escape from a world of clichés."<sup>66</sup> It had to open up to what Deleuze calls "the readable image and the thinking image," where more clearly cuts, camera-movements and "reframings [are] functions of thought" and movements in time, more than descriptions of space.<sup>67</sup> But there is a fourth step, or rather a fourth aspect implied in the new image: the capacity to "put thought into contact with an unthought," that is, with an outside, with forces of the new.<sup>68</sup> Below we will return to the question of how the outside can remain outside while part of a film image.

Different time-images relate to all this in different ways, and they differ in how close they come to a new image of thought capable of handling the forces of the outside. Italian Neorealism introduces the "preceding characteristics" and had "an intuitive consciousness of the new image in the course of being born," but they simultaneously retained much of the organic logic.<sup>69</sup> The New American Cinema as well as parts of the French and German new waves tended to stay "content to parody the cliché instead of giving birth to a new image."<sup>70</sup> Other parts of French New Wave (e.g. Godard) — as well as the "noo-sphere" cinema of for instance Resnais and Kubrick — more fully managed set up such an image of thought from the new coordinates. Basically all modern time-images, however, concern the struggle for the possibility of creation within states that appear as the outcome of entropic cancellation of potential. Virtual potential *subsists* even in such states, and time-images deal with these states precisely from the perspective of virtual potential, but whose lines of actualization are *more or less* blocked. The crystal-images chart the parameters of this latter aspect.

## CRYSTAL CONCEPTION

The chapter on crystal images in *Cinema 2* introduces the theme of the new as delicate and rare, a theme that continues in more directly social and political forms in other kinds of time-images described subsequently in the book (for instance the struggle to tear from the dominant and the preestablished a "pure speech-act" in Huillet/Straub, or the endeavor to extract

“just an image” from the clichés in Godard). The description of different crystal-images appear like a map of struggles for the new as seen from the perspective of a virtual past.

Crystalline struggles primarily take place at the intersections of virtual potentials and seemingly exhausted actual worlds — as they both relate to an elusive outside. What does “struggle” mean here? In general, to struggle means to try do advance with violent effort or to compete with an opposing force. The aim of crystalline struggle, however, is not for the virtual “win” over the actual (or the other way around). The aim is to revive or create channels of actualization between virtual potentials and the actual states that they subsist within. This entails, to repeat the above quote from Deleuze’s *Foucault*, making “the past active and present to the outside so that something new will finally come about.” Before we go into the details of how this is played out in the films, we need to make a path through some of the temporal basics of the crystal-image.

The virtual past shown in the crystal-image differs from the (represented) virtual past of the movement-image. In the movement-image, there is an internal tendency to expand towards grander and grander “sets” and “worlds,” not only spatially, but also including vast circuits of fantasy, dreams or recollection. Movement-image films may thereby contain various more direct “virtual” images, but only — despite the limit-cases and complications — as fitted within an overall logic of representation: for instance, a dream-image anchored in a dreamer that dreams or a recollection-image centered on a character that remembers something in an actual present. Such “virtualities” are measured in relation to an actual, present perspective in which they appear as representations.

The crystal-image, instead, contracts the actual/virtual relation, to the point that they co-exist within the same image. The two sides are objectively distinct, but can no longer be discerned as distinct (they chase after each other in continual, reciprocal exchange). At this most contracted point, the present is revealed as no longer a point (in a succession of points) but a double flow: the present as a constant split between the actual present (which flows to the future) and its co-existing past (which it flows back to). The present, as this double movement, is merely the most contracted (pseudo-)point of the whole of the virtual past that coexists with itself in all its levels of contraction and relaxation (as illustrated by Bergson’s cone). The crystal thereby shows a present no longer rooted in the actual but as seen from the perspective of the virtual past itself, which reversely draws in the actual present as one of *its* dimensions.<sup>71</sup> The crystalized image reveals the virtuality that subsists as a reality

*within* any actual as its “own” virtual side, a virtual side that — through the crystalized limit point (the contracted tip of the cone) — also opens up to the whole of the virtual “pure” Past. The manner in which this past in “pure” is key for understanding how this relates to the problem of the new.

The virtual past is pure, first of all, since it is irreducible to what *was* (a line of former presents). It is a preexisting Past “in general” that fundamentally consists of that which, counter-intuitively, “has not yet received a date” (a past that is primarily datable, conversely, corresponds with the logic of the movement-image: linear time and representational thought that can re-collect and re-cognize what resides in the past as givens). But while the crystalline past is pure from (being reducible to) representable remnants of the old, it is filled with potentials for the new. The virtual past is made up of — co-excising and intercommunicating but non-organic and all-in-all incommensurable — “sheets,” “strata,” and “regions” that a time-image film may traverse in an open variety of ways (and with varying depth). These sheets and regions consist of variable constellations of pre-individual singularities, which is to say, problematic Ideas or potentials not yet actualized (these Ideas/potentials are real but made up of differential relations that are non-localizable and that have “not yet received a date”). How do these potentials relate to the “blocked” lines of actualization mentioned above and the notion of the new as a rarity?

This question first leads to another question: What do crystal-images primarily show and what do they rarely show? What the basic contraction of virtual/actual in the crystal-image “reveals or makes visible,” Deleuze writes, “is the hidden ground of time, that is, its differentiation into two flows, that of presents which pass and that of pasts which are preserved.”<sup>72</sup> This notion of a past as the “ground” of time and its process of differentiation within its most contracted point, corresponds closely to the “founding” operation within the “ground” that is the second synthesis of time, in which the present and the future are dimensions of the past, as described in *Difference and Repetition*. However, there is in *Difference and Repetition* also a third synthesis of time: intensity or the force of the future. The third synthesis, in which the past and the present are instead dimensions of the future, is the other condition for the new (the virtual past is the other). What is provided by this condition? In one sense, the future does not bring anything. The new itself does not come “from the future” — nothing does.<sup>73</sup> For Deleuze the future, or the third synthesis, is in itself “pure and empty.”<sup>74</sup> It is empty in every sense except consisting of the intensity that spawns actu-

alizations (and that in certain ways also drives the virtual: at the deepest level the virtual past “topologically” connects with a generating outside, future, intensity). If the virtual past contains variable constellations of pure differences that form potentials (differentiation) it is the force of the future that draws novelty (differentiation) from the realm of potentials. And reversely, as an “empty” force, the third synthesis therefore depends on the second synthesis, the pure past. As Williams notes, the pure past is a “reserve of difference,” which avoids “the need for creation out of nothing.”<sup>75</sup> The creation of the new in the actual, then, concerns a complex mix of processes (differentiation) that span intensive force (future) and virtual potential (past).<sup>76</sup> But these processes far from always relate in an ongoing flow of creativity. Their relations can include many forms of blockages. This is what *Cinema 2* investigates.

Deleuze does not explicitly refer to the three syntheses of time after his detailed descriptions in *Difference and Repetition* (he seldom references any of his previous work in a direct sense), but I argue that he implicitly returns to them in *Cinema 2* while complicating some of their internal dynamic. *Cinema 2* does not merely illustrate the syntheses through film examples or apply them as if they were a static system unchanged by the specific problems at hand. But it still refers to the basic principles of the syntheses in its own complicating ways. In some of his other works, Deleuze shorthands or simplifies his conception of time, such as in the division between Chronos and Aiôn in *The Logic of Sense* and *A Thousand Plateaus*, in which Aiôn largely refers to non-chronological time in general and thereby may be said to work as a sort of cover-all indication of what would correspond with the second and third syntheses.<sup>77</sup> *Cinema 2*, in contrast, does not perform a simplification so much as a complication that regards *disturbances* between the two conditions for the new — the second (pure past) and the third synthesis (pure future, the outside) — as concerning the possibility of creation within the actual. This book deals with a variety of struggles and creative blockages between the two syntheses, in which the pure crystalline past may appear closed in on itself, and the actual present as a state of entropic cancellation of potential. Let us now finally look at how all this plays out across the different crystal-image films.

A “perfect crystal” is a prison. Nothing can escape when the actual/virtual circuit forms a closed circle. In the films of Ophüls, characters are according to Deleuze “imprisoned” and “[c]rystalline perfection lets no outside subsist: there is no outside.”<sup>78</sup> Does the enclosure mean that the crystal is sterile? Generally, the virtual aspect of the crystal indicates the opposite: as we have seen, the virtual past consists of variable constellations of pure differences, potentials. A perfect crystal, however, imprisons such potentials. They are clearly blocked from being drawn out by the “third” force so as to create something new, but also, as it seems, from flowing to the future in the sense of the forward direction of presents caused by the founding operation of the second synthesis. Still, the pure past even of the most enclosed crystal-images tend to display a theatrical uncertainty, where new things are *tried out*, before the right role is found which *could* pass on to new life. While “we are born in a crystal,” a closed crystal that remains closed — like an egg that never hatches — “retains only death, and life must come out of it, after trying itself out.”<sup>79</sup> In order for that to happen in any significant manner, however, there must be an escape from the crystal, which is to say, not only from the enclosed past but from the whole crystalline time circuit itself (consisting of flows of presents passing forwards and back to the past). This is possible if the crystal contains a flaw that can function as a “point of flight [*point de fuite*].”<sup>80</sup>

Renoir’s crystals are not perfect. They contain aspects of what Deleuze here calls “the third side, or the third dimension”: small cracks in which something can escape.<sup>81</sup> While Renoir’s films deal with levels of theatricality “absorbing the real” into a crystal circuit, the crystal always has a “failing” and most often something “is going to slip away in the background” in the sense that “a new Real will come out beyond the actual and the virtual.”<sup>82</sup> The something that has gradually been formed from experimentation within the crystal is finally directed towards a future, but not merely in the sense of presents continuously made to flow forwards, but in the sense of the “future as a bursting forth of life” that produces “a new distinction [...] like a new reality which was not pre-existent” — all “on condition that it *leaves* the crystal.”<sup>83</sup>

But such novelty, such productive intrusion of an elusive third force, does not come about easily in any crystal-image. The new is rare. And this goes for all time-images described in *Cinema 2*. While crystal-images are more firmly at home in the virtual past/second synthesis, the new is equally rare also in other time-images in which the past and the outside are in more dynamic and direct contact. In Huillet/Straub the past come in the form of texts,

documents, monuments, and the archeological layers of the earth that buries events, which poses a resistance to the pure, “nomadic” speech-act that in turn struggles to “tear” itself from them.<sup>84</sup> The emphasis is on the struggle — whether the tearing will fully succeed is left as an open question. The new is rare also when its production is as explicit as it can get, as in Kubrick’s *2001*. Deleuze conceives of Kubrick’s cinema (like Resnais’) as expressing identity between world and brain, as having as *mise-en-scène* a world-brain, which is not a “whole” but a topological membrane connecting “two forces”: an “inside” deeper than any interiority that is the depths of the past, and an “outside” beyond any exteriority that is the violent force of creativity, evolution, future. The two forces, the two conditions for the new, which at the limit “become ultimately indiscernible,” are themselves here “deadly.” There is in *2001* only the “chance of entering into a new, incommensurable, unknown relation, which would convert death into a new life.”<sup>85</sup> Even in the more optimistic and future-oriented of Renoir’s films, to return to the chapter on crystal-images, the “new Real” is what towards the end *may* take flight or sneak out in the background through a crack. The new Real also tends to have a subtle and downplayed position, and in some of his more “pessimistic” films it may never come about. But what is this new Real? What actual content does it have? The new Real that is born through the crack is an event in which the forces of the future actualize — and thereby further differentiate — singled out aspects of the virtual past. But although directly implied or hinted at by a camera, the new real is seldom if ever shown as a present actuality, and if it is, very briefly or poetically (like the camera panning out into the water at the end of *The River*, 1951). Rather, the new Real appears in these crystal-images more like the hint of an actualized new future as seen from the perspective of the pure past. And given that time is fundamentally open, and the future therefore unforeseeable, how could the actualized new *itself* ever be more than a hint (in general and in Deleuze’s philosophy in particular)? If it were it would instantly become not-future, an actual, present content (or the future as envisioned by the actual, i.e. mainstream science-fiction). Conversely, the outside, the empty force of the future, can hardly appear as a matter of fact image without becoming not-outside. But still, it must be rendered visible *somehow* in the “new image.” The new image must have means to integrate the outside, *as* outside.

How can the outside be part of an image in any sense? No matter how far beyond the representational a time-image finds itself — expressing non-localizable and non-chronological relations that give filmic shape to virtual Ideas — an image is fairly concrete. Any one image

frames an inside with a content. But of course, there is the specificity of moving images with sound and all the possibilities that lie in composing them (shots, framings, postproductions) and creating linkages (montage) *between* images as well as between the visual and the audio: instead of linkages that commensurably measures them in relation to a concept-whole, there can be non-commensurable linkages between “independent” images and sounds in which the link itself, the cut, becomes more autonomous and primary. Throughout the latter half of *Cinema 2*, Deleuze discusses incorporations of the outside mainly in terms of the interstice that appear in various “differential” connections between images and between images and sounds — the audio can importantly form its own autonomous image frame (no longer a mere aiding component of the visual image) that relates non-linearly to the visual image, forming new kinds of complexes of audio-visibility.<sup>86</sup> Marie-Claire Ropars-Wuilleumier, referencing the formally advanced thought-images conceptualized towards the end of *Cinema 2*, asserts that while the outside cannot be a direct localized image it will (in these films) nonetheless find itself incorporated “into the image’s inside, thus proposing a sort of visibility of the invisible itself.”<sup>87</sup> Is the implication here the more outside the better for creative thought? Not at all. The outside must be carefully harnessed. The new thought-image aims to creatively connect the outside (3) with (virtual) Ideas/potentials (2) formed in relation to specific actual situations (1). But the lines that lead to the outside are “deadly, too violent and fast,” Deleuze says in a 1986 interview, and adds that “we have to manage to fold the line and establish an endurable zone in which to install ourselves, confront things, take hold, breathe — in short, think.”<sup>88</sup>

Compared to the pure intensive force of the (unfolded) outside, the virtual past, which is the main perspective of the crystal-image, is a more stable zone. There are several types of crystal-images, that all relate a bit differently to the problem of the new. Some produce potentials for and others even hint at the actualization of the new. But not even the crystals that finally only retain “death” are sterile — there has still been experimentation within the crystal, although, of course, the experimentation is more productive when the crystal is not closed (Ophüls compared to Renoir).<sup>89</sup> In reference to Renoir, Deleuze writes: “Everything happens as if the circuit served to try out roles, as if roles were being tried in it until the right one were found, the one with which we escape [...] In short, the circuit, the round, are not closed because they are selective [...]” This experimentation with roles in Renoir is no empty role-playing. Rather, as Deleuze writes, “something *takes shape* inside the crystal which will [perhaps] succeed in leaving through the crack.”<sup>90</sup>

In the crystal-images of (later) Fellini the something that “takes shape” is instead more like the whole film or the whole crystal in the process of growing. Instead of escaping *from* a crystal past that equals death if not creatively opened to the future, it is now the march towards death in the actual, linear time of successive presents — a “formidable entropy” — that must be escaped. Life therefore seeks entryways *into* the crystal, entryways that themselves form “seeds” (some abort while others succeed) and that make up a crystal “in the process of being made.”<sup>91</sup> Here it is more clearly *in* the crystal that we see the creativity of life (differentiation), instead of in the bursting out from it (differentiation). The crystal as a realm that, as Deleuze writes, “holds in its depths or in its sides the surge of the new reality” — the crystal world, if you will, as a growing egg.<sup>92</sup> It is an open question, however, whether the crystal-egg will remain closed in the direction of actualization or somehow become “present to the outside so that something new will finally come about.”

## CONCLUSION

Contrary to what is often argued or implied — whether by famously tendentious interpreters like Badiou<sup>93</sup> or by the most important Deleuze scholars — events that lead to the creation of the new are in many regards a rarity in Deleuze. The rarity of the new is increasingly emphasized from his 1970s and forward, culminating with *Cinema 2*, which in large parts deals with the new as an intricate difficulty. While creative experimentation with structures of potential continues to have a certain consistency within the virtual (differentiation) — which time-images tend to delve deep into — truly creative actualizations of potentials (differentiation) are now considered to be uncommon. Although the generalizations virtual-actual co-exist as always intertwined and (mutually) interacting registers of reality, the relationship between the two can be more or less creative depending on their relation to the actualizing forces of the “outside.” Time-images, as I have shown above, deal with troubled relations between forces and registers.

The crystal-images introduce the basic parameters for a theme that runs throughout *Cinema 2*: the new as the rare outcome of struggle. The aim of the struggle is creative connections between (3) the outside (actualizing intensity) and (2) virtual potentials within (1) actual states that appear as the effect of entropic exhaustion of generative difference (societies



of cliché, in which the new itself only appears as cliché). Since generative differences are not really exhausted but subsist as virtual potentials even in such states, the concern is to link the potentials with the outside — and to thereby connect the two conditions for the new — so that there can be creative actualizations. The rest of *Cinema 2* complicates and develops these parameters — most importantly in the direction of a more fully realized new image of (film) thought that is capable of a more direct (but careful, harnessing) handling of the forces of the outside. This new image, however, does not make the creation of the new go from rarity to a constant; it only sets up a partly new plane of immanence of thought on which the struggle can be conducted with stronger (noological) weapons.

“There is only a slim chance,” Deleuze says in the epigraph above. As our capitalist societies of cliché develop further into societies of control — with their modulating, flexible logic — the struggle confronts new kinds of forms of “exhausted [and exhausting] life” with expanded capabilities of getting “control of the New from its birth.” It is now even clearer that it is not enough (it never was) to merely break with representation or the transcendent form of the true — the opponent has itself to a large extent done precisely that (a problem Deleuze and Guattari investigate from *Anti-Oedipus* and onwards). Beyond mere wallowing in the wreckage of representation, we need un-preconceived types of new creative thought. And that doesn’t come about very often.

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1. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinéma 1. L'image-mouvement* (Paris: Les Éditions de minuit, 1983), 83-88, 73; *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 56-60, 49, hereafter referenced as C1 followed by fr/eng pagination.

2. Deleuze, C1, fr 89-95/eng 60-64.

3. Deleuze, C1, fr 117f/eng 81f.

4. Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Qu'est-ce que la Philosophie?* (Paris: Le Éditions de Minuit, 1991/2005), 41; *What is Philosophy?* trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchill (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 38, hereafter referenced as WP followed by fr/eng pagination.

5. Deleuze, *Le bergsonisme* (Paris: PUF, 1966), 34; *Bergsonism* (New York: Urzone, Inc., 1988), 41. Translation modified.

6. Deleuze, C1 fr 117/eng 81.

7. Deleuze on cinema as exceeding, or even contradicting natural perception, *Cinéma 2. L'image-temps* (Paris: Les Éditions de minuit, 1985), 262; *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Roberta Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 201, hereafter referenced as C2 followed by fr/eng pagination; see also C1 fr 11/eng 2f

8. Deleuze: “[W]e can say of the shot that it acts like a consciousness. But the sole cinematographic consciousness is not us, the spectator, nor the hero; it is the camera — sometimes human, sometimes inhuman or superhuman.” C1 fr 34/eng 20.

9. As implied in the preceding note, Deleuze is far from most contemporary film studies in his views on spectatorship: "Nothing happens in the spectator's head that does not derive from the character of the image." C2 fr 136/eng 104. Translation modified.

10. Deleuze, "Le cerveau, c'est l'écran," in *Deux Régimes de Fous. Textes et entretiens 1975-1995*, ed. David Lapoujade (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 2003), 264f; "The Brain is the Screen," in *Two Regimes of Madness: texts and interviews 1975-1995/Gilles Deleuze*, trans. Ames Hodges and Mike Taormina (New York: Semiotext(e), 2007), 284. Translation modified.

11. Raymond Bellour, "The Image of Thought," in *Afterimages of Gilles Deleuze's Film Philosophy*, ed. D. N. Rodowick (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 5.

12. Paola Marrati, *Gilles Deleuze: Cinema and Philosophy* [2003], trans. Alisa Hartz (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 4, 93. Worth mentioning, although it falls outside of the present discussion, is that Marrati's preface for the English translation of her book contains seminal suggestions for how to understand the cinema books as among Deleuze's most important contributions to political philosophy.

13. Marrati, *Gilles Deleuze*, 124f, note 32.

14. Deleuze and Guattari, *Mille plateaux* (Paris: Les Éditions de minuit, 1980), 466; *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 376, hereafter referenced as *ATP* followed by fr/eng pagination.

15. Deleuze and Guattari, *ATP* fr 469/eng 379.

16. Deleuze, *Différence et répétition* (Paris: PUF, 1968/2008), 172f; *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (London/New York: Continuum, 2004), 167f, hereafter referenced as *DR* followed by fr/eng pagination. One may object by pointing to how Deleuze adds that "[i]t is not a question of opposing to the dogmatic image of thought to another image borrowed, for example, from schizophrenia [...]" *DR* fr 192/eng 185. But this addition comes across clearly as an effort to underline that the principles of the new thought are not to be perceived as an alternative representational or stereotyped Image.

17. Deleuze, *Nietzsche et la philosophie* (Paris: PUF, 1961), 223; *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 195, hereafter referenced as *NP* followed by fr/eng pagination.

18. Deleuze, *Proust et les signes* (Paris: PUF, 1964), 122, 115; *Proust and Signs*, trans. Richard Howard (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 100, 94.

19. Deleuze, "Trois questions sur *Six fois deux*," in *Pourparlers* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1990/2003), 62f; "Three Questions on *Six Times Two*," in *Negotiations*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 42f.

20. Deleuze, "Sur Nietzsche et l'image de la pensée [1968]," in *L'Île Déserte et Autres Textes (1953-1974)* (Paris: Les Éditions de minuit, 2002), 195; "On Nietzsche and the Image of Thought," in *Desert Island and Other Texts, 1953-1974* (Los Angeles and New York: Semiotext(e), 2004), 141.

21. Deleuze: "This was also the case with [...]" C2 fr 220/eng 169.

22. On the unthought in thought as the "outside," see Deleuze, *Foucault* (Paris: Les Éditions de minuit, 1986/2004), 127; *Foucault*, trans. by Seán Hand (Minnesota/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 96f, see also Deleuze, C2 fr 233/eng 178. More precisely, the deepest level of thought is topologically connected to the outside, from which it is fundamentally born. C2 fr 363/eng 278.

23. Deleuze, *NP*, fr 118-126/eng 103-110.

24. Deleuze and Guattari, *ATP*, fr 467/eng 376f.

25. The two images types, as D. N. Rodowick puts it, "differ with respect to the image of thought they presuppose," *Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 175.

26. Deleuze, C2, fr 210/eng 161.

27. *Ibid.*, fr 212/eng 163.

28. *Ibid.*, fr 209-210/eng 161f.

29. *Ibid.*, fr 217/eng 166.

30. *Ibid.*, fr 221/eng 170.

31. Deleuze, *DR*, fr 182/eng 176.

32. Deleuze, C2, fr 205/eng 157.

33. More precisely, the whole that thought confronts "undergoes a mutation," in which it "ceases to be the One-Being" and merges with the force of the outside. Deleuze, C2, fr 235, 233/eng 180, 179.

34. Deleuze, C2, fr 217, 218/eng 167. This may be compared with the romantics' concern with elaborating "a material of thought in order to capture forces that are not thinkable in themselves," but in Deleuze and Guattari's conception, the latter is about forces that "constitute a great expressive Form" more relatable to the logic of the movement-image. See *ATP*, fr 42/eng 342f. For a comment on the Romantics' organic notions of Spirit, Nature and a Whole, see also Deleuze, *C1*, fr 80/eng 54.

35. As is well-known, Deleuze contrast virtual potential from the “possible” in the following manner: A possibility preexists the real as a given identity that only awaits realization; a virtual potential is instead already real but in the form of a “problematic” virtual Idea that if “actualized” will entail the production of a new difference that does not resemble the potential.

36. Deleuze, “The Method of Dramatization,” in *Desert Island*, fr 161/eng 115.

37. James Williams, *Gilles Deleuze’s Philosophy of Time: A Critical Introduction and Guide* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 106. Daniel W. Smith draws, in his seminal readings of the new in Deleuze, similar but more nuanced conclusions about what I here call the frequency of the new. Although he contends that every event is new, and that novelty is a ubiquitous part of everyday processes (that occur between the side of a thing that is a virtual multiplicity and its actual side), not everything that happens is an event. Not even within the virtual. This is because a virtual multiplicity is a mixture of both “singular” and “ordinary” points, and it is only the former that constitutes “precisely those points where something ‘happens’ within the multiplicity” — an event — or something that occurs “in relation to another multiplicity, causing it to change nature and produce something new.” See Smith “The Conditions of the New,” *Deleuze Studies* 1 (2007): 17, 11. In a footnote, Williams corrects Smith on this issue and argues — despite Deleuze’s frequent usage of the term — that there are no ordinary points, only singular points. Williams, *Gilles Deleuze’s Philosophy of Time*, 187, note 10.

38. Brian Massumi, “Translator’s Foreword: Pleasures of Philosophy,” in *A Thousand Plateaus*, xiv.

39. On Deleuze’s critique of Bergson’s dualism between space and duration, and how the relation between the actual and the virtual is structured differently in Deleuze, see Miguel de Beistegui, *Truth and Genesis: Philosophy as Differential Ontology* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004), 313-317.

40. de Beistegui, *Truth and Genesis*, 322.

41. Deleuze, *DR*, fr 176/eng 171.

42. Deleuze and Guattari, *ATP*, fr 54/eng 40.

43. In Deleuze, the relation between virtual/actual is not simply one-directional. The virtual is indeed a generative condition but as such, it is an immanent part of reality and not a semi-transcendent sphere that merely “gives.” Both sides are altered by interactions between them. First of all, actualizations of virtual potentials/Ideas (differentiation) determine not only actual things and phenomena, they also re-determine the virtual potentials/Ideas themselves — the virtual structure will have been, as Daniel Smith writes, “modified by the actualisation that has just taken place,” which is to say that the virtual “conditions and the conditioned are determined at one and the same time,” Smith, “The Conditions of the New,” 17. Furthermore, through their mutual implication, concrete actual events, relations, and problems affect virtual potentials — although not in a straight casual fashion. Although Williams goes too far in crediting actualization for determining virtual potentials/Ideas (the latter, rather, are equally determined virtually by experimental processes within, through, and between themselves) he aptly describes the “reciprocal quasi-causal determination” between virtual and actual as “perhaps Deleuze’s greatest metaphysical innovation and the key to understanding the power of his philosophy,” *Gilles Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition: A Critical Introduction and Guide* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), 176ff, see also 11, 14f, 21, 186f. The well-acknowledged fact that Deleuze in *DR* utilizes the term “reciprocal determination” more explicitly for how differences that form Ideas are determined *within* the virtual, does not itself, as John Roffe claims, speak against virtual and actual as reciprocally determined in the senses described above. Roffe, *Badiou’s Deleuze* (Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2012), 149ff.

44. John Rajchman, *The Deleuze Connections* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2000), 24.

45. *Ibid.*, 25.

46. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon. Logique de la sensation* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1981/2002), on capturing invisible forces, see 57, 58, 61, on something having to emerge from the diagram, see 103, 146; *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. by Daniel W. Smith (New York: Continuum, 2004), 56, 57, 61; 110, 138, 156.

47. Deleuze, *DR* fr 174, 192/eng 168, 185.

48. Deleuze, “What is the Creative Act?,” in *Two Regimes of Madness*, fr 291/eng 312. Translation modified.

49. Deleuze, *Foucault*, fr 127/eng 119.

50. Deleuze: “Underneath the large noisy events lie the small events of silence, just as underneath the natural light there are the little glimmers of the Idea.” *DR*, fr 212/eng 202f.

51. Deleuze, *NP*, fr 4/eng 4; *C2*, fr 332/eng 255.

52. Deleuze, *DR*, fr 198f/eng 191.

53. Deleuze, *Logique du sens* (Paris: Le Éditions de Minuit, 1969), 290; *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Charles J. Stivale, Constantin V. Boundas, Mark Lester (New York: Continuum, 2003), 286, hereafter referenced as *LS* followed by fr/eng pagination. Translation modified.

54. Deleuze, “May ‘68 Didn’t Happen,” in *Two Regimes of Madness*, fr 216/eng 235.

55. Deleuze, *C2*, fr 221/eng 170.

56. Deleuze, *C1*, fr 91/eng 62.

57. Ibid.
58. Deleuze, *C1*, fr 139f/eng 98f; *C2* fr 45f/eng 30f.
59. Deleuze describes this “mental image” in *C1*, fr 266-277/eng 196-205.
60. As is well known, no actual film ever belongs 100% to either of the categories. But in all films one is more or less dominant, although sometimes this can even vary within the same film.
61. Deleuze, *C2*, fr 166/eng 127.
62. Ibid., fr 109/eng 81.
63. Ibid., fr 29, 221/eng 18, 170.
64. Ibid., fr 10/eng 3.
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid., fr 35, 33/eng 23, 21f.
67. Ibid., fr 35, 34-37/eng 23, 22-24.
68. Ibid., fr. 279/eng 214.
69. Deleuze, *C1*, fr 284f/eng 211-212.
70. Ibid., fr 283f/eng 210f.
71. Time-images can thereby also be rooted in presents, such as in the films of Robbe-Grillet, but in contrast to how movement-images are rooted in actual, chronological presents, this regards presents that are “de-actualized.” See Deleuze, *C2*, fr 131-132, 137/eng 100f, 104.
72. Ibid., fr 129/eng 98.
73. For a very different account of the three syntheses of time and how they are at play in *Cinema 2*, in which the third synthesis is discussed in terms of actual content that comes “from the future,” see Patricia Pisters, *The Neuro-Image: A Deleuzian Film-Philosophy of Digital Screen Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 136-155.
74. Deleuze, *DR*, fr 354, 112, 160, note 1/eng 346, 114, 149. It is worth stating that “empty” must not be confused with dismissible. Jay Lampert goes so far as to label Deleuze “anti-future” while arguing that in Deleuze, since “the new is not the future, but has been achieved as the co-ordination across mutually available time-lines, the New is the Past,” Lampert, *Deleuze and Guattari’s Philosophy of History* (New York: Continuum, 2006), 140. But these formulations obscure what finally drives the production: the future/third synthesis/intensity creatively draws select constellations of differences within the past outside of the past.
75. Williams, *Gilles Deleuze’s Philosophy of Time*, 136.
76. Deleuze describes the details of differenc/tiation in the fourth and part of the fifth chapters of *Difference and Repetition*, rather than the second chapter in which the three syntheses of time are described.
77. Deleuze, *LS* fr 190-197/eng 186-193; *ATP* fr 320ff/eng 262ff.
78. Deleuze, *C2*, fr 111/eng 83.
79. Ibid., fr 115/eng 86.
80. Ibid., fr 117/eng 87.
81. Ibid., fr 112/eng 85. Richard Rushton discusses the crack in Renoir’s crystals from the perspective of articulating a “Deleuzian imaginary” that he contrasts to the critique of the imaginary in 70s and 80s film theory, in Rushton, “A Deleuzian Imaginary: The Films of Jean Renoir,” *Deleuze Studies* 5.2 (2011): 241-260.
82. Deleuze, *C2*, fr, 113, 114/eng 85, 86.
83. Ibid., fr 116, 117/eng 87, 88, emphasis mine. Translation modified.
84. Ibid., fr 331ff/eng 254ff.
85. Ibid., fr 267f/eng 205f.
86. Ibid., fr 235f/eng 180f. Jean-Clet Martin describe Rembrandt’s *Philosopher in Meditation* as wearing the mask of the old image of thought in order to smuggle in the subtle expression of a new image of thought and even the outside, in “The Image of Thought,” *Deleuze Studies* 3 (2009): 1-25. But it seems to me that painting, however expressive in other respects, will in contrast to moving images with sound always be comparably more like indications or even representations of a new image of thought and the outside than itself directly expressive of them.
87. Ropars-Wuilleumier, “Image or Time? The Thought of the Outside in *The Time-Image* (Deleuze and Blanchot),” in *Afterimages of Gilles Deleuze’s Film Philosophy*, ed. D. N. Rodowick (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 17.
88. Deleuze, “A Portrait of Foucault,” in *Negotiations*, fr 151/eng 111.
89. An exception of sorts is the “decomposing” aristocratic crystal worlds of Visconti’s later films that are separated “from life and creation” and that have not yet vanished completely because the crystal is “artificial,” and in which the only actualizing, clarifying aspect possible is the realization that it is “too late” for these (aesthetically “grandiose”) crystal worlds to escape their own decomposition. Deleuze, *C2*, fr 124-128/eng 94-96.
90. Ibid., fr 115/eng 86, emphasis mine.

91. Ibid., fr 117, 119, 121, 123/eng 88, 90, 92. 93. Translation modified.

92. Ibid., fr 122/eng 92. Deleuze, *DR*, fr 279/eng 268.

93. See, for instance, Alain Badiou, *Deleuze. La Clameur de l'être* (Paris: Hachette, 1997), 114; *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*, trans. Louise Burchill (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 74f; Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event II*, trans. Alberto Toscano (New York: Continuum, 2009), 381-387. I discuss Badiou's own philosophy of the event in relation to Deleuze more in depth in Nilsson, *The Untimely-Image: On Contours of the New in Political Film-Thinking* (Stockholm: Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, 2012), chapter 1.

## VISIONS OF THE INTOLERABLE: DELEUZE ON ETHICAL IMAGES

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Perhaps the most prevalent trait of Deleuze scholarship has been its privileging of creativity, activity and the production of the new. The contemporary tendency towards these themes is foregrounded in the wide influence of Jane Bennett's neo-Deleuzian project, to which action, the production of effects and the alteration of events are central.<sup>1</sup> One page of Daniella Angelucci's new work on Deleuze's cinematic concepts unreservedly claims that philosophy "creates" "new" concepts and art "creates" images as part of a "production, an invention."<sup>2</sup> Nadine Boljkovac states she is most generally concerned to "negotiate and effect the new," in another recent book on Deleuze and cinema.<sup>3</sup> The reception of Deleuze's notion of the image has also privileged the production of the new. Anne Sauvagnargues suggests that the image opens up a "new process of creation," "new potentials" and "new processes."<sup>4</sup> The image that opens new creations is thus "liberated" from the banal, to which it is "opposed."<sup>5</sup> This paper will take its cue from the only "grumble" that, in his 1995 tribute, Jacques Derrida claimed to have had about the *content* of Deleuze's philosophy: the emphasis on creation.<sup>6</sup> It will agree with Bernard Stiegler that Derrida is not correct about Deleuze, yet it will reveal that his critique is applicable to the highly prevalent reading of Deleuze that privileges creation and implies a Bergsonian choice that is fundamentally free.<sup>7</sup> In order to show how this reading is mistaken, a concept of the image will be demonstrated in which creativity, productivity and activity are no longer primary.

The basic form of the argument posits the priority of ethics in relation to the creation of images. The standard claim in Deleuzian literature is that images of the intolerability of the world are necessary insofar as they call for the creation of new images. Sauvagnargues explicitly says that the "imperative" and goal of politics is to "think and create for the sake of the new," whilst she suggests that ethics is merely "appreciating" the "new relations" into which we enter.<sup>8</sup> This essay will reveal that the reverse is the case: the creation of new images is necessary only in order to force thought into a vision of the intolerability of the world, an intolerability that is continually arising anew and thus continually demands a new vision.

Images of the intolerable are now privileged as the aim of creativity, as opposed to creativity being the aim of those images. The primacy of ethics in relation to the creation of images will be revealed by first tracing the basic concept of the image as the fundamental matter of existence in *Difference and Repetition*, characterized by the passive fusion of external elements. The problem for Deleuze is to construct an image of time that is not merely immediate presence, as it is in passive fusion. We will outline how Deleuze reads this problem in Plato, who attempts to construct an image through a test carried out by the soul that selects images based on their participation in a purely present Idea. The standard Deleuzian literature then sees Plato as problematic because he is primarily concerned with the presupposition of an ideal world and the denial of the new; we will show, however, that Plato is fundamentally important for Deleuze because the construction of images is *morally* motivated for the first time in Western thought. Plato's construction of images attempts to universalize the ideal of an *orthodoxy*, which is ultimately the State. Deleuze's response to Plato is to suggest that, rather than attempting to construct an image that universalizes an ideal orthodoxy, we must construct an image of the irreducible splitting of time, which carries its own ethical imperative. The splitting of time can only be imaged through the manner in which the present boundaries of thought continually impose themselves upon bodies, which are exhausted and eliminated by these boundaries. This exhausted impossibility of living in the present is the intolerable; the images of this intolerability force thought to abandon itself, and impose new boundaries on the present. Ethical images must be created that force thought to think its constant imposition of deadly boundaries upon bodies, rather than being produced merely for the sake of creation. In this way, we will demonstrate that creativity in itself is not primary in Deleuze's conception of the image, as the standard view of Deleuze claims; instead we will reveal the priority of ethics or the vision of the intolerable over creativity.

## THE UNIVERSE OF IMAGES

In order to disclose the relationship between images and ethics, we must first examine the basic conception of an image. On May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1980, closing his lectures on Leibniz, and just months after the appearance of *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze presents the central concept of the history of philosophy as being that of appearance.<sup>9</sup> Images are crucial for Deleuze pre-

cisely because they constitute that which appears.<sup>10</sup> As Heidegger demonstrates in his work on Plato, the Ideas are that “in whose light” beings themselves are what they are.<sup>11</sup> The Idea itself is something “seen,” it is the “outward appearance” “in which beings as such show themselves,” which requires light.<sup>12</sup> The understanding, the mind or thought is thus essentially that which “illuminates,” it is the most “sunlike” faculty of the human being, and as Bergson claims, philosophy is thus a “gradual ascent to the light.”<sup>13</sup> Derrida clarifies this relation between understanding and light, in claiming that the space of ideality or the totality of the whole world contracted in the phenomenon is “light” itself.<sup>14</sup> At the culmination of his reflections on light in the 1980s, in his *Foucault* book, Deleuze clearly shows himself to be part of this tradition of relating light and the ideality of things. What he calls “Light-being” is an “a priori,” within thought, that is able to “lay visibilities open to sight” and “to the other senses.”<sup>15</sup> Deleuze himself directly cites Plato’s notion of “weaving” in the *Philebus* when describing the relation between light and *logos* or language.<sup>16</sup> Light is fundamentally the realm of “qualities, things and objects,” as opposed to the realm of ideal sense and determination.<sup>17</sup>

We must now ask: how can images constitute the realm of qualities, things and objects that make up that which appears? Prior to *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze invokes the notion of the image at key junctures, but always in an opaque and brief manner.<sup>18</sup> In *Difference and Repetition*, during a discussion of Plato, Deleuze states that an image occurs within a contemplation that is not sensation, “memory” or “reflection.”<sup>19</sup> Such an image is a living present, which makes chaotic, material and external instants repeatable by fusing them into similar cases. In the fusion of the image, chaotic instants are constituted *as* instants; as mere chaotic materiality they are not even instants and they require contemplative fusion. The *Cinema* books will go further: because even chaotic, material instants require a contemplative image to *be* instants at all, chaotic instants of matter themselves are now also images, albeit instantaneous images without repeatability, past or future. Deleuze’s theory of the image becomes more consistent in the *Cinema* books, therefore, insofar he presents us, in Agustín Zarzosa’s words, with a “universe” in which everything is “an image that differs from others only by degree”: instantaneous actions of purely present consciousness without memory, sensation or reflection.<sup>20</sup> The universe of images brings time into the form of an instant that involves a closed and spatial relation, that of movement. Things and objects appear in images because images divide time into spatial objects that are *present* and *actual*. Given that thought begins with present and actual images in which things appear, Plato and Deleuze



both face the dilemma of thinking in such a way as to comprehend time itself, which causes the present to become past and open up a future. We will now demonstrate that the problem of thinking time is not centered upon the problem of creativity, as the standard view of Deleuze holds, but rather is centered upon an ethical relationship between thought and the body. We will begin by considering the initiation of the moral interpretation of the image in Western thought, which occurred, according to Deleuze, with Plato.<sup>21</sup>

### IMAGING THE SOCIAL ORTHODOXY

In Plato, thought always begins with a multiplicity of confused images, similar to the universe of chaotic, instantaneous images described above. This beginning is not temporal, but is the essence of the sensible, empirical world of opinion. These chaotic, instantaneous images are contradictory, always becoming one another, and thus lead us to pose problems about them, problems which demand creative solutions, solutions not previously given on the level of images.<sup>22</sup> Creativity is inherent to the Platonic system, and this undermines those readings of Deleuze that suggest creativity is the locus of Deleuze's break with Plato and Platonism. The creativity that leads beyond present images grasps that which has never been present and thus can only be remembered through *reminiscence*. The object of reminiscence is called an Idea, and despite having never been present must *resemble* something that has already been seen, for Plato. The strange resemblance or similarity between that which has never been present and that which is present means that the Idea has in fact been seen, "but in another life" or another world, a world in a "mythical present."<sup>23</sup> The pure past, which in fact does resemble our present, is an Idea that posits the essence of the Same as identity, rather than positing Sameness as confusion and difference as the confused images of the sensible present do.<sup>24</sup>

The strange resemblance between the self-identical Idea and the confused images of the present is not immediately given, but occurs when the confused images of the present imitate the Idea.<sup>25</sup> The Idea, as self-identical, "possesses" any given quality in the "first place."<sup>26</sup> The imitation of Ideas by sensible images occurs when the soul selects and constructs images that are identical to themselves over time, which thus resemble the Idea that acts as a selective test for the soul. In this selective test, the soul predicates the image with properties that

“agree” with the Idea, the model of sameness.<sup>27</sup> Sensible images are thus organized into those that resemble the Idea according to whether they possess the Idea’s quality in second place, third place and so on, up to those that do not resemble it at all. Images that do not agree at all with the Ideal model are called “simulacra” and are eliminated by this test. The order of resemblances and possessions produces an organized line of descent from the sensible back to the Idea.<sup>28</sup> After the line has been drawn to the Idea, a line is also drawn back from the Idea to the sensible images, to which a new distribution is brought. There is thus a “turn” to the mythically present, self-same Idea, and then a “return” back to sensible images; this turn and return is eternally necessary, because there always remains a certain confusion at the empirical level to which we must return. The eternal turn and return of the soul to and from the mythical present introduces *time* into thought, a time that arranges chaotic images into an ordered circle of resemblances to the Idea. In this way, time imprints Ideal models upon rebellious sensible images as a “law” or an “order.”<sup>29</sup>

The law imposed upon sensible images removes what Miguel de Beistegui has called the “essential ambiguity of the image itself,” by dividing images into those that resemble the Ideal model and those that do not.<sup>30</sup> The division into good and bad images, into copies and simulacra, is the product of “dialectic,” which is simply the uniform rotation of the soul we have outlined above. Ronald Bogue presents this “uniform rotation” as the basic problem that Deleuze attempts to rethink in his *Cinema* works.<sup>31</sup> However, although Deleuze does appear to present the project in this light in his first *Cinema* book, this is done primarily to outline the Bergsonian idea of “movement,” which frames his investigation into pre-war cinema.<sup>32</sup> The true importance of the distinction between good and bad images is a moral one. Plato is the thinker in which we witness the birth of the moral vision of the world, because he does not presuppose a subject who imposes ordered form onto rebellious matter in the way that Western thought does from Aristotle to Nietzsche. Instead of tracing the ordering of chaotic images using criteria discovered in the subject, Plato discovers criteria in the world. What could motivate the philosopher to desire the construction of images that resemble eternal self-sameness and the elimination of those that escape any self-sameness? Only that within the world that remains “identical to itself across its variations,” the organs of power that are essentially concerned to preserve and conserve themselves, capturing all exteriority. This self-identical, internalizing organization of power is what Deleuze and Guattari later name “the State.”<sup>33</sup> Platonic thought that desires the division of images into the ordered

circle of time universalizes this self-same organization of power, which itself gives social authority to that morally motivated thought. In the words of de Beistegui, the potential anarchy of democracy leads Plato to turn philosophy into the “ultimate source of authority.”<sup>34</sup> In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze has not yet developed a political philosophy, but he already suggests such a social and moral motivation: the division of images in Plato is driven by thought that appropriates the “ideal” of an “orthodoxy.”<sup>35</sup> We must take the “law” and “order” of the circular time of the soul in their political connotations as appropriating the ideal of an orthodoxy. The criteria for dividing images into good and bad is thus the universalization of a purely conservative social order, orthodoxy or the State, a fundamentally moral motivation at the heart of Plato’s thought. Deleuze’s response to Plato is centered upon the ethical, and not merely upon the notion of movement or uniform rotation as Bogue suggests. The problem is not unleashing a cosmological creativity that is denied by Plato’s eternal, self-same Ideas, but rather undermining the moral motivation that posits those Ideas in the first place.

#### IMAGES OF THE UNLIVABLE PRESENT

We began with the conception of images as that which appears in the present or as time that is spatialized into qualities, objects and things. The philosophical problem was then how to move from these present, spatializing images to a notion of time as involving the past and the future. Plato solves the problem by subjecting present, chaotic and appearing images to a division that finds its criteria in that which remains the same within the world, an organization of power that remains the same and captures all exteriority, eliminating all that differs from it. Deleuze challenges the lawful and ordered circular time that divides images with a new conception of time as essentially *splitting*, a conception that we will find is made necessary by the intolerable world, which Plato’s thought universalizes. The argument for time’s splitting first poses the question to Plato: how did the mythically past Idea *become past*? The present cannot pass *in* the past, nor in the future, and so the present must “become past” at the same time as it is present, in order that it might open onto a future present. Derrida shares this key insight with Deleuze, that the present is fundamentally “split”: in Husserlian terminology, retention is a “continuous composition” *between* non-presence and presence, the

present is continually becoming past at the same time as it is present.<sup>36</sup> According to Deleuze, this split in time “exists forever” as *the* “inexplicable secret.”<sup>37</sup> Splitting is eternal because nothing *happens* “in” the split; the splitting makes possible all events, all present moments, even the “mythical” present of Plato, and thus all *images*. As soon as there is an event or an image, which are essentially in the present, time’s splitting is interrupted. Readings of Deleuze that privilege the creativity of the new above all else are faced with the dilemma that every creation of a new image interrupts time. We must search for a more specific criterion for the creation of images: these images must interrupt time’s splitting in such a way that the split is in fact mirrored and thus relaunched.

The search for an image that both interrupts and relaunched the splitting of time is necessary because if it was to become completed or finished; interruption is necessary, otherwise time’s splitting would end. The difficulty lies in discovering an interrupting image that does not simply cover over the splitting of time, but that relaunched that splitting.<sup>38</sup> What exacerbates the difficulty of finding such an image is that humanity is defined by thinking using representational images, and thus humanity is always, in essence, too late to the splitting of time. Thought is basically a choice regarding the mode of existence of the thinking being, which consists in selecting images from outside of thought in order to constitute a present actuality.<sup>39</sup> Readers who privilege the new in Deleuze face the difficulty that new selections are always already too late. For example, although Anne Sauvagnargues also focuses on the image that relaunched the splitting of time, named the “crystal-image,” she sees this as merely an image that “opens up a new view of the real.”<sup>40</sup> Whilst this is certainly an important moment of the crystal-image, Sauvagnargues’ privileging of the new ignores the fact that the truly essential moment of the crystal-image is its internal decomposition, that is, the decay caused by the impossibility of grasping an original splitting in time that we could grasp once and for all. As we have established, each time the present splits into the past, it transforms the entire past in general, and so each new present, and each human thought, confronts a radically new past, and thus human thought provides no possibility of grasping time once and for all. The first clue to a solution to finding an image that relaunched the splitting of time rather than covering it over is found in the body: humanity is united with the splitting of time in its bodily, sensual and perceptual nature.<sup>41</sup> This problematic of the body, we can say in advance, will open up the ethical dimension of a non-Platonic image of time.

Although overly intellectual thought is continually covering over the splitting of time by transforming it into images of present objects, the body is united with that splitting of time because it does not only exist in the present. The body is composed of the deposited remains of past experience that are left over after actions and speech are finished, and thus the body is the preserved past.<sup>42</sup> The remains of the past are within the body that Derrida describes as “neither perceptible nor invisible” but still “flesh.”<sup>43</sup> The fundamental importance of this fleshy body lies in its ability to cause an eruption within thought that is continually attempting to transform it into images of objects present before thought. This eruption of the presence of objects is the attitude of the body called *fatigue*. Those readers who want to privilege the production of the new have not recognized the importance of fatigue, because it involves an unfree eruption of the present as opposed to an active creation of the new. Whilst Bogue acknowledges that fatigue “puts the past in the body,” he then reduces fatigue to the marking of the body by “past exertion,” and thus it is merely the retention of past time in the body.<sup>44</sup> John Protevi also incorrectly relates fatigue to the “anticipation of the future,” in an essay that privileges creativity, defining life as “creative self-organization.”<sup>45</sup> Bogue and Protevi reduce fatigue to the phenomenological dimensions of time, retention and projection, as opposed to maintaining its *explosive* nature, marking the passive limit at which the body can no longer live in the present. The body does not retain time in fatigue, facilitating an active production of the new; rather, there is a passive eruption of the present in which the body lives. The passive eruption of the present gives us an initial clue to what an image that re-launches the splitting of time might look like, but it also introduces an ethical dimension to this image. Fatigue is essentially the impossibility of living in the present world, a present world that is thus intolerable.

Humanity is united with the splitting of time through fatigue, which causes the eruption of the present. Yet, human thought and the images that thought has of things operate in the present. The body that is fatigued escapes from thought because it is the eruption of the present, and thus in order to think an image of the splitting of time, thought must be made to confront its own impossibility. In everyday existence, when we are forced to think in conformity with a dominant reality, however, we necessarily presume choice is possible in order to make practical decisions: as Deleuze and Guattari write in *A Thousand Plateaus*, you are then “the one in command, in your capacity as a rational being.”<sup>46</sup> Thought that presumes its own self-sameness over time and its own command over all exteriority must be *shocked* into

seeing that it is modelled on a social organization of power that presupposes its own ability to capture all exteriority and remain self-identical through all variation, as we analyzed in Plato. In seeing that it universalizes a purely conservational organization of power, thought also sees that it universalizes the impossibility of life in the present for some bodies. These self-preserving organizations of power ensure actions are closely controlled and do not deviate from their own boundaries, and they make life impossible for bodies that do not conform to those boundaries. For example, race is the first deviation that is normalized by the structural state violence of the police. Racism “propagates waves of sameness until those who resist identification have been wiped out.”<sup>47</sup> Thought that universalizes the model of self-sameness also universalizes the wiping out of non-conforming bodies; such thought must be made to see the intolerable present that it universalizes and see its own embodiment in this intolerable world.

The image of the intolerable will ultimately be produced in thought by a certain relation to language. A language transmits a set of ideal and uncrossable boundaries between bodies.<sup>48</sup> These boundaries between bodies universalize the borders set up by the dominant organization of power of the society in which that language is used.<sup>49</sup> As we have seen in the case of racism, these ideal, uncrossable boundaries universalize the spatial and temporal “end” of bodies, and thus mark the death of those non-conforming bodies. The system of ideal, uncrossable boundaries set up by our dominant global reality presently makes the “white, male, adult, “rational,” man” into the “standard” of all things in universe.<sup>50</sup> The body is thus a prisoner of “morality and feelings” that merely conserve unadapted, past values left unrenewed by thought.<sup>51</sup> The regime of the present that imprisons the body in an unadapted morality, transmitted through language, causes certain bodies to collapse in fatigue. There is, however, a type of linguistic act that gives voice to this intolerable present in which certain bodies are wiped out in fatigue. This “speech act” is the production of a memory or a past that gives voice to the impossibility of living in the present for certain bodies.<sup>52</sup> Speech-acts produce the memory that when one tries to decide upon a present mode of existence, a new set of bodies will be fatigued and thus life will be made unlivable for them in the present. They do this by telling the story of bodies that have no “place,” and for whom life is thus impossible. As Deleuze says, in summary, the “less human” the world is, the more we must produce speech-acts that give voice to such the intolerability of the present, and these speech acts form a kind of “ethics,” “morality” or “faith.”<sup>53</sup>

The ethical voice of the empty places of the present finally brings us to the threshold of a new, ethical conception of the image because it gives rise to a new kind of *vision*. The vision that the speech act gives rise to is “purely optical” in that it outstrips any possible action or reaction and is not merely part of a pragmatic chain of use-values.<sup>54</sup> A purely optical vision is not limited to the system of ideal, uncrossable boundaries of the dominant organs of power, and thus it sees what is “invisible” to ordinary vision.<sup>55</sup> Such a vision is no longer merely a vision; it is an “immersion” of thought in the unlivable spaces of the present, no longer separated from those spaces but existing inside them. The optical immersion in unlivable space is the precise definition of a Deleuzian *event*.<sup>56</sup> Bogue’s claim that the event is the “passage of the power of the outside into the interstice” is not incorrect, but remains too general to highlight the true significance of events.<sup>57</sup> On the present reading, in an event, which might be a singular life, a world or an episode, we have a *vision* that has previously escaped our thought. Because we are always born into a conformist mode of thought, the vision of the intolerable always comes as an *event* that *shocks* it.<sup>58</sup>

The purely optical event is a vision not just for the eyes, but primarily for *thought*. Ethics is not a question of “speaking for the unhappy, speaking in the name of victims, of the tortured and the oppressed,” but rather of *giving* voice to unlivable spaces, of which the brain is most intimate with thought.<sup>59</sup> Although there is a widely differentiated set of bodies, from molecules to races, which are unknown by conformist thought, the brain is the unlivable space of thought itself, “a void, nothing but a void,” an uncertain, acentered system that must be brought together with thought.<sup>60</sup> Any “journey” or immersion in an unlivable space is thus at the same time an “exploration of the brain” in which thought recognizes that the ideal, uncrossable boundaries it imposes upon bodies are also borders imposed upon the acentered mechanisms of its own body, which is the brain.<sup>61</sup> The physical brain, studied by contemporary science, is much more than the “model” for a cinematic brain that Bogue posits.<sup>62</sup> Rather, through the brain, thought is “brought face to face with its own impossibility” and with “what does not let itself be thought” “in thought.”<sup>63</sup> Thought that sees its own impossibility becomes a mind in which there is only an automated, uncontrollable parade of “contradictory” images that cannot exist in the same present. Such automated thought cannot choose or select images: it is a pure seer that necessarily grasps something in the world that causes bodies to find the present unlivable, and thus it grasps the unity of the fatigued body with the passage of the present, the eruption of the present.<sup>64</sup>

In the ethical vision of the unlivable, empty spaces of the present, thought is brought face to face with its own embodiment in the brain, and thus with the impossibility of its essence, choice. We seem to be at a point of ethical transparency that might signal the possibility of something like progress based on continually unveiling the intolerable. Yet, vision also essentially *buries* and veils the unlivable spaces it sees. Vision covers over the actual, present image of its immersion in unlivable space with a “virtual” or past image.<sup>65</sup> In this pure, virtual image, the vision becomes “buried” “outside of consciousness” and exists within the past itself.<sup>66</sup> These virtual images buried outside of consciousness form layers of “meaning,” and through these layers, *history* is established.<sup>67</sup> In summary, we can now see that on the one hand, a speech-act gives voice to bodies, always including the brain, that have no place and thus can be wiped out in fatigue, which gives rise to a vision bringing thought face to face with its own impossibility, but on the other hand this vision covers over thought’s encounter with its own impossibility by burying it in the past.

Having outlined the speech act or sound image that brings thought face to face with its actuality and the visual image that buries that actuality in a virtual past, we must now note that these two images are in fact *rigorously incommensurate*. The sound image and the visual image do not correspond to an object that remains the same over time, like Plato’s Idea. Time is continuously splitting, and so once we bury the actuality of the unlivable present in a virtual past, a new present has already arisen, precisely because we have transformed the past. There is an irreducible resistance, heterogeneity and “always re-created disjunction” between the sonority of the speech-act and the burial of vision.<sup>68</sup> The very “status” of the image as such is transformed by this heterogeneity: rather than separate sound and visual images representing a single, self-same object like the Platonic Idea, there is a single image, a “truly audio-visual” image in which sound and vision are “continually separated” by cuts that are not obliged to represent actions.<sup>69</sup> Vision and sound are now two “autonomous components” of a single audio-visual image that only has the continually relaunched disjunction between the visual and the sonorous as its object, a “common point” that is infinite in that it is never fully achieved, just like the splitting of time.<sup>70</sup> The people to come, those who are called for by the speech-act, are precisely called upon to think this irreducible disjunction, and thus to continually rethink the ways in which the vision that thought has of its own embodiment is itself causing new presents to arise in which there are new unlivable spaces forming. The priority lies, first of all, in giving an ethical voice to body in such a way that a people is called



who continuously rethink the impossibility of thought, and, secondly, in covering over the vision of this impossibility in such a way that our history also stimulates us to resist the ways in which we cover over our visions of the unlivable spaces of our present.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

To conclude, we must make explicit the priority of ethics over creativity in the account we have given of Deleuze's conception of the image. The common view of Deleuze claims that he sees the image as attempting to open up a "new process of creation," that it "awakens new potentials" and "breaks into new processes."<sup>71</sup> The image must thus be "opposed" to "pervasive mediocrity," and its seeing must be "liberated" from the everyday actions of the sensory-motor system. The liberated image would "tear a true image out of clichés" and possess "intensive characteristics from reality."<sup>72</sup> Ethics on this view is reduced to mere appreciation; it is "appreciating the new relations into that we enter."<sup>73</sup> The liberation of an image which forms a "true" image and that possesses characteristics "from reality" seems to open this standard interpretation of Deleuze to Derrida's ultimate critique that he "stakes everything" on "a sovereignty of the responsible human Me" that is "capable of responding freely," thus "retaining a relation of freedom" to the splitting of time.<sup>74</sup> We do not believe, like Sauvagnargues and others, that it would be possible to freely tear a true image from reality that would break into new creations, relaunching the splitting of time. We propose to follow Deleuze and Guattari in being aware of the immense "danger" that those true images of creation might set up even worse borders between bodies that exhaust some bodies and eliminate others altogether.<sup>75</sup> Again, following Deleuze and Guattari, our reading will be much more "cautious," suggesting that creation must always aim at revealing the ever-new ways in which thought causes bodies, including the brain, to fatigue, and thus causes its own impossibility.<sup>76</sup>

To measure the stakes of our reading against the standard view, we can point to Nadine Boljkovac's prioritizing the creation of the new over "speaking in the name of others."<sup>77</sup> Boljkovac uses this quotation from Deleuze and Parnet to illustrate that ethics is subordinate to creation, which she supports by quoting them next saying that what is really important is "producing a living line."<sup>78</sup> Crucially, however, Boljkovac ignores the passage after those she

cites, where Deleuze and Parnet go on to write that “creating new elements and relations” is *not* in fact primary; thus, the aim of Boljkovac’s book, to “negotiate and effect the new,” is shown to be *not* fundamental on Deleuze’s view.<sup>79</sup> Rather, they go on to write that creation is always in the service of losing, abandoning, reducing and simplifying.<sup>80</sup> Abandoning, as this essay has shown, is the continual abandoning of thought’s ideal boundaries that exhaust and eliminate bodies. Such an abandoning only occurs in the ethical vision that the speech-act gives rise to; yet, this speech-act is always covered over by vision, which buries it in the past. The continual creation of speech-acts and images of the intolerable is necessary because of the infinite disjunction between sound and visual images; we must affirm, in this light, Derrida’s highly prescient insight: for Deleuze, the *best* thought, the *best* writing, the *best* philosophy does not merely create the new, but “lets itself” be unflinchingly “haunted” by the problem of thought’s impossibility or the horror of stupidity.<sup>81</sup>

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1. Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), viii.
  2. Daniela Angelucci, “Life,” trans. Sarin Marchetti, in *Deleuze and the Concepts of Cinema, Deleuze Studies* 8.3 (2014): 365.
  3. Nadine Boljkovac, *Untimely Affects: Gilles Deleuze and an Ethics of Cinema* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 173.
  4. Anne Sauvagnargues, *Deleuze and Art*, trans. Samantha Bankston (London: Continuum, 2012), 172.
  5. *Ibid.*, 171.
  6. Jacques Derrida, “I’m Going to Have to Wander All Alone,” *Philosophy Today* 42.1 (1998): 3.
  7. Bernard Stiegler, “Doing and Saying Stupid Things in the Twentieth Century: Bêtise and Animality in Deleuze and Derrida,” *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 18.1 (2013): 163.
  8. Sauvagnargues, *Deleuze and Art*, 172; 83.
  9. See Gilles Deleuze, *Les Cours de Gilles Deleuze, Leibniz, 20/05/1980*, trans. Charles Stivale, <http://www.webdeleuze.com/php/texte.php?cle=130&groupe=Leibniz&langue=2> (accessed 15 July 2014).
  10. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (London: Athlone, 1986), 58.
  11. Martin Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth: On Plato’s Cave Allegory and Theaetetus*, trans. Ted Sadler (London: Continuum, 2002), 72.
  12. Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Ancient Philosophy*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 117. See also Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 67.
  13. Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth*, 74; Henri Bergson, “Life and Consciousness” in *Mind-Energy*, trans. H. W. Carr (New York: H. Holt, 1920), 6.
  14. Derrida, *Voice and Phenomenon: Introduction to the Problem of the Sign in Husserl’s Phenomenology*, trans. Leonard Lawlor (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2011), 62.
  15. Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Sean Hand (London: Continuum, 2006), 50.
  16. *Ibid.*, 92.
  17. *Ibid.*, 45.
  18. See Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983): on the image of thought (xiii; 103), negation as an “inverted image” of affirmation (56), and the “game” of images (30). See also Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1988): on the image as pure surface and of one single nature (41), the critique of possibility (97), and the image as primarily related to actualization of the virtual (58).

19. Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul R. Patton (London: Continuum, 2001), 70.
20. Agustín Zarzosa, "Layering Images, Thwarting Fables: Deleuze, Rancière and the Allegories of Cinema," *Cinema: Journal of Philosophy and the Moving Image* 2 (2011): 37, <http://cjpml.ipl.pt/2-zarzosa> (accessed 15 July 2014).
21. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 285.
22. *Ibid.*, 246; 64.
23. *Ibid.*, 142.
24. *Ibid.*, 265.
25. *Ibid.*, 127.
26. *Ibid.*, 62.
27. *Ibid.*, 265.
28. *Ibid.*, 63.
29. *Ibid.*, 67-68; 128.
30. Miguel de Beistegui, "The Deleuzian Reversal of Platonism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Deleuze*, ed. Daniel W. Smith and Henry Somers-Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 57.
31. Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 197.
32. Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 4.
33. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 360.
34. de Beistegui, "The Deleuzian Reversal of Platonism," 58.
35. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 148, 268.
36. *Ibid.*, 55.
37. Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (London: Athlone, 1986), 50.
38. *Ibid.*, 82.
39. *Ibid.*, 189.
40. Sauvagnargues, *Deleuze and Art*, 170. The new view of the real that Sauvagnargues privileges is only made possible by the decomposition of the crystal-image that she suppresses, but that we have restored to its true place as the essential feature of the crystal-image.
41. *Ibid.*, 94.
42. *Ibid.*, 189.
43. Derrida, Jacques. *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994), 157.
44. Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema*, 155.
45. Protevi, "Deleuze and Life" in *The Cambridge Companion to Deleuze*, ed. Daniel W. Smith and Henry Somers-Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 242; 248.
46. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 151.
47. *Ibid.*, 448; 178.
48. *Ibid.*, 105.
49. *Ibid.*, 105.
50. *Ibid.*, 292.
51. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 204.
52. *Ibid.*, 243.
53. *Ibid.*, 171; 172-173.
54. *Ibid.*, 217; 256.
55. *Ibid.*, 260.
56. *Ibid.*, 256.
57. Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema*, 182.
58. *Ibid.*, 100.
59. Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 28.
60. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 211; 167.
61. *Ibid.*, 168.
62. Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema*, 179.
63. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 206.
64. *Ibid.*, 268.
65. *Ibid.*, 79.

66. Ibid., 80.
67. Ibid., 79.
68. Ibid., 255.
69. Ibid., 252.
70. Ibid., 259; 257.
71. Sauvagnargues, *Deleuze and Art*, 172.
72. Ibid., 171-172.
73. Ibid., 53.
74. Derrida, *The Beast and the Sovereign*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 183.
75. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 299.
76. Ibid., 150.
77. Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues*, 28, cited in Boljkovac, *Untimely Affects*, 174.
78. Ibid.
79. Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues*, 29; Boljkovac, *Untimely Affects*, 173.
80. Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues*, 29.
81. Derrida, *The Beast and the Sovereign*, 157.

ARTAUD VERSUS KANT:  
ANNIHILATION OF THE IMAGINATION  
IN DELEUZE'S PHILOSOPHY OF CINEMA<sup>1</sup>

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Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and Antonin Artaud (1896-1948) present two different poles of the possibility of thought: 1) that of critical sharpness and 2) a possible inability to concentrate on thinking at all. The first author is known as a famous critic of all forms of reason, whereas the second stands out as the author of the theatre of cruelty, a poet, playwright, essayist, novelist, theatre and film actor, producer, theoretician of the theatre, and artist who spent about nine years in various asylums, diagnosed with schizophrenical delirium. How it is possible for them to have some relation at all? Philosophy is a paradox, writes Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition*. These two, at the first sight incommensurable thinkers, as Michel Foucault would have said — meet at the realm of discourse — in the philosophy of Deleuze. In 1963, Deleuze published the book *Kant's Critical Philosophy (La philosophie critique de Kant)*. He never wrote a book or any special text on Artaud as, for instance, Jacques Derrida did in “La Parole soufflée,” “Le Théâtre de la cruauté et la clôture de la représentation,”<sup>2</sup> and “Forcener le subjectile.”<sup>3</sup> Adrian Morfee nevertheless made a hasty conclusion when he reproached Deleuze for “grandiloquent championing of Artaud in his article “Le Schizophrène et le mot,” where he declares he would not sacrifice one page of Artaud for all of Carroll, in fact only half a page out of fifteen are given over to discussing Artaud. This is a disappointing failed encounter.”<sup>4</sup> Artaud's name appears in Deleuze's pre-cinema books *Difference and Repetition (Différence et répétition, 1968)*, *The Logic of Sense (Logique du sens, 1969)*, as well as in the books written in collaboration with Félix Guattari: *Anti-Oedipus (Capitalisme et Schizophrénie 1. L'Anti-Cédipe, 1972)* and *A Thousand Plateaus (Capitalisme et Schizophrénie 2. Mille Plateaux, 1980)*. Artaud's name also appears in the *Cinema 2: The Time-Image (Cinéma II: L'Image-temps, 1985)* in the seventh chapter “Thought and cinema,” in which Deleuze is discussing thought's place in the cinematic image and relies not on transcendental idealism of Kant, but on transcendental empiricism of Artaud. How do Artaud's ideas become concep-

tual presuppositions for Deleuze when discussing the premises of modern cinema? Further, how is it possible for Deleuze to see Artaud in opposition to Kant?

#### ANTONIN ARTAUD OR LEWIS CARROLL?

In the book *The Logic of Sense*, Artaud seems to be mentioned as an exemplar only incidentally in chapter thirteen, entitled the "Schizophrenic and the Little Girl." Whereas Kant is referred to by Deleuze in chapter fourteen, entitled "Double Causality." Addressing the question of how we are to reconcile the logical principle according to which false propositions would also make sense as true statements, Deleuze returns to Husserl and Kant. Deleuze opposes the position of a transcendental subject, which retains the forms of the person, personal consciousness and subjective identity, and which is satisfied with creating the transcendental out of characteristics of the empirical. That, according to Deleuze, is evident in Kant when he directly deduces the three transcendental syntheses from the corresponding psychological syntheses and no less evident in Husserl, when he deduces an original and transcendental "seeing" from the perceptual "vision."<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, Deleuze criticizes Kant and Husserl's philosophy for its powerlessness to break free from the forms of common sense. The same critique will be repeated by Deleuze in the *Difference and Repetition*. Deleuze is in search of what is impersonal, pre-individual, what constitutes the genesis of thought. Artaud seems much closer to Deleuze's intentions. Kant and Artaud appear as two accidental thinkers, who are of no particular importance to the main narrative of the book, which is based on event. Under the circumstances, Kant even appears more challenging, if only for the reason that Deleuze is developing a new transcendental philosophy (as prefigured in his *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, 1963, developed in *Difference and Repetition* and still a concern in his last essay "Immanence: a life..."). But, contrary to Kant, Deleuze "seeks to avoid the mapping of the condition on what it conditions, thereby allowing both an openness through the asymmetry of their relations and a form of reciprocal determination."<sup>6</sup> James Williams, writing a critical introduction to Deleuze's *Logic of Sense*, mentions Artaud only once and only as an example among other writers Deleuze was interested in.<sup>7</sup> It seems Artaud did not have much to say about the event in question.

Deleuze's focus on analysing Artaud's language of schizophrenia is based on Artaud's inability to translate the verse of *Jabberwocky*, created by Lewis Carroll in the book *Through the Looking Glass: And What Alice Found There*,<sup>8</sup> from English into French. Deleuze regards Carroll as the master and the surveyor of surfaces, on which the entire logic of sense is located. Nevertheless, he paradoxically remarks, "We would not give a page of Artaud for all the Carroll."<sup>9</sup> What does he mean?

Deleuze is intrigued by Artaud's disappointment in translating Carroll's book. In 1942, Artaud was moved to the asylum in Rodez, where his doctor Toulouse, considering that the most effective therapy was through art, encouraged Artaud to maintain correspondence with his friends and persuaded him to translate the poems by Lewis Carroll, a chapter from the book *Through the Looking-Glass*, and Robert Southwell's *The Burning Babe*. Artaud also translated some poems by Edgar Allan Poe. After spending seven months at Rodez, Artaud wrote to his mother that the atmosphere of affection and human helpfulness had shaken him up and finally brought him back to himself and restored the sanity of his vision.<sup>10</sup>

However, Deleuze draws our attention to another letter by Artaud, within which he writes about how bored he was while translating Carroll's poem *Jabberwocky*. He explains, "I never liked this poem which always struck me as an affected infantilism. I do not like poems and languages of the surface. [...] There is no soul in *Jabberwocky*."<sup>11</sup> It seems that Deleuze borrowed the concept of surface from this specific letter, which he further develops in *The Logic of Sense*, as opposed to the concept of depth. Deleuze carefully reads Artaud's translation of *Jabberwocky* and notices in it the gradual slide from Carroll's intended meaning towards the language of schizophrenia. Deleuze notices the gap between the logic of sense played on the surface of the language used by Carroll and Artaud's schizophrenic language of suffering, death, and life.<sup>12</sup> While he is intellectually intrigued by Carroll's language games, personally he takes Artaud's side, seemingly expressing solidarity with Artaud's schizophrenic abyss. What new insights can this schizophrenic language suggest for philosophy?

Deleuze's answer can be found in the chapter "The Image of Thought" in the *Difference and Repetition*:

Artaud does not simply talk about his own "case," but already in his youthful letters shows an awareness that his case brings him into contact with a generalised thought

process, which can no longer be covered by the reassuring dogmatic image but which, on the contrary, amounts to the complete destruction of that image. The difficulties he describes himself as experiencing must therefore be understood as not merely in fact but as difficulties in principle, concerning and affecting the essence of what it means to think.<sup>13</sup>

For Deleuze, the case of Artaud was not a question of opposing the dogmatic image of thought with another borrowed image, for example, from schizophrenia. Rather it was a question of remembering that schizophrenia is not only a human fact but also a possibility for thought — one, moreover, which can only be revealed as such through the abolition of that image.

The genesis of thought was the main interest for Deleuze in his philosophical conception of the cinema. In the second volume of *Cinema*, Deleuze is seeking to trace the faculties of the mind, which organize cinematic art as a specific art in comparison with the others. Deleuze is exploring the possibility of the cinema to achieve a truly mathematical rigour, “a rigour which no longer simply concerns the image (as in the old cinema which already subjected this to metrical and harmonic relations), but the thought of the image, the thought in the image?”<sup>14</sup> He develops his idea by relying on Artaud’s “Cinema of cruelty,” on Artaud’s idea that it “does not tell a story but develops a sequence of spiritual states which are deduced from one another as thought is deduced from thought.”<sup>15</sup>

What happens to imagination when thought plays the main creative role or becomes a faculty responsible for creative process in cinema? What is the relation between thinking and imagination?

KANT:

HARMONY, DISCORD AND GOING BEYOND THE IMAGINATION

The relationship between reason and imagination is reflected by Deleuze in his investigations of Kant’s philosophy. In his book *Kant’s Critical Philosophy*, Deleuze reflects upon the nature of common sense as a relationship between three faculties: imagination, understanding, and reason. Deleuze considers the idea of the difference in nature between these three



faculties to be one of the most original points of Kantianism. In this text, Deleuze discerns accord between imagination as free and understanding as indeterminate; there is a free and indeterminate accord between the faculties in question. Such an agreement defines a properly aesthetic common sense (taste). Following Kant, Deleuze claims that this free play of imagination and understanding cannot be cognized intellectually, but only felt. Aesthetic common sense does not represent an objective accord of the faculties, but a pure subjective harmony where imagination and understanding are exercised spontaneously, each on its own account.<sup>16</sup> Aesthetic common sense does not complete the other two. Rather, it provides them with a basis and makes them possible.<sup>17</sup> In the essay “The Idea of Genesis in Kant’s *Esthetics*” (from 1963), Deleuze returns to this conclusion, stating that it would be a mistake to think of the *Critique of Judgement* as completing the other two *Critiques*. In aesthetic judgment, imagination cannot attain a role comparable to that played by the understanding in speculative judgment, or that played by reason in practical judgment. The imagination is liberated from the supervision of the understanding and reason. It does not, however, become legislator in turn: on a deeper level, the signal it gives to the other faculties is that each must become capable of free play on its own.<sup>18</sup> For Deleuze, these Kantian insights seem very important, especially for his own conception, the one he elaborated further. His conception of a contingent agreement of sensible objects with all our faculties together, instead of a necessary submission to one of the faculties — and a free indeterminate harmony of the faculties among themselves, instead of a determinant harmony presided over by one of the faculties, is one of the main presuppositions of Deleuze’s experimental thinking. It seems that he invented these ideas himself *just together* with Kant.

In 1978, Deleuze gave a number of seminars on Kant, some of which were published in the text “On Four Poetic Formulas Which Might Summarize the Kantian Philosophy.”<sup>19</sup> Here, again, the problem of the imagination enters into play. In this text, Deleuze formulated the first answer to the question he raised in the previous philosophical writings, namely, what is the deepest secret of imagination? The Sublime goes even further in this direction: it brings the various faculties into play in such a way that they struggle against one another. The struggle consists of the one pushing the other towards its maximum or limit, the other reacting by pushing the first towards an inspiration, which it would not have had alone, without such an interaction. Each pushes the other to the limit, but each makes the one go beyond the limit of the other. It is a terrible struggle between imagination and reason, and also between

understanding and the inner sense, a struggle whose episodes are the two forms of the Sublime, and then Genius. It is a tempest in the depths of a chasm opened up in the subject. The faculties confront one another, each stretched to its own limit, and find their accord in a fundamental discord: a discordant accord is, according to Deleuze, the great discovery of the *Critique of Judgement*.

This discord between imagination-understanding and reason is once more emphasized in the book *Difference and Repetition*. There, Deleuze radically opposes the Kantian common sense idea as the harmony between these three faculties as a hindrance to philosophy, naming it ideal orthodoxy, which implements a dogmatic image of thought and substitutes the transcendental model of recognition and representation.<sup>20</sup> As a consequence, the harmony between the faculties can appear only in the form of a discordant harmony, since each only communicates the violence to the other, which confronts it with its own difference and its divergence from the others. Deleuze highlights that, “Kant was the first to provide the example of such a discordant harmony, the imagination and thought which occurs in the case of sublime.”<sup>21</sup>

What happens with this Kantian-based investigation of the relation between reason and imagination when Deleuze enters into the realm of film philosophy? Deleuze argues that the clash between reason and imaginations turns towards the annihilation of imagination.

In the first volume *Cinema*, when discussing the aesthetics of German expressionism, Deleuze again returns to the Kantian idea of the Sublime, discerning two possible versions — mathematical and dynamic (the immense and the powerful, the measureless and the formless). Both had the property of decomposing organic composition — the first by going beyond it, the second by breaking it. In the mathematical sublime, the extensive unit of measurement changes so much that the imagination is no longer able to comprehend it, runs up against its own limit, and is annihilated. But the most important effect of this annihilation, according to Deleuze, is that annihilated imagination gives way to a thinking faculty which forces us to conceive the immense or the measureless as whole.

In the dynamic sublime, it is intensity which is raised to such a power that it dazzles or annihilates our organic being, strikes terror into it, but arouses a thinking faculty by which we feel superior to that which annihilates us, to discover in us supra-organic spirit which dominates the whole inorganic life of things: then we lose our fear, knowing

that our spiritual “destination” is truly invincible. German expressionism tells us, from the aspect of dynamic sublime, that the non-organic life of things culminates in a fire, which burns us and which burns all of Nature, acting as the spirit of evil and darkness.<sup>22</sup>

Could it be then, that the deepest secret of imagination is the death of imagination, which gives birth to the new sort of thought?

In the second volume of *Cinema*, Deleuze is seeking to trace the faculties of the mind, which organize the cinema art as the specific art in comparison with the others. To do so, Deleuze relies not on imagination, but on thought. In the chapter entitled “Thought and Cinema” Deleuze, following the Kantian idea of the Sublime though not mentioning his name, suggests a *sublime* conception of cinema: “In fact, what constitutes the Sublime is that the imagination suffers a shock which pushes it to the limit and forces thought to think the whole as intellectual totality which goes beyond the imagination.”<sup>23</sup>

When the imagination was annihilated, the thought came into play. But Kant has nothing to do with it any more. From now onwards, Deleuze relies on the thought genesis reflected by Antonin Artaud.

#### ARTAUD AND MODERN CINEMA

According to Deleuze,

modern cinema develops new relations with thought from three points of view: the obliteration of a whole or of a totalization of images, in favour of an outside which is inserted between them; the erasure of the internal monologue as whole of the film, in favour of a free indirect discourse and vision; the erasure of the unity of man and the world, in favor of a break which now leaves us with only a belief in this world.<sup>24</sup>

How does it happen that, according to Deleuze, Artaud is a forerunner of modern cinema?

The idea of a shock as an effect of the spirit, which forces it to think and to think the Whole is not a Deleuzian invention, but seems to be suggested by the Russian film director Sergei Eisenstein (1898-1948). Deleuze carefully reads texts by Eisenstein: *Film Form, Film*

*Sense, Mémoires, Au-delà des étoiles, La non-indifférente Nature.*<sup>25</sup> He refers to Eisenstein not only in the first chapter, when discussing the topic of dialectical montage, but also in the second volume in the chapter “Thought and Image.” Deleuze seems to refer to this notion of Eisenstein, in which he considered that internal monologue in the cinema goes beyond dreaming, which is too individual, and constitutes segments or links of a truly collective thought. Artaud also wrote about shock as a very important power in his theatre of cruelty: “To make metaphysics out of a spoken language is to make the language express what it does not ordinarily express: to make use of it in a new, exceptional, and unaccustomed fashion; to reveal its possibilities for producing physical shock.”<sup>26</sup> Deleuze compares the Eisensteinian insight of the shock, which annihilates the imagination and gives birth to new thought, with a different version of the shock, namely the one expressed by Artaud. The “theater of cruelty” is supposed to produce shock in order to revitalize the world we live in. Artaud wrote: “Everything that acts is a cruelty. It is upon this idea of extreme action, pushed beyond all limits, that theater must be rebuilt [...] The theater must give us everything that is in crime, love, war, or madness, if it wants to recover its necessity.”<sup>27</sup> Artaud suggested for the new theatre to concentrate around famous personages, atrocious crimes, superhuman devotions — to return to the images and struggling forces of the old Myths. But this return to old Myths has nothing to do with the return towards imagination. Artaud proposed to renounce “our empiricism of imagery, in which the unconscious furnishes images at random, and which the poet arranges at random too, calling them poetic and hence hermetic images.” He also proposed “to return through the theater to an idea of the physical knowledge of images and the means of inducing trances.”<sup>28</sup>

But these trances have nothing to do with a dream. Artaud wrote that a dream as it appears in the European cinema inspired by surrealism is too easy a solution to the “problem” of thought. Artaud believes more in the appropriateness between cinema and automatic writing, considering that automatic writing is not the absence of composition, but a higher control which brings together critical and conscious thought and the unconscious in thought. It is the structure of spiritual automaton. Deleuze, following Artaud noticed that mainly in cinema, thought is brought face-to-face with its own impossibility, but drawn from this a higher power of birth. In this conception, thought no longer confronts repression, the unconscious, dream, sexuality or death, “as in expressionism (and also in surrealism), it is all these

determinations which confront thought as a higher “problem,” or which enter into relation with the indeterminable, the unrefferable.”<sup>29</sup>

“It is true,” — concludes Deleuze, “that a bad cinema (and sometimes good) limits itself to a dream state induced in the viewer, or — as has been the subject of frequent analysis — to an imaginary participation. But the essence of the cinema — which is not the majority of films — has thought as its higher purpose, nothing but thought and its functioning.”<sup>30</sup>

The paradox is that Artaud himself has difficulties with thought, but Deleuze relies mainly on these difficulties. He discusses them in *Difference and Repetition*. Deleuze noticed that for Artaud the problem was not to orientate his thought, or to perfect the expression of what he thought, or to acquire application and method or to perfect his poems, but simply to manage to think something. Deleuze studies the discussion in correspondence between Artaud and his friend Jacques Rivière concerning the difficulties of thought and concludes that Rivière did not understand the main idea of Artaud, who identified the only difficulties in thinking as related to lack of method, technique or application, and even lack of health. According to Deleuze, these, however, are fortunate difficulties. Fortunate not only because they prevent the nature of thought from devouring our own nature, and not only because they bring thought into relation with obstacles which are so many “facts” (without which it would not manage to orientate itself), but also because our efforts to overcome these obstacles allow us to maintain an ideal of the self as it exists in pure thought. We can maintain this ideal like a “superior degree of identity with ourselves,” which persists through the factual variations, differences and inequalities which constantly affect us. But Artaud, from Deleuze’s point of view, had different things in mind. For him, according to Deleuze, this was the only conceivable “work”: it presupposes an impulse, a compulsion to think which passes through all sorts of bifurcations, spreading from the nerves and being communicated to the soul (*et se communiqué à l’âme*) in order to arrive at thought.<sup>31</sup> Henceforth, thought is also forced to think its central collapse, its fracture, its own natural “powerlessness” (*impouvoir naturel*), which is indistinguishable from the greatest power — in other words, from those unformulated forces, the *cogitanda*, as though from so many thefts or trespasses in thought. Deleuze concludes, that contrary to Kant’s dogmatic image of thought, Artaud pursues in all this the terrible revelation of a thought without image (*d’une pensée sans image*), and the conquest of a new principle which does not allow itself to

be represented. Artaud knows “that difficulty as such, along with its cortege of problems and questions, is not a *de facto* state of affairs but a *de jure* structure of thought; that there is an acephalism in thought (*acéphale dans la pensée*) just as there is an amnesia in memory (*un amnésique dans la mémoire*), an aphasia in language (*un aphasique dans le langage*) and an agnosia in sensibility (*un agnosique dans le sensibilité*).”<sup>32</sup> Relying upon Artaud’s insight on the powerlessness of thought Deleuze concludes that thinking is not innate, as Kant supposed, but must be engendered in thought. This genesis of thought, overlooked from the Kantian perspective but tackled from Artaud’s experience, reveals for Deleuze that the problem is not to direct or methodically apply a thought which pre-exists in principle and in nature, but to bring into being that which does not yet exist. “To think is to create — there is no other creation — but to create is first of all to engender “thinking’ in thought,”<sup>33</sup> says Deleuze, following Artaud. This conception constitutes one of the important principles of Deleuzian aesthetics of cinema.

A different understanding of the genesis of thought creates, according to Deleuze, an absolute opposition between Artaud’s project and a conception such as Eisenstein’s. Deleuze concludes that for Artaud, contrary to Eisenstein’s concept, what cinema advances is not the power of thought but its impower.

Artaud was involved in cinema art as an actor and screenwriter. Having appeared in more than twenty films between 1924 and 1935, Artaud as film actor was performing in Abel Gance’s *Napoléon* (1926), Carl Th. Dreyer’s *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (*La Passion de Jeanne d’Arc*, 1927), and Fritz Lang’s *Liliom* (1933). Artaud is the author of fifteen scenarios, but only one of them was to ever be produced. When Germaine Dulac directed *The Seashell and the Clergyman* in 1927, Artaud insisted on his participation in the filming and editing of his own text, but Dulac, taking into account Artaud’s notoriously difficult personality, did her best to exclude Artaud from any possible collaboration. Afterwards, Artaud openly disagreed with the interpretation of his scenario. When asked in 1924, “What sort of films would you like to make?,” he replied: “So I demand phantasmagorical films [...] The cinema is an amazing stimulant. It acts directly on the grey matter of the brain. When the savour of art has been sufficiently combined with the psychic ingredient which it contains it will go way beyond the theatre which we will relegate to a shelf of memories.”<sup>34</sup> When Artaud believed in cinema he suggested some its achievement as an example for theatre. In *The Theater and Its Double* he wrote:

In a Marx Brothers' film a man thinks he is going to take a woman in his arms but instead gets a cow, which moos. And through a conjunction of circumstances which it would take too long to analyze here, that moo, at just that moment, assumes an intellectual dignity equal to any woman's cry. Such a situation, possible in the cinema, is no less possible in the theater as it exists: it would take very little—for instance, replace the cow with an animated manikin, a kind of monster endowed with speech, or a man disguised as an animal to rediscover the secret of an objective poetry at the root of humor, which the theater has renounced and abandoned to the Music Hall, and which the Cinema later adopted.<sup>35</sup>

When Deleuze pronounces that “the Brain is the screen,”<sup>36</sup> he does so as if following Artaud's insight. But, as Jamieson notices, tragically, Artaud's film theory was never fully realized and remains historically lost. Despite pursuing a number of avenues to raise funds, Artaud's polemic remained purely theoretical.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, Deleuze discerns in Artaud's ideas the turn towards modern cinema. Deleuze notices that as long as Artaud believes in the cinema he credits it not with the power of returning to images and linking them according to the demands of an internal monologue and the rhythm of metaphors, but of “un-linking” them, according to multiple-voices, internal-dialogues, always a voice in another voice. “In short,” writes Deleuze, “it is the totality of cinema-thought relations that Artaud overturns: on the one hand there is no longer a whole thinkable through montage, on the other hand, there is no longer an internal monologue utterable through image.”<sup>38</sup> Deleuze studies unrealised film scripts written by Artaud (32, *La révolte du boucher*, *Dix-huit secondes*) and identifies the powerlessness of thought as the main topic in them. Deleuze concludes that Artaud believes in the cinema as long as he considers that the cinema is essentially suited to reveal this powerlessness to think at the heart of thought. He ceases to believe in the film when he begins to believe that the movie may create only an abstract, figurative and dreams. Deleuze warns that we are in danger of misconstruing Artaud's originality: “it is no longer thought which confronts repression, the unconscious, dream, sexuality or death, as in expressionism (and also in surrealism), it is all these determinations which confront thought as higher “problem,” or which enter into relation with the undeterminable, the unreferable.”<sup>39</sup>

Deleuze was not interested in Artaud's experience as an actor — he did not usually analyse the actor's input into the film creation. Deleuze was more interested in Artaud's disap-

pointment in cinema as an art. He refers to Artaud's reflections in the text *La vieillesse précoce du cinéma* (*Old age of the cinema*): "The imbecile world of images caught as if by glue in millions of retinas will never perfect the image that has been made of it. The poetry which can emerge from it all is only a possible poetry, the poetry of what might be, and it is not from cinema that we should expect."<sup>40</sup> Artaud's disappointment is the basic argument Deleuze uses to discuss the problem of the unity of man and the world in modern cinema. To a certain extent, Deleuze shares the disappointment in modern cinema when writes, "Cinema is dying, then, from its quantitative mediocrity."<sup>41</sup> Artaud warned that cinema must avoid two pitfalls: abstract experimental cinema, which was developing at the time, and commercial figurative cinema, which Hollywood was imposing. Deleuze thinks that in some sense Artaud's predictions become realized: "What becomes of Hitchcock's suspense, Eisenstein's shock and Gance's sublimity when they are taken up by mediocre authors?"<sup>42</sup> On the other hand, Deleuze considers that cinema as the mass-art has degenerated "into state propaganda and manipulation, into a kind of fascism which brought together Hitler and Hollywood, Hollywood and Hitler. The spiritual automaton became fascist man."<sup>43</sup> This type of a cinema is not the one Artaud was dreaming about. It is also not the type of a cinema Deleuze is interested in. Deleuze is concentrating on the other type of cinema, according to his words "when it stops being bad"<sup>44</sup> (*quand il cesse d'être mauvais*).<sup>45</sup> This type of movie does not constitute the majority of film production, but is enough for Deleuze: he mentions more than one hundred film directors in the first volume *Cinema I, The Movement-Image* and adds additional forty in the second volume *Cinema II. The Time-Image*. He further cites about four hundred movies in the both volumes of *Cinema*.

On the other hand, as has already been discussed in this article, Deleuze relies on Artaud's texts which are not related to the cinema — he discerns from Artaud's reflections on the inability of thought, the attempt to break the causally related patterns of the movement-image, the so-called "sensory-motor schemata," along with a turn towards pure *visual situations* in modern cinema. Among the main film directors who made this sensory-motor break towards the modern cinema of the seer in pure visual situations Deleuze mentions the Danish film director Carl T. Dreyer (1889-1968) (*Vampyr, Gertrud, Ordet*), the Italian film director Roberto Rossellini (1906-1977) (*Stromboli, Europe 51*), and the French-Swiss film director Jean-Luc Godard (1930) (*Pierrot le fou, Une femme est une femme, Bande à part, Le Mépris, Weekend, Lettre à Freddy Buache, Les Carabiniers, La Chinoise, Deux ou trois choses que je sais d'elle*).



Deleuze even noticed the spiritual crisis Dreyer experienced and posed the rhetorical question: "Was Dreyer an Artaud to whom reason would have been "restored," once again by virtue of the absurd?"<sup>46</sup> In Dreyer's movies Deleuze points out the new relation between cinema and thought, the grasping of the intolerable even in the everyday and insignificant. In 1983, during a conversation with Pascal Bonitzer and Jean Narboni, Deleuze, when asked about the crisis of the movement-image, mentions these two Rossellini's movies once more, indicating that in them, the situations are too powerful or too painful or too beautiful and because of that the old sensory-motor links are broken. The main personages in *Stromboli* and *Europe 51* found themselves in situations which are too intense, so they do not know how to react. Instead of reacting by action, they have gained an ability to see and to hear. In this visionary cinema, new types of signs, such as chronosigns, lectosigns, and noosigns, are created. Artaud's "cinema of cruelty," as Deleuze renames it: "does not tell a story but develops a sequence of spiritual states which are deduced from one another as thought is deduced from thought."<sup>47</sup> This has, according to him, something in common with Paolo Pasolini's movies (*Theorem*, *Salo*). In them, the image is carried to the point where it becomes deductive and automatic and creates the thought of the image and the thought in the image (*pensée de l'image, la pensée dans l'image*).<sup>48</sup> Carmelo Bene (1937-2002) – an Italian actor, poet, film director and screenwriter, wrote the essay *Superpositions* in 1979 in collaboration with Deleuze. In the chapter "Cinema, Body and Brain, Thought" (*Cinema II. The Time-Image*) Deleuze concludes, that "Carmelo Bene must be the director closest to Artaud"<sup>49</sup> Deleuze explains: Bene has the same experience as Artaud: he "believes" in cinema, he believes that cinema can bring about a more profound theatricalization than theatre itself, but he only believes this for a short time. The most important aspect which unites Artaud's conception with Bene's is their common belief in the capacity that cinema would have to give a body, to bring about its birth and disappearance in a ceremony, in a liturgy. In Bene movies (*Capricci*, 1969, *Don Giovanni*, 1971, *Salomè*, 1972, *One Hamlet Less*, 1973) one can discern a metaphysics Artaud wrote about. According to Artaud:

to make metaphysics out of language, gestures, attitudes, sets, and music from a theatrical point of view is, it seems to me, to consider them in relation to all the ways they can have of making contact with time and with movement.<sup>50</sup>

Derrida argues that this “impouvoir” indicated by Artaud is not lack of inspiration, the sterility of having nothing to say, but, on the contrary, is the inspiration itself in so far as it is antecedent and another voice coming from “nowhere.” Adrian Morfee in his book *Antonin Artaud's Writing Bodies* opposes Derrida by arguing that Artaud is quite simply not as meditative, reflective, and philosophical as Derrida's brilliance makes him appear. Nor do his texts carry the penetrating insights he lends them. Artaud's way of thinking is not unidirectional and incisive, but fragmented, messy, and repetitive. For this reason, Morfee suggests that the greater danger with this approach is that it assumes Artaud may be treated synthetically. But Artaud is not that sort of writer. His ideas evolve and mutate over time, and, to make matters more complicated, he proceeds by developing pairs of conflicting accounts. In his final poetry two mythic narrative systems are created, the one to trace the genealogy of his alienation, the other to trace out a future genealogy that would end it.<sup>51</sup> The same critique could be addressed to Deleuze as well — that is, one can say that he treats Artaud synthetically.

On the other hand, Morfee claims that Artaud does not build theories but theorizes — his work is directed not towards creating objects, either esthetic or theoretical, but towards the activities of thinking and writing. The annihilation of imagination in Deleuzian aesthetics of the cinema is based mainly on the activities of thinking.

Thought does not become visible in cinema, but it turns towards what is impossible to think in thought and towards what it is impossible to see in the image. Thought in the cinema clashes with its own impossibility, but exactly from this clash its power and new rebirth becomes possible. Discussing the problem of thought's own impossibility as the source of cinema art, Deleuze returns to other, different theoretical sources. He mentions Martin Heidegger who discovered the thought's universal form and Maurice Blanchot, who expressed an idea similar to Artaud's in literature. What Blanchot diagnoses everywhere in literature, Deleuze considers as particularly clear in cinema: “on the one hand the presence of an unthinkable in thought, which would be both its source and barrier; on the other hand the presence to infinity of another thinker in the thinker, who shatters every monologue of a thinking self.”<sup>52</sup> On a similar note, Deleuze also cites Jean-Louis Schefer's book *L'homme ordinaire du cinéma*,<sup>53</sup> noticing Schefer's attempt to reply to the question: in what respect and how is cinema concerned with a thought whose essential character is not yet to be? Deleuze concludes that Schefer is close to Artaud.<sup>54</sup>

Mainly, cinema art reveals that thought, when it approaches the world, meets with something unbearable and something unthinkable. These contradictions stop its functioning. Because this world is intolerable it can no longer think a world or think itself. The intolerable (*l'intolérable*), supposes Deleuze, is not some injustice, but the permanent state of a daily banality. Man is not himself a world other than the one in which he experiences the intolerable and feels himself trapped. The aim of cinema, says Deleuze, as if trying to restore Artaud's faith in the cinema, is to create a new link between man and the world and this link is possible if only a new belief were created. For Artaud this belief in reality is closely linked with the belief in body. In this place Deleuze unexpectedly expresses his own personal attitude towards cinema. He considers the aim of cinema to function as an artificial link between man and world, an art form that paradoxically allows us to believe into our world (and us relating in meaningful way to it). According to Deleuze, it is possible to believe in this only as in the impossible, the unthinkable, which nonetheless cannot but be thought.<sup>55</sup>

Artaud's film theory was not implemented. However, Deleuze revived Artaud's lost film theory and re-created it in his experimental cinematic thinking, making it the one of the most influential sources in his cinematic investigations.

## CONCLUSION

Deleuze concludes, that contrary to Kant's dogmatic image of thought, Artaud pursues in all this the terrible revelation of a thought without image (*d'une pensée sans image*) and the conquest of a new principle which does not allow itself to be represented. Whereas Kant discusses the displeasure this free play can cause, under the terms of "the sublime," Artaud's displeasure is by no means linked to a new belief in body and flesh. On the contrary: the "healing" — yet gruesome — pedagogy of Artaud's cinema (for Deleuze) lies entirely in the experience of a severe disappointment, namely, Artaud's (and probably everybody's) inability to link brain and screen instantly/directly together, which Artaud longed so urgently for in his early writings of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Artaud's later praise of the theatre of cruelty (1935) are reminiscent of his cinematic days, as it relies on a number of techniques that are interestingly typical for cinema, but not for theatre. One can argue that Artaud's disappointment in cinema (as medium) is transformed/perverted/elevated into its hidden praise in disguise of

a theatrical theory. There — just as in cinema — he recommends to scatter the text (script book). As is done every day while shooting, he aims to distort the body with obscene gestures, to use the human voice as an organ of common beasts. He deliberately separates human voice and human movement/gestures as it is possible through a non-synchronic use of sight & sound in cinema (through machines, not by virtue of the actor). The use of one's body, one's one voice, one's text etc., that Artaud projects here, is not only schizophrenic, it brings the daily, banal, yet artificial (and yes: controlled) use of all our faculties into the process of film shooting on stage and lets the audience suffer, as no current of music, no flickering lights, no narrative, bring all these fragments back to life. Artaud's theatrical fragmentations of the human body and the scattering of any possible narrative display and re-enact cinematic techniques at best. The free play of the human faculties (in Kant) here (in Artaud) becomes a free play of all the inabilities and hindrances a gifted actor (who Artaud was) can think of. The inability of thought might not be its cause, but the effect of this impressive display of Artaud's — theoretical — anti-method-acting *avant-la-lettre*:

The Theatre of Cruelty has been created in order to restore to the theatre a passionate and convulsive conception of life, and it is in this sense of violent rigour and extreme condensation of scenic elements that the cruelty on which it is based must be understood. This cruelty, which will be bloody when necessary but not systematically so, can thus be identified with a kind of severe moral purity which is not afraid to pay life the price it must be paid.<sup>56</sup>

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1. The article is based on the investigation included into the project "Gilles Deleuze: Philosophy and Arts" financed by the Lithuanian Academy of Science (No. MIP-067/2014).

2. Jacques Derrida, *L'écriture et la différence* (Paris: Seuil, 1967).

3. Jacques Derrida and Paule Thévenin, *The Secret Art of Antonin Artaud*, trans. Mary Ann Caws (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England: The MIT Press, 1998).

4. Adrian Morfee, *Antonin Artaud's Writing Bodies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 6.

5. Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester (London: The Athlone Press, 1990), 98.

6. James Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Logic of Sense: A Critical Introduction and Guide* (Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 2008), 71.

7. Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Logic of Sense: A Critical Introduction and Guide*, 151.

8. Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland & Through the Looking Glass* (New York: The New American Library, 1960), 184-186.

9. Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 93.

10. Ronald Hayman, *Artaud and After* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 125.

11. Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 84.
12. *Ibid.*, 84.
13. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul R. Patton (London: The Athlone Press, 1994), 148.
14. Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (London: Continuum, 1989), 168.
15. *Ibid.*, 174.
16. Deleuze, *La philosophie critique de Kant* (Paris: Quadrige/PUF, 1963), 49.
17. *Ibid.*, 50.
18. Deleuze, "The Idea of Genesis in Kant's Esthetics," in Deleuze, *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953-1974* (Los Angeles and New York: Semiotext(e), 2004), 59.
19. Two texts: 1. Deleuze, "On Four Poetic Formulas That Might Summarize the Kantian Philosophy," in Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (London and New York: Verso, 1998), 27-35. 2. Deleuze, "On Four Poetic Formulas Which Might Summarize the Kantian Philosophy," in Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), vii-xiii.
20. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 134.
21. *Ibid.*, 146.
22. Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (London: Athlone, 1986), 55.
23. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 152.
24. *Ibid.*, 187-188.
25. For Deleuze relation towards Eisenstein see Gregg Lambert, *The Non-Philosophy of Gilles Deleuze* (New York: Continuum, 2002).
26. Antonin Artaud, *The Theater and Its Double*, trans. Mary Caroline Richards (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 47.
27. *Ibid.*, 85.
28. *Ibid.*, 80.
29. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 161.
30. *Ibid.*, 163.
31. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 147.
32. *Ibid.*, 147. Deleuze, *Différence et répétition* (Paris: PUF, 1968), 192.
33. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 147. Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, 192: "Penser, c'est créer, il n'y a pas d'autre création, mais créer, c'est d'abord engendrer "penser" dans le pensée."
34. Antonin Artaud, *Collected Works: Volume Three*, ed. Paule Thévenin (London: Calder and Boyars, 1972) 166-167.
35. Artaud, *The Theater and Its Double*, 43.
36. "The Brain Is the Screen: An Interview with Gilles Deleuze," in *The Brain is the Screen*, ed. Gregory Flaxman (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press), 365.
37. Lee Jamieson, "The Lost Prophet of Cinema: The Film Theory of Antonin Artaud," in *Feature Articles 44* (2007).
38. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 167.
39. *Ibid.*, 161.
40. Deleuze, *Cinema 2. The Time-Image*, 165.
41. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 164.
42. *Ibid.*, 164.
43. *Ibid.*, 159.
44. *Ibid.*, 166.
45. Deleuze, *Cinéma II: L'Image-temps* (Paris: Les éditions de minuit, 1985), 223.
46. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 165.
47. *Ibid.*, 174.
48. Deleuze, *Cinéma II*, 227.
49. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 184.
50. Artaud, *The Theater and Its Double*, 46.
51. Morfee, *Antonin Artaud's Writing Bodies*, 8-9.
52. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 162.
53. Jean-Louis Schefer, *L'homme ordinaire du cinéma* (Paris: Cahiers du cinéma/Gallimard, 1980), 113-123.
54. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 163.

55. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 164. Deleuze, *Cinéma II*, 221: "Croire, non pas à un autre monde, mais au lien de l'homme et du monde, à l'amour ou à la vie, y croire comme à l'impossible, à l'impensable, qui pourtant ne peut être que pensé."

56. Artaud, "The Theatre of Cruelty," in *The Theory of the Modern Stage*, ed. Eric Bentley (London: Penguin, 1968), 66.

PARA ALÉM DA IMAGEM-CRISTAL:  
CONTRIBUTOS PARA A IDENTIFICAÇÃO DE UMA TERCEIRA  
SÍNTESE DO TEMPO NOS CINEMAS DE GILLES DELEUZE

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A imagem-cristal desempenha uma função determinante na economia interna não apenas da *Imagem-Tempo* como inclusive de toda a obra de Gilles Deleuze.<sup>1</sup> São por demais conhecidos os seus principais contornos: mediante uma encarnação visual dos paradoxos do tempo de Bergson — objecto da segunda das três sínteses passivas de *Diferença e Repetição* — Deleuze encontrava nas cinematografias de Welles, de Renoir, ou de Visconti imagens que se concentravam na cisão entre o presente que passa e o passado que se conserva, entre o actual e o virtual, e que nesse movimento dariam a ver o próprio mistério do tempo: “O tempo consiste nesta cisão, e é ela, é ele que se vê no cristal. A imagem-cristal não era o tempo, mas vê-se o tempo no cristal. Vê-se no cristal a fundação perpétua do tempo, o tempo não cronológico, Cronos e não Chronos.”<sup>2</sup>

A ommipresença da sombra tutelar de Bergson no díptico sobre o cinema, bem como o facto de Deleuze não mencionar explicitamente a teoria das sínteses passivas do tempo de *Diferença e Repetição* que lhe serve de arquitectura, contribuíram todavia para que a superação de Bergson, que obras como *Proust e os Signos* ou *Diferença e Repetição* continham, tenha passado despercebida a grande parte dos comentadores.<sup>3</sup> O objectivo do presente artigo é por conseguinte trazer à luz alguns dos seus indícios, o que implicará, sem diminuir a importância da imagem-cristal, demonstrar como a *Imagem-Tempo* só poderá verdadeiramente ser compreendida quando nos aproximamos de uma terceira e derradeira forma de temporalidade — *a potência do falso* —, derradeiro estádio de um sistema que, no *magnum opus* de 1968, se propunha “derrubar o platonismo” de forma a recusar o seu presente envenenado: ter introduzido a transcendência em filosofia. Por outras palavras, só nesta terceira síntese do tempo, e nas imagens cinematográficas que Deleuze convoca para a construir, se instaura o plano de imanência para o qual tende todo o pensamento do filósofo francês.

Que na imagem-cristal do cinema moderno se apresente um “pouco de tempo em estado puro” é uma tese indiscutível do segundo volume dos *Cinemas*. Mas o que significa exactamente, para Deleuze, capturar o tempo em estado puro? E será realmente legítimo aproximar esta operação, como Bergson ameaçava na sua doutrina do passado e da memória, de uma teoria da reminiscência? Se o que interessa Deleuze no cinema é o funcionamento do pensamento, não tinha ele já defendido, desde *Diferença e Repetição*, que a reminiscência não serve, em última análise, a uma teoria do pensamento puro, ou seja, a uma imagem do pensamento que conjure o decalque da terra incógnita do transcendental a partir do domínio empírico correspondente<sup>4</sup>? Se a imagem-cristal contribui para desvelar o elemento genético da imagem-tempo, se nela coalescem o actual e o virtual numa tensão máxima, irresolúvel e inelutável, é talvez nas duas imagens a que dá origem — coexistência de toalhas de passado e simultaneidade de pontas de presente<sup>5</sup> — que devemos procurar uma resposta a esta questão, pois é nelas que o virtual se separa mais claramente do actual e é *explorado por si mesmo*.<sup>6</sup> É também aí que o virtual ganha, ainda mais claramente, o estatuto de imagem, e que os *Cinemas*, num movimento análogo ao de *Proust e os Signos* e de *Diferença e Repetição*, deixam Bergson pelo caminho e avançam na formulação de uma terceira e derradeira forma de temporalidade.

Das duas imagens directas do tempo mencionadas focar-nos-emos naquela que incide directamente sobre o passado virtual, uma vez que é a essa que Deleuze consagra o essencial do seu comentário e que melhor permite enquadrar o nosso problema.<sup>7</sup> Esta imagem-tempo é extraída por Deleuze a partir de uma análise das cinematografias de Orson Welles e Alain Resnais. O realizador americano marca, no seu entender, o aparecimento de uma imagem directa do tempo, não apenas pela construção de imagens-cristal, mas pela invenção de dispositivos formais que servirão para explorar o passado sem recorrer ao flash-back e à imagem-recordação, isto é, que atingirão um passado puro, virtual. Da miríade de artifícios estilísticos utilizados por Welles, Deleuze realça a importância das imagens em profundidade de campo que, num filme como *Citizen Kane*:

expressam as regiões do passado como tal, cada uma com os seus acentos próprios ou os seus potenciais, e marcam os tempos críticos da vontade de potência de Kane. O herói age, anda e mexe-se ; mas é no passado que ele próprio se afunda e se move: o tempo não está mais subordinado ao movimento, mas o movimento ao tempo. Assim, na gran-



de cena em que Kane reencontra em profundidade o amigo com que vai romper, é no passado que ele se move; este movimento *foi* a ruptura.<sup>8</sup>

Estaremos então em presença de um procedimento análogo ao de Proust, ou seja, ao resgate de um passado puro, virtual? Numa nota preciosa, Deleuze ergue-se contra a tentação das aproximações arbitrárias, defendendo que «não existe nenhuma procura do tempo perdido em Welles.»<sup>9</sup> Na sua interpretação de *Citizen Kane*, um passado não cronológico coexiste virtualmente sob a forma de toalhas de passado e de nebulosas de pontos brilhantes, e os diferentes testemunhos efectuarão o *salto* bergsoniano nesse elemento ontológico de forma a poderem responder à questão “é lá que jaz a recordação pura ‘Rosebud’?”<sup>10</sup> Rosebud não será contudo encontrado em nenhuma das toalhas de passado e quando surge por fim, aparentemente situado numa região da infância,

é literalmente para ninguém, na lareira onde arde o trenó lançado. *Não apenas Rosebud poderia ter sido qualquer coisa*, como, na medida em que é qualquer coisa, desce numa imagem que queima por si mesma, e não serve para nada, não interessa ninguém. Desse modo, *ela lança uma suspeita* sobre todas as toalhas de passado que foram evocadas por este ou aquele personagem.<sup>11</sup>

Deleuze opta deste modo, no seu comentário de *Citizen Kane*, por enfatizar uma ideia que dirigira já a dedução transcendental da imagem-cristal: a percepção atenta ensina-nos mais quando falha do que quando é bem sucedida, e é esse falhanço que permite entrar em contacto com um passado “em geral,” puro, que resiste à degradação numa imagem-recordação.<sup>12</sup> Toda a análise da cinematografia de Welles se declina a partir deste princípio: a profundidade de campo dá a ver o esforço de evocação e a exploração das toalhas de passado mas *o passado puro guardará o seu segredo virtual*.<sup>13</sup> Este ponto é crucial: a filosofia de Deleuze não é uma filosofia do acesso ao Ser, e se o muro do virtual é de facto transposto pela imagem cinematográfica não devemos ler nessa experimentação o desvelar de um mundo original, submetido à ideia de verdade. Nas páginas elípticas e complexas consagradas a Welles, Deleuze parece recusar a possibilidade de uma reminiscência proustiana que salvasse para nós o em-si do passado e, no mesmo movimento, aproxima-se de uma forma de temporalidade que já não se deixa apreender exclusivamente pelos paradoxos do tempo de Bergson: “Welles não se con-

tenta em mostrar a inutilidade de uma evocação do passado, ele mostra a impossibilidade de toda e qualquer evocação, o devir-impossível da evocação, *num estado do tempo ainda mais fundamental.*"<sup>14</sup>

Por que razão o modelo da reminiscência não serve a Deleuze? Em *O Bergsonismo*, Deleuze sustentava desde logo que a tese de um passado puro como fundamento da passagem do tempo em Bergson:

não tem equivalente senão em Platão – a Reminiscência. A reminiscência também afirma um ser puro do passado, um ser em-si do passado, uma Memória ontológica, capaz de servir de fundamento ao desenrolar do tempo. Mais uma vez, uma inspiração platónica faz-se profundamente sentir em Bergson.<sup>15</sup>

Ora, a filosofia de Deleuze não é, como defendeu Alain Badiou, uma versão do platonismo,<sup>16</sup> mas antes o esforço ardiloso e incessante para o derrubar. Repare-se, neste sentido, que se *Diferença e Repetição*, retendo a lição de *Proust e os Signos*, evidenciava como na *Recherche* se esboçava a possibilidade de penetrar na síntese passiva da memória bergsoniana, se acrescentava igualmente, *logo de seguida*, que o em-si de Combray assim atingido constituía menos uma essência original do que “uma questão persistente, que se desenvolve na representação como um campo problemático, com o imperativo rigoroso de procurar, de responder, de resolver” e que só a introdução de uma terceira síntese do tempo vinha denunciar “a ilusão do em-si como sendo ainda um correlato da representação. O em-si do passado e a repetição na reminiscência seriam uma espécie de ‘efeito,’ como um efeito óptico.”<sup>17</sup> A ambiguidade do fundamento Memória era para Deleuze, em 1968, a seguinte: como evitar que, organizando em semi-círculos a passagem dos presentes, o fundamento não se exprima como um antigo presente, ainda que “mítico,” como em Platão? Quando, pelo contrário: “a memória transcendental domina a sua vertigem, e preserva a irredutibilidade do passado puro a qualquer presente que passa na representação, é para ver este passado dissolver-se de uma outra maneira.”<sup>18</sup>

Como compreender esta dissolução? Deparamo-nos aqui com uma das principais dificuldades do pensamento de Deleuze, e porventura da filosofia transcendental em geral : o fundamento não pode ser decalcado a partir do condicionado — como em Kant ou Husserl — mas, por outro lado, tem de revestir-se de um carácter imanente, não devendo situar-se

além da experiência. A filosofia de Deleuze traça um caminho complexo por entre esta dificuldade. Fundar, para Deleuze, é “determinar o indeterminado,” mas igualmente “metamorfosar,” e a procura de um fundamento deverá ter como único objectivo “inspirar novas formas de pensar.” Ora, entre o determinado e a indeterminação, entre o pensamento e o ser, inscreve-se, para o Deleuze leitor de Kant, a *forma do determinável*: o tempo, definido como forma pura e vazia que cinde inelutavelmente o *cogito* cartesiano e inaugura a filosofia transcendental.<sup>19</sup> Uma das grandes originalidades do deleuzianismo será a de fazer girar a própria procura do fundamento em torno desta introdução do tempo no pensamento, ou seja, em torno daquilo que o *impossibilita*, que o afunda irreparavelmente: pensar será então afrontar o que não pode ser pensado, aquilo que não se deixa determinar e representar (que é, aliás, uma das definições da imanência propostas em *O que é a filosofia?*<sup>20</sup>). Por outras palavras, o acontecimento do pensamento não se engendra senão em torno de um “ponto de afundamento,”<sup>21</sup> quando a procura do fundamento se depara com a sua própria impossibilidade, com o seu a-fundar (*effonder*), e que assinala o *ponto exacto em que o pensamento nasce no mundo*.<sup>22</sup> Para Deleuze, enquanto dispomos de um fundamento não começámos ainda a pensar: só lançando-nos na sua busca e desposando o sem fundo impensado poderemos abrir espaço à sua possibilidade. Não nos deverá portanto surpreender que, em *Apresentação de Sacher-Masoch*, se defina nestes termos a filosofia transcendental: “O próprio de uma investigação transcendental é que não a podemos interromper quando queremos. Como se poderia determinar um fundamento sem se ser precipitado, ainda mais longe, no sem fundo donde ele emerge?”<sup>23</sup>

O fundamento Memória oscila entre uma queda no fundado e a abertura do sem fundo a partir do qual emerge.<sup>24</sup> Deleuze, movido por uma “vontade obtusa,”<sup>25</sup> prosseguindo a sua investigação transcendental, tentará pensar na *Imagem-Tempo* esse sem fundo em que se dilui o passado puro por intermédio de uma terceira síntese a que corresponderá, no cortejo das faculdades, uma passagem de testemunho da memória ao pensamento puro, tal como sucedia em *Proust e os Signos* e *Diferença e Repetição*.

Em *Proust e os Signos*, rompendo com toda uma tradição de comentadores da *Recherche*, Deleuze intitulava polemicamente um capítulo “Papel secundário da memória” e assinalava como tema principal do romance de Proust uma aprendizagem dos signos virada para o futuro. A memória involuntária seria, deste ponto de vista, apenas uma *etapa* na aprendizagem das essências. Por seu turno, as essências deixavam de ser pensadas segundo o modelo pla-

tónico da Ideia como ponto de chegada da reminiscência e eram concebidas como diferenças imanentes e seriais,<sup>26</sup> como princípios de individuação que, na obra de arte, já não *reproduzem* um mundo mas fazem dele o objecto de uma verdadeira *criação*.<sup>27</sup>

*Diferença e Repetição* seguia a lição de *Proust e os Signos* na sua secundarização do fundamento Memória. O eterno retorno de Nietzsche — que fornecia uma síntese imanente da diferença e da repetição segundo a qual o ser se dizia unicamente do devir — bem como o tempo em Kant como “forma pura e vazia” — que, ao contrário da reminiscência, introduzia o tempo no pensamento e não apenas “o movimento na alma” — eram utilizados por Deleuze para afundar o fundamento, dissolver o passado puro no sem fundo e torná-lo uma simples “condição por defeito.” *E só nesta terceira síntese se derrubava efectivamente o platonismo.* Mais uma vez, era a uma teoria das séries (ou, na terminologia de 1968, a um “sistema do simulacro”<sup>28</sup>) de inspiração em parte estruturalista que Deleuze recorria para, *simultaneamente*, diluir o fundamento e organizar o sem fundo, numa operação onde se desmentia Hegel, que considerava que um tal lance especulativo apenas nos faria entrar numa “noite indiferente onde todas as vacas são negras.”<sup>29</sup> O benefício teórico da teoria das séries e da noção de estrutura — que Deleuze lê, num artigo seminal, como uma nova forma de filosofia transcendental, aproximando-a da sua teoria do virtual<sup>30</sup> — é o de garantir às idealidades (passado, ideia ou sentido<sup>31</sup>) um estatuto imanente, diferencial e não subjectivo, e de prescindir do decalque (semelhança) com os campos empíricos correspondentes. Por seu intermédio, Deleuze pode então destituir “Combray em si” do seu estatuto de fundamento ou de instância originária a que a reminiscência se tentaria alcandorar, transformando-a num *problema* que o pensamento — e não mais a memória, mesmo que involuntária — tem de afrontar, a título de “(não)-ser da questão.”<sup>32</sup> Aplicado aos sistemas intensivos e diferenciais do simulacro, de que para Deleuze não o podemos dissociar, o eterno retorno excluiria assim: “a imputação de um originário e de um derivado, como de uma primeira e de uma segunda vez, porque a diferença é a única origem, e faz coexistir independentemente de qualquer semelhança a diferença que reporta ao diferente.”<sup>33</sup>

Neste desenvolvimento subtil, onde se aprofunda a investigação transcendental e que em *Proust e os Signos* Deleuze designava por “dialéctica ascendente,”<sup>34</sup> o significado da expressão “um pouco de tempo em estado puro” transforma-se, pois agora é considerado sob o ângulo da terceira síntese. “Combray em si” — ou, no caso de Welles, “Rosebud,” pois Deleuze reitera que ele poderia ser “qualquer coisa” — deixa de designar o passado puro como

origem mítica ou plenitude do ser, para se dizer agora do tempo como “forma pura e vazia”<sup>35</sup>: assimilada ao “objecto = x” que o estruturalismo, de Lévi Strauss a Lacan, teorizou, ela funcionará como o elemento que faz ressoar as diferentes séries *sem que o possamos contudo identificar*, precursor sombrio que, ligando o diferente ao diferente, se furta ao trabalho da representação — identidade no modelo, semelhança na cópia — e conjura nesse movimento qualquer forma de transcendência.<sup>36</sup> Se, doravante, “por detrás das máscaras existem ainda máscaras, e o mais escondido é ainda um esconderijo até ao infinito,”<sup>37</sup> se o em-si do passado é efeito de uma ilusão, se os ícones bem fundados deram lugar ao devir incessante dos simulacros, então pensar já não é o movimento de descoberta ou de reminiscência do Verdadeiro, mas a libertação de uma “potência do falso,” princípio nietzscheano que Deleuze introduz na terceira síntese de *Diferença e Repetição* e que ocupará um lugar de destaque na *Imagem-Tempo*.

Em suma, o “salto na ontologia” não se confunde, na filosofia de Deleuze, com o reencontro miraculoso de um *déjà là* numenal, não se submetendo a um regime filosófico do verdadeiro ontológico, no que seria uma versão do platonismo e de uma imagem dogmática do pensamento que não soube libertar-se do modelo da reminiscência. Neste sentido, o salto no elemento ontológico do passado, da ideia ou do sentido, representa menos a busca de uma resposta do que a *constituição de um problema que não sabemos ainda formular, o impensado* enquanto ponto de afundamento<sup>38</sup> a partir do qual começamos a pensar. Efectuado o salto, como na sequência da fábrica de *Europa 51* ou do vulcão de *Stromboli*, tratar-se-á então de “traçar no ser e no pensamento”<sup>39</sup> circuitos que não são nunca preexistentes, mas envelopes cada vez mais vastos da realidade *e* do pensamento, da percepção *e* da memória, da matéria *e* do espírito. O tempo em “estado puro” proustiano ou da imagem-cristal significa, por conseguinte, menos a revelação final de um segredo escondido no passado virtual do que a potência disruptiva e não cronológica de uma temporalidade a partir da qual um sem fundo se abre e se joga a possibilidade impossível de começarmos enfim a pensar.

Esta breve incursão no interior do sistema tem por objectivo exclusivo uma melhor compreensão do argumento da *Imagem-Tempo*. Com efeito, se Deleuze não formaliza uma terceira síntese diversos elementos a indiciam. Sobre *Citizen Kane* Deleuze dirá que: “mal atingimos as toalhas de passado é como se fossemos levados pelas ondulações de uma grande vaga, o tempo saído dos seus eixos, e entra-se na temporalidade como um estado de crise permanente.”<sup>40</sup>

Atingir o passado puro graças à profundidade de campo não é o mesmo que o salvar para nós. O esforço de evocação do passado depara-se com a sua própria impossibilidade pois o presente na sua corrida para a frente já não o sabe acolher. A exploração das regiões não cronológicas do tempo já não se deixa circunscrever pela Memória: “as regiões do passado já não libertam imagens-recordação, elas libertam presenças alucinatórias.”<sup>41</sup> E, tal como sucedia em *Diferença e Repetição*, quando o passado puro domina a sua vertigem e não já não tomba sobre o fundado — imagem-recordação —, assiste-se para Deleuze à sua dissolução: “dir-se-ia que certas toalhas se enrugaram, outras se extinguíram, de tal forma que se justapõem aqui ou acolá esta ou aquela idade como em arqueologia. *Nada mais é decidível*: as toalhas coexistentes justapõem agora os seus segmentos.”<sup>42</sup>

Dois aspectos merecem ser reiterados. Em primeiro lugar, que a conquista do passado puro não revela nenhum segredo, que não existe uma essência estável como na reminiscência, e que, como na terceira síntese de *Diferença e Repetição*, se suprime um termo fixo (transcendente) supostamente último e originário.<sup>43</sup> O tempo abandona aqui, como em 1968, “qualquer conteúdo memorial,”<sup>44</sup> e é neste sentido que deve ser dito “forma pura e vazia.” Referindo-se a um texto de Melville que considera aplicar-se ao cinema de Welles, Deleuze observa que:

vamos de faixa em faixa (*bandelette*), de estrato em estrato no seio da pirâmide, à custa de horríveis esforços, e tudo isso para descobrir que não existe ninguém na câmara funerária — a não ser que comece aqui a “substância não estratificada.”<sup>45</sup>

Esta substância não estratificada conduz-nos ao segundo ponto pois é aí que as toalhas de passado se parecem dissolver. Para Deleuze, o apanágio da profundidade de campo em Orson Welles é o de fazer comunicar regiões espacialmente e cronologicamente distintas no fundo de um tempo ilimitado. Este fundo é um *sem fundo*, um plano de imanência. Nele reina o tempo como devir terrível e universal, como forma pura e vazia que cinde inelutavelmente o sujeito: “é a loucura, a personalidade cindida, que testemunha agora pelo passado.”<sup>46</sup> Nele reina também a morte, que para Deleuze é o ponto em que encontramos a substância universal, o sem fundo não estratificado. A morte, quando considerada à maneira de Blanchot como impessoal, assinala a terceira síntese do tempo na ordem do inconsciente e constitui “a forma derradeira do problemático, a fonte dos problemas e das questões, a marca da sua perma-

nência para além de qualquer resposta.”<sup>47</sup> Aproximamo-nos assim do limite para o qual tende a filosofia transcendental segundo Deleuze, que num curso sobre Welles constata: “Estamos no sem fundo. Porquê? Não existe resposta, não existe uma razão para que eu pense tal coisa, para que eu acredite, é a questão, a última das questões, é assim (*c’est comme ça*).”<sup>48</sup>

Este momento recebe um nome enigmático no pensamento de Deleuze, numa recuperação de uma ideia do filósofo pré-socrático Anaximandro: Justiça. Na *Lógica da Sensação* o combate de Francis Bacon contra a imagem-cliché tendia para um limite análogo: “será preciso ir até lá, afim que reine uma Justiça que será somente Cor e Luz, um espaço que será somente Saara.”<sup>49</sup> Quando, em Orson Welles, as toalhas de passado se dissolvem, quando a prioridade — ou transcendência — do passado puro se dissipa no tempo considerado “como matéria-prima, imensa e terrífica, como devir universal” então aproximamo-nos de uma justiça superior de que as regiões do passado são apenas os auxiliares, uma justiça imanente da Terra ou “pré-história da consciência no nascimento do tempo e do pecado, quando o céu e a terra, a água e o fogo, o bem e o mal ainda não são distintamente separado.”<sup>50</sup> Orson Welles traça assim um plano de imanência simultaneamente temporal e espiritual, ou moral e noético, exacto contraponto do plano de imanência material a que Vertov remontava na *Imagem-Movimento*, num procedimento que corresponde menos a uma substituição do que à anexação de uma nova dimensão — o tempo não cronológico, o pensamento — que o primeiro continha enquanto virtualidade não actualizada, mas que necessitava paradoxalmente de ser construída ou *depositada*, única forma de a distinguir de uma simples possibilidade.

Se a dissolução do passado puro na imagem directa do tempo criada por Welles marca a entrada dos *Cinemas* numa terceira síntese do tempo, Deleuze não a formaliza detalhadamente como em *Diferença e Repetição* — ou tal como o fizera para a segunda síntese da imagem-cristal — votando o comentador a recolher pacientemente, aqui e ali, os seus indícios. Um estudo que incidisse apenas sobre esta questão poderia no entanto detalhadamente trazê-la à luz. A cinematografia de Alain Resnais, realizador que parece ocupar-se da Memória mas sobre o qual Deleuze afirma que “não existe autor menos enfiado no passado,”<sup>51</sup> na medida em que inventa “toalhas paradoxais, hipnóticas, cujo próprio é, a um tempo, o de serem um passado, mas sempre por vir,”<sup>52</sup> desempenharia nessa demonstração um papel fundamental. Poderiam igualmente ser mencionados os cristais *fendidos* de Renoir, que desenvolvem uma experimentação na profundidade de campo onde se abre caminho ao *novo* e donde

“sairá [...] um novo Real [...] para além do actual e do virtual,”<sup>53</sup> ou a exploração da *serialidade* do tempo na cinematografia de Godard, que reúne o *antes e o depois* dos corpos numa imagem directa do tempo,<sup>54</sup> ou ainda a fabulação nos cinemas do Terceiro-Mundo, que Deleuze aproxima *ipsis verbis*, em resposta a uma pergunta de um auditor do seu curso, da terceira síntese do tempo de *Diferença e Repetição*.<sup>55</sup>

Um aspecto da terceira síntese na *Imagem-Tempo* deixa-se porém claramente circunscrever, e ocupa um lugar predominante na economia global do segundo volume dos *Cinemas*. A imagem-cristal constituía o elemento genético da imagem-tempo, o *acme* para o qual se encaminhava a dedução transcendental da imagem virtual como correlato das imagens ópticas e sonoras puras do cinema moderno. Atingido esse ponto, Deleuze acrescentará no entanto um novo lance à sua análise do cinema moderno: *a potência do falso*, que eleva ao estatuto de “princípio mais geral que determina o conjunto das relações na imagem-tempo directa.”<sup>56</sup> Ora, a introdução deste princípio, que Deleuze comenta sob o ângulo anódino da narração cinematográfica, só parece poder ser justificada, numa dedução que aparentemente encontrara já o seu ponto de incandescência na imagem-cristal, se tiver como principal objectivo, à semelhança do movimento global de *Proust e os Signos* e de *Diferença e Repetição*, a dirimição de um certo platonismo de Bergson, atenuando a prioridade e a transcendência do passado virtual como “fundamento, em-si, númeno, ideia”<sup>57</sup> e libertando a imagem-cristal do modelo de um verdadeiro ontológico. Tratar-se-á, por outras palavras, de mostrar que “o passado não é necessariamente verdadeiro,” que quando o tempo não cronológico é capturado pelas imagens do cinema teremos também de abandonar qualquer conteúdo memorial, desfazendo-nos pelo caminho da ideia de verdade. E se, aos olhos de Deleuze, a importância do cinema moderno reside na criação de uma nova imagem do pensamento, se, como assinalámos anteriormente, toda a sua dramaturgia é actualizada no comentário aos filmes do pós-Guerra, então tal tarefa não estaria plenamente realizada se a imagem-tempo e as revelações do cristal deixassem subsistir aquele que, desde *Nietzsche e a Filosofia* e *Proust e os Signos*, Deleuze considerava como um dos mais perniciosos postulados da imagem dogmática: a afinidade “natural” do pensamento e da verdade, que se operava justamente pela neutralização da força do tempo.<sup>58</sup>

Sob este prisma, não surpreende que na *Imagem-Tempo* os paradoxos do tempo de Bergson sejam postos de lado e dêem progressivamente lugar às diversas ferramentas conceptuais que Deleuze mobilizava para estabelecer uma terceira síntese em 1968: a) o tempo



enquanto linha recta que bifurca de Borges como resposta à noção de impossibilidade em Leibniz; b) a morte impessoal e a abertura do sem fundo; c) a teoria das séries (despida, porém, da sua roupagem estruturalista); d) a fórmula de Rimbaud “Eu é um outro (*Je est un autre*)” como contraponto poético de uma concepção filosófica do tempo como forma pura e vazia em Kant; e) a síntese estática do antes e do depois; f) a referência omnipresente ao pensamento de Nietzsche e à potência do falso.

A introdução do paradoxo dos futuros contingentes<sup>59</sup> servirá assim a Deleuze, numa primeira aproximação, para demonstrar que a ideia de verdade não resiste a um confronto com a força do tempo, pois dele decorrem inevitavelmente duas conclusões: *ou o possível procede do impossível ou o passado não é necessariamente verdadeiro*. Esta posição não se confunde com um relativismo *naïf*, que se limita a constatar que a verdade depende de factores subjectivos ou epocais, postulando pelo contrário que é a consideração do tempo de um ponto de vista transcendental, enquanto força *pura*, que nos impede de deixar intacta a pré-existência de uma forma do verdadeiro que caberia ao pensamento reencontrar. Deleuze louva a Leibniz a bela noção de impossibilidade, que teria permitido resolver o paradoxo dos futuros contingentes e salvar provisoriamente a verdade, mas acrescenta que nada nos impede de avançar, como em Borges ou na obra de arte moderna, que os mundos impossíveis participam de um mesmo universo. Deste ponto de vista, o tempo seria uma linha recta que não cessaria labirinticamente de bifurcar, “passando por presentes impossíveis, e regressando sobre passados não necessariamente verdadeiros.”<sup>60</sup> Esta nova forma de temporalidade já não se enquadra estritamente com os paradoxos do tempo de Bergson, e Deleuze tenta extrair as suas implicações cinematográficas à luz do pensamento de Nietzsche e da sua crítica filosófica da ideia de verdade.

A forma de temporalidade do regime cristalino da imagem é doravante pensada como um devir ilimitado e terrível que põe em causa todo e qualquer modelo formal de verdade. À semelhança do que sucedia em *Diferença e Repetição*, o significado da expressão proustiana “um pouco de tempo em estado puro” transforma-se, como consequência do *aprofundamento*<sup>61</sup> da investigação transcendental: já não apenas o duplo jacto bergsoniano do presente que passa e do passado virtual, mas uma *série de potências do falso*.<sup>62</sup> À indiscernibilidade entre o real e o imaginário que as descrições cristalinas implicavam corresponde agora, no plano da narração cinematográfica, uma indecidibilidade entre o verdadeiro e o falso:

A narração deixa de ser uma narração verídica que se encadeia com descrições reais. É simultaneamente que a descrição se torna o seu próprio objecto e que a narração se torna temporal e falsificante. A formação do cristal, a força do tempo e a potência do falso são estritamente complementares, e não cessam de se implicar como as novas coordenadas da imagem.<sup>63</sup>

É a Orson Welles, mais uma vez, que Deleuze atribui o estatuto de pioneiro nesta redefinição da narração cinematográfica que teria aberto o caminho à *nouvelle vague*. O regime orgânico da imagem-movimento era inseparável da *pressuposição* de um real pré-existente que a descrição viria desposar, bem como de uma economia narrativa que, decorrendo do agenciamento de esquemas sensório-motores e da subordinação do tempo ao movimento, estabelecia relações localizáveis, causais e legais entre as imagens. A subsequente introdução de imagens-recordação e imagens-sonho no regime orgânico não era suficiente para o abalar, pois efectuava-se unicamente *por oposição*, sob uma forma caprichosa e subjectiva (psicológica) que deixava intactos os pólos do real e do imaginário, submetidos apenas a uma confusão *de facto*. O próprio da imagem-movimento era o de tender narrativamente para uma forma do verdadeiro, dirimindo as aparências até ao momento do desenlace final, tal como ilustram paradigmaticamente os filmes que incidem sobre o meio judicial. Pelo contrário, no regime cristalino da imagem-tempo, os nexos sensório-motores são destruídos, assistindo-se a uma multiplicação de movimentos anormais e de falsos *raccords* que indicam uma emancipação do tempo relativamente ao movimento, a conquista de um tempo não-cronológico e não subjectivo, numa palavra, virtual. Doravante, e *de direito*, no plano de imanência da profusão objectiva e cristalina de todas as diferenças, já não sabemos distinguir o real do imaginário, o verdadeiro do falso, e entramos no reino das alternativas indecíveis e das diferenças inexplicáveis.<sup>64</sup> A potência do falso como mecanismo de produção das imagens apodera-se do cinema, negando ao passado a sua qualidade de elemento verdadeiro ou originário e fazendo o possível proceder do impossível. É levada assim aos ecrãs, nas cinematografias de Robbe-Grillet, Welles ou Resnais, a *impossibilidade leibniziana*:

Num mundo, duas personagens conhecem-se, num outro mundo não se conhecem, num outro é uma que conhece a outra, num outro, por fim, é a outra que conhece a primeira.

Ou então duas personagens traem-se, apenas uma trai a outra, nenhuma trai, uma e outra são o mesmo que se trai sob dois nomes diferentes.<sup>65</sup>

À semelhança de *Proust e os Signos, Diferença e Repetição e Lógica do Sentido*, Leibniz revela-se essencial, para Deleuze, como preâmbulo a uma *estética não subjectiva do ponto de vista*, segundo a qual não existem pontos de vista sobre as coisas, mas onde cada coisa, ser ou imagem se torna ela própria um ponto de vista, ou seja, um princípio de individuação, à maneira da imagem-simulacro que incluía em si mesma e se deformava perpetuamente segundo o ponto de vista do observador.<sup>66</sup> Nesta ordem de ideias, não é o sujeito que constitui os pontos de vista, mas os pontos de vista que determinam a constituição dos sujeitos que neles se instalam. Contudo, a exigência teológica e transcendente que em Leibniz fazia da divergência das séries um princípio de exclusão é substituída, no sistema de Deleuze, por um princípio diabólico e imanente que *afirmará*, na esteira da arte moderna (Borges, Proust, James, Welles, Godard) e do perspectivismo de Nietzsche, a divergência de todos os pontos de vista heterogêneos como modificações de *um mesmo universo em variação contínua*, como “se uma paisagem absolutamente distinta correspondesse a cada ponto de vista.”<sup>67</sup> A ordem *afundou-se*, o platonismo foi derrubado, “a terra perdeu todos os centros”<sup>68</sup> (Welles), “o mundo tornou-se migalhas e caos”<sup>69</sup> (Proust). No caso do cinema moderno, sob a força de um tempo não cronológico, tudo se caotiza e se torna inexplicável, *impensável*:

Já nada é decidível: as toalhas coexistentes justapõem agora todos os seus segmentos. O livro mais sério é também um livro pornográfico, os adultos mais ameaçadores são também crianças a quem se bate, as mulheres estão ao serviço da justiça, mas a justiça está nas mãos de meninas, e a secretária do advogado, com os seus dedos espalmados, será ela uma mulher, uma menina ou um dossier folheado?<sup>70</sup>

Como escapar porém à alternativa da transcendência e do caos? Como pode Deleuze pretender que o derrube do fundamento, o afloramento do impensado, não seja coextensivo ao mergulho na “noite indiferente” que Hegel apontava ao sistema de Schelling? Uma primeira resposta foi já avançada: *afirmando-o*. Ao afirmar o caos, ao afirmar a divergência das séries em torno de um centro perpetuamente descentrado, ao desposarmos o devir e o movimento infinito, conferimos-lhe esse *mínimo de consistência* que o filtra sem perder a variação contí-

nua, traçado de um plano de imanência como coração vertiginoso da própria filosofia.<sup>71</sup> Em *Diferença e Repetição* era o eterno retorno que cumpria essa função, fazendo do regresso (*revenir*) da diferença o único “ser,” ser que se dizia unicamente *do devir* e se aplicava aos sistemas intensivos e seriais do simulacro, onde a diferença comunicava com o diferente sem passar por um fundamento transcendente graças às noções de ressonância, movimento forçado e díspar.<sup>72</sup> Em *Lógica do Sentido*, que aprofundava os resultados da terceira síntese de *Diferença e Repetição*, Deleuze designava-a por *síntese disjuntiva afirmativa*, segundo a qual cada coisa se abria à infinidade dos seus predicados mediante a eleição de uma instância paradoxal que fazia ressoar as séries divergentes a partir da sua própria distância positiva.<sup>73</sup> Em ambas as obras, Deleuze assinalava desde logo que essa lógica diabólica e “esotérica”<sup>74</sup> era indissociável de uma potência do falso, princípio que a *Imagem-Tempo* convoca naturalmente para o centro da análise do cinema moderno, e que figura como o limite para o qual tende toda a demonstração. É ela que, no caso de Welles, permite que o sem fundo enigmático não se confunda com um simples caos, com o niilismo, e possa até ser entendido como uma Justiça superior.

Uma teoria das séries renovada, emancipada do regime de oposições que a caracterizava no estruturalismo, desempenha um papel fulcral na constituição deste caosmos, conferindo-lhe uma organização *imane*nte. Afundar o fundamento é erradicar a forma do Verdadeiro, o mais ilustre dos suplementos transcendententes e universais erguidos pela representação. Mas quando prescindimos do modelo abdicamos igualmente da instância que permitia julgar as aparências e distinguir o verdadeiro do falso. É por este motivo que o falso não se confunde com a mentira ou o *erro* — conceito que para Deleuze, desde *Nietzsche e a Filosofia*, participa de uma imagem dogmática do pensamento, pois consiste numa simples troca do verdadeiro pelo falso e supõe uma forma da verdade imutável e preexistente.<sup>75</sup> Destituído de uma *forma*, o falso é ilocalizável, e não podemos nunca dizer o que ele é: o falso conhece apenas uma *potência* e é indissociável de uma *cadeia ou série de falsários*, de uma multiplicidade que o declina e expõe em graus. Deleuze apresenta vários exemplos de cadeias de falsários, do romance de Melville *The Confident Man* aos personagens de Orson Welles, passando pelo *Zaratrusta* de Nietzsche. A cadeia ou série de falsários permite assim a introdução da noção de valor, e contém em si a resposta ao niilismo e ao caos: o mais baixo grau da vontade de potência encontra-se no próprio homem verídico – como o inspector em *A sede do Mal* (1958) de Welles – que inventa a ideia de verdade para poder julgar a vida, e termina no ar-

tista, que eleva o falso à sua maior potência, na medida em que apenas conhece o devir perpétuo, a transformação interminável, a capacidade de afectar e de ser afectado, de metamorfosear, e que pode *agora* receber o nome de verdade:

Só o artista criador conduz a potência do falso a um grau que já não se efectua na forma mas na transformação. Não há mais verdade nem aparência. O artista é criador de verdade, pois a verdade não tem de ser atingida, encontrada ou reproduzida, ela deve ser criada. Não existe outra verdade para além da criação do *Novo*.<sup>76</sup>

“Atingida, encontrada ou reproduzida” são os verbos pressupostos pela teoria da Reminiscência, de que Bergson se aproxima perigosamente e que Deleuze descarta ao introduzir uma potência do falso como terceira síntese do tempo no regime cristalino da imagem. O nietzscheanismo de Welles consiste para Deleuze na abolição do mundo verdadeiro e do homem verídico que pretende julgar a vida em nome de um ideal superior.<sup>77</sup> Mas para além do bem e do mal não significa para além do bom e do mau, nem se confunde com o caos. A potência do falso possui diferentes graus, e é objecto de uma avaliação imanente, que depende de um critério espinozista: será rejeitado o que não aumenta a potência de agir, o que não intensifica a vida, o que petrifica o devir em nome do ser. É necessário fazer “do devir um Ser,”<sup>78</sup> da metamorfose a única verdade, da criação de possibilidades o único horizonte de *uma vida*. Justiça, bondade, generosidade, o devir é inocente e testemunha por uma vida “emergente, ascendente, aquela que se sabe transformar, se metamorfosear consoante as forças que encontra.”<sup>79</sup>

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O perspectivismo generalizado e a multiplicação de cadeias de falsários no cinema de Welles, o tempo não cronológico e serial enfim emancipado dos gonzos que o amarravam ao movimento e à ideia de verdade, realiza cinematograficamente para Deleuze o célebre aforismo do *Crepúsculo dos Ícones*: “ao mesmo tempo que o mundo verdadeiro abolimos também o mundo das aparências.”<sup>80</sup> A potência do falso em Welles cumpre assim o mesmo programa que *Diferença e Repetição* atribuía a terceira síntese do tempo, dita do “eterno retorno”: afirmar a inocência do devir, derrubar o platonismo e o ideal de verdade, instaurar um plano de

univocidade e imanência que não se deixa circunscrever exclusivamente pela filosofia do tempo de Bergson nem pela noção de imagem-cristal que Deleuze construiu para a incarnar.

Este plano de univocidade e imanência instaurado pela *Imagem-Tempo* distingue-se do da *Imagem-Movimento* pelo facto das imagens, abandonando o regime sensório-motor, mergulharem no continente do virtual, nas regiões de um tempo não cronológico emancipado do movimento. Se este novo plano, por via da aliança com Bergson, se traçava inicialmente como o de uma Memória, Deleuze rapidamente o transformava, à maneira de *Proust e os Signos* e de *Diferença e Repetição*, no plano de uma síntese temporal ainda mais profunda, indissociável da faculdade do pensamento puro que por todo o lado multiplicava as potências do impossível, do inexplicável e do impensado. De facto, se Bergson é importante para Deleuze na medida em que nele se rasga o prodigioso continente do virtual, a etiqueta Memória para o designar foi, ao longo da sua obra, constantemente recusada. *O que é a filosofia?* reitera este ponto, que nos parece fundamental:

Para sair das percepções vividas, não é suficiente a memória que convoca apenas antigas percepções, nem a memória involuntária que acrescenta a reminiscência como factor que conserva o presente (a memória intervém pouco na arte, inclusive e sobretudo em Proust).<sup>81</sup>

No fundo, o que cineastas como Welles, Godard ou Resnais recusam é a transcendência do fundamento Memória ou o apaziguamento de uma revelação final, de um reencontro com um já visto, ou um já pensado – forma e elemento da reminiscência. O que interessa Deleuze é o que não se deixa pensar: devir infinito das imagens, troca perpétua entre o actual e o virtual, indiscernibilidade da matéria e do espírito, libertação de uma potência do falso mirabolante e serial, obtida no poço mais profundo e não estratificado da impossibilidade. Pois só no confronto com este impensado nos aproximamos da imanência e se vislumbra a esperança de começarmos enfim a pensar.

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1. Mencionemos, a título de exemplo, dois dos estudos que lhe atribuíram um lugar de destaque: Ana Godinho, *Linhas do Estilo. Estética e Ontologia em Gilles Deleuze* (Lisboa: Relógio d'Água, 2006) e Christine Buci-Glucksmann, «Les Cristaux de l'Art. Une Esthétique du Virtuel,» in *Rue Descartes, «Deleuze. Immanence et Vie»* (Paris: PUF, 1998), 95-111.

2. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinéma 2. L'Image-Temps* (Paris: Minuit, 1985), 110.
3. A importância de Nietzsche nos *Cinemas*, num artigo que matiza o papel de Bergson, foi contudo assinada por D. N. Rodowick, «La critique ou la vérité en crise», *Iris: Revue de Théorie de l'image et du Son* 23 (1997), 7-25.
4. Cf. Gilles Deleuze, *Différence et Répétition* (Paris: PUF, 1969), 217.
5. Deleuze, *L'Image-Temps*, 129: "O que o cristal dá a ver é o fundamento escondido do tempo, ou seja, a sua diferenciação em dois jactos, o dos presentes que passam e o dos passados que se conservam [...]. Existem portanto já duas imagens-tempo possíveis, uma fundada sobre o passado, a outra sobre o presente." O que interessará Deleuze no presente não é contudo o seu carácter actual, mas a *construção cinematográfica* de um presente *desactualizado*.
6. Repare-se que não é este propriamente o caso da imagem-cristal pois esta, ao concentrar-se na cisão irreparável do presente e do passado, parece não conseguir salvar o virtual senão sob o preço de já não o conseguirmos distinguir do actual a que está acoplado.
7. E porque era o estatuto do passado que, na filosofia do tempo de *Diferença e Repetição*, conduzia Deleuze a elaborar uma terceira síntese.
8. *L'Image-Temps*, 139.
9. *Ibid.*, 146, n. 20.
10. *Ibid.*, 146.
11. *Ibid.*, 146 (nós sublinhamos).
12. Cf. *ibid.*, 75.
13. *Ibid.*, 149: "As regiões do passado guardarão o seu segredo."
14. *Ibid.*, 149 (nós sublinhamos).
15. Gilles Deleuze, *Le Bergsonisme*, (Paris: PUF, 1966), 55.
16. A leitura de Badiou enferma de um grave defeito: ter privilegiado Bergson na constelação de filósofos de que Deleuze se inspira e, por via de consequência, ter conferido pouco importância ao elemento teórico que a vem matizar, a terceira síntese do tempo. Cf. Alain Badiou, *Deleuze: La Clameur de l'Être* (Paris: Hachette, 1997).
17. *Différence et Répétition*, 119.
18. *Ibid.*, 351.
19. Cf. *ibid.*, 116.
20. Cf. Gilles Deleuze e Félix Guattari, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1991), 59.
21. *Différence et Répétition*, 354.
22. *Ibid.*, 351 e 354: "O pensamento só pensa com a diferença, em torno deste ponto de a-fundamento (*effondement*)."
23. Gilles Deleuze, *Présentation de Sacher-Masoch* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1967), 98.
24. Cf. *Différence et Répétition*, 352.
25. *Ibid.*, 197.
26. Cf. Gilles Deleuze, *Proust et les Signes* (Paris: PUF, 1964) (ed. aumentada em 1979 e 1973), 83-102.
27. Cf. *ibid.*, 131ss.
28. Sobre o sistema do simulacro como organização do sem fundo cf., *Différence et Répétition*, 355 e ss. Sobre a aplicação do eterno retorno ao sistema do simulacro cf. *ibid.*, 153.
29. *Ibid.*, 355.
30. Gilles Deleuze, «A quoi reconnâit-on le structuralisme» (1967), in *L'Île déserte et autres textes* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 2002), 250: "Da estrutura diremos: real sem ser actual, ideal sem ser abstracta."
31. Cf. *L'Image-Temps*, 135.
32. *Différence et Répétition*, 142.
33. *Ibid.*, 163-164.
34. *Proust et les Signes*, 108.
35. Cf. a nota sobre as experiências proustianas em *Différence et Répétition*, 160.
36. Cf. *ibid.*, 157
37. *Ibid.*, 140.
38. *Diferença e Repetição* designava-o por "ponto aleatório transcendente, sempre Outro por natureza, em que todas as essências são envolvidas como diferenciais do pensamento, e que não significa a mais alta potência de pensamento sem designar também o impensável ou a impotência do pensamento no seu uso empírico" (188).
39. Cf. o curso de 7 de Junho de 1983, a que acedemos na Bibliothèque National de France, como para as restantes citações dos cursos.
40. *L'Image-Temps*, 147.
41. *Ibid.*, 149.

42. Ibid., 149.
43. Cf. *Différence et Répétition*, 139
44. Ibid., 146-147.
45. *L'Image-Temps*, 150.
46. Ibid., 148.
47. *Différence et Répétition*, 148.
48. Curso do 10 de Janeiro de 1984.
49. Deleuze, Francis Bacon. *Logique de la Sensation*, (Paris: La Différence, 1981), 33.
50. André Bazin apud. Deleuze, *L'Image-Temps*, 151.
51. *L'Image-Temps*, 163.
52. Ibid., 162.
53. Ibid., 114.
54. Ibid., 254.
55. Cf. o curso de 18 de Junho de 1985.
56. *L'Image-Temps*, 172.
57. *Différence et Répétition*, 119.
58. Cf. Deleuze, *Nietzsche et la Philosophie* (Paris: PUF, 1962), 118.
59. *L'Image-Temps*, 170.
60. Ibid., 171.
61. Termo escolhido por Deleuze em *Diferença e Repetição* para dar conta da modificação do significado da expressão “um pouco de tempo em estado puro” na passagem da segunda à terceira síntese. Cf. a “Nota sobre as experiências proustianas,” 160.
62. O curso do 8 de Novembro de 1983 ilustra bem este ponto.
63. *L'Image-temps*, 172.
64. Cf. *ibid.*, 173.
65. Ibid., 172.
66. Cf. Gilles Deleuze, *Logique du Sens* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1969), 298.
67. Ibid., 300.
68. *L'Image-Temps*, 186.
69. *Proust et les Signes*, 134.
70. *L'Image-Temps*, 149-150.
71. *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?*, 44: “O plano de imanência é como um corte do caos, e funciona como uma peneira (*crible*).”
72. Cf. *Différence et Répétition*, 155.
73. Cf. *Logique du Sens*, 204, bem como o apêndice sobre o simulacro, 302-304.
74. Ibid., 204.
75. Cf. *Nietzsche et la Philosophie*, 118.
76. *L'Image-Temps*, 181.
77. Cf. *ibid.*, 179.
78. Ibid., 185.
79. Ibid., 185.
80. *L'Image-Temps*, 182.
81. *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?*, 158.





*ECOLOGIES OF THE MOVING IMAGE:*

*CINEMA, AFFECT, NATURE*

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Adrian J. Ivakhiv. Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2013. 435 pp. ISBN13 978-1-55458-905-0.

The world appears to us as a world of moving images. Images affect viewers in ways that other forms of expression cannot; this is their singular power. Cinema, since its invention — or rather industrialisation — has arranged these images and has given rise to a set of material practices known as spectatorship. Analogies between spectators of cinema and subject-spectators of “the world” are common. In 1960, Siegfried Kracauer argues that film is unique in the representational arts, as it allows viewers to experience reality more fully. Film theorists of the 1970s — Jean-Luc Baudry, Christian Metz, and Laura Mulvey for instance — explain how viewers identify with film images in what is essentially a voyeuristic relationship. More recent scholarship drawing on phenomenology and affect theory asserts a more dynamic relationship between viewers and images. In these contexts, the question of how the world in its natural states relates to technologically mediated “worlds” arises promptly. A growing number of media-analytic works attuned to concrete ecological issues, including the “media ecologies” research field, examine this question. The world is constituted by an infinite array of natural ecological and geographical processes that unfold next to a more ephemeral range of social and cultural practices. But where does cinema fit into the world and how does it mediate or present this world? Does film somehow change our perception of the world? This is where Adrian J. Ivakhiv’s *Ecologies of the Moving Image: Cinema, Affect, Nature* picks up.

The novel part of Ivakhiv’s conception of the affective relationship between images and viewers is the particular structure he argues that it takes: images themselves are structured as worlds. “World” in this sense signifies a fluid system of natural relations. Ivakhiv is interested in the *movement* from natural relations to mediated relations, and there is a strong sense throughout this work of the imbrication of images’ affective potentials and place, or a geopolitical awareness of the world. Indeed, movement is an important figure for Ivakhiv as it

points to the scale of the world. Images move viewers; moving images, then, go a step further by “projecting our imagination more extensively across the territory of the world” (1). These movements take place in a series of contexts, which the author terms “relational ecologies”: “[All] of this takes place through a process that moves from minerals to photographic chemicals, plastics, and silicon chips, to shooting locations and sets, to editing suites and film distributors, who deliver images to screen and desktop.” (5). Here we sense the broad stakes of these ecologies, which Ivakhiv approaches in a distinct manner.

After a general introduction and a chapter on the book’s “process-relational” approach to cinema, Ivakhiv delves into three chapters on what he calls the geomorphic, anthropomorphic, and biomorphic dimensions of cinema’s significance. These categories could be rewritten as objective, subjective, and “livingness”; the world is divided along a subjective-objective continuum where biomorphy is the middle and mediating term. The final main chapter looks at ecological crisis, examining films and discourses concerning the politics of trauma and the sublime. The afterword examines digital cultures in relation to the book’s key questions. The appendix lays out a series of questions to be asked when doing process-relational analysis. Rather than analyse each individual chapter, I would like to spend some time on some of Ivakhiv’s key concepts, and their consequences.

Firstly, he analyses cinematic ecologies in material, social and personal, and perceptual/affective terms, thus adopting a method of threes or triadism. Ivakhiv derives this approach from Charles Sanders Peirce’s phenomenology of experience — “phaneroscopy” — and Alfred North Whitehead’s process philosophy. It is a tendency in modern thought, according to the author, to divide experience into dualisms such as nature/culture, mind/body, and materialism/idealism. Introducing a third term disrupts this tendency and circumvents this dichotomising habit (34). The book is structured on Peirce’s triadism and makes frequent reference to his categories of firstness, secondness, and thirdness.

Secondly, Ivakhiv adopts an ontology of the world that he calls “process-relational”: “it is a model that understands the world, and cinema, to be made up not primarily of objects, substances, structures, or representations, but rather of relational processes, encounters, or events.” (12). This ontology thus rejects Cartesian dualisms, which separate the essences of mind and body, preferring to conceptualise experience in terms of events and encounters. The book draws on Henri Bergson’s theory of images as flows of matter and movement, Gil-

les Deleuze philosophy of difference, and Félix Guattari's "three ecologies," in addition to the sources already mentioned.

Process-relational analysis of cinema proceeds as follows: a film *is* what a film *does*. Cinema is a composite process made up of social, material, and perceptual elements in admixture. It is a constant becoming that occurs from the top-down, bottom-up, and in every other direction: "from its making to its viewing to its after-effects, including its reverberation in viewers' perception, sensations, conversations, motivations, and attunements to one thing or another in the social and material fields that constitute the world." (44). Film analysis thus requires a consideration of how diegetic and extra-diegetic material, sociality, perceptuality — the "ecologies" of the title — relate to each other. In other words, our experience of cinema is firmly rooted in the world. Process-relational analysis sheds light on cinematic experience, which is posited as a reciprocal process between films and viewers. Each communicates with the other in a reflexive relationship that moves beyond traditional semiotic accounts of how cinematic representation works. Ivakhiv discusses film experience again in a series of threes — spectacle, narrative, and "signness" — working with Peirce's categories, but also re-writing aspects of Deleuze's classification of film images and Sean Cubitt's typology of film experience. Throughout the book, well-known films such as *Stalker* (1979), *Grizzly Man* (2005), and *Avatar* (2009) are analysed in depth, as well as other films by directors like Aleksandr Dovzhenko, Robert Flaherty, Peter Greenaway, Terrence Malick, and Lars von Trier. What these films have in common, as Ivakhiv tells us, is their construction of notable film worlds, and their relations to the material world. Taking *Stalker* as the signal film for process-relational analysis, Ivakhiv demonstrates with aplomb how the film's content and themes relate to the material, social, and mental conditions in the world. Tarkovsky shows the world as it is; its objects mean what they show. Ivakhiv advocates this kind of cinematic materialism, arguing that the material conditions of film production also generate meanings. *Stalker* is prescient in its presentation of themes concerning nuclear disaster — Chernobyl — human rights — Soviet gulags — and political power — the fall of the Soviet Union.

This is a long book. It discusses at length assumptions we may have about ecocritical or ecosophical approaches to cinema; it goes through concepts in threes, in order to circumvent binaries. All of this is required, however, to build the model of process-relational ontology Ivakhiv desires for cinematic analysis. He sets out a lot of groundwork but always in an engaging and provocative manner.

The form of Ivakhiv's argumentation is original. Each chapter looks at a different aspect of the triadic, process-relational approach to cinema. This approach does not cleave material, social, and mental perspectives apart, but insists on their interrelation as part of the same process. There is a sense, throughout, that cinematic worlds are as boundless and fecund as real worlds, "because there are always new films to be made, new kinds of films being made, and new sense to be made of them." (328). Cinema expands outwards, beyond its boundaries. But within these boundaries, cinema is not defined by sets of rigid points—it is more dynamic. And here we sense the significance of an ecophilosophy of cinema, which this book makes us aware of:

More and more of [cinema's constituent parts] are fluid bursts — more like bacteria that share genetic information across boundaries, or rhizomes that connect with others in ever-widening webs, than like sedentary organisms that take root and bear fruit in a single plot of soil. (328)

What questions remain to be asked for an ecophilosophy of cinema? Ivakhiv's comments on digital cultures and biosemiosis should be extended, as they occupy only an afterword here. In it, Ivakhiv ponders the effects of contemporary technologies on cinema — has mimetic representation, and thus the era of cinema, ended, or is it merely film that is coming to its end, with cinema continuing in other guises and by other means? — and finds that digitisation is the latest in a series of transformations of the cinema-industry apparatus that has always co-developed. Cinema will thus live on, exploiting the energies and potentials — "bio-semiotic" relations — made possible by this dynamic relationship. The relation between media and environmental, biological, and ecological issues, which is active in other realms of Media Studies, should be established in film scholarship if it wishes to remain relevant. Ivakhiv takes a worthy step in this direction. This is a rich book that I feel is only beginning to reveal its significance to me.

*BRUTAL VISION:*  
*THE NEOREALIST BODY IN POSTWAR ITALIAN CINEMA*

Adam Cottrel (Georgia State University)

Karl Schoonover. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012. 328 pp. ISBN 978-0-8166-7555-5 .

Karl Schoonover's *Brutal Vision: The Neorealist Body in Postwar Italian Cinema* may seem at first glance to be yet another monograph in the ever growing body of literature dedicated to Italian neorealist cinema. Schoonover's engagement with geopolitics, Andre Bazin's theory of the long-take, and auteur directors such as Roberto Rossellini and Vittorio De Sica supports the suspicion that this effort may be a further rehashing of the well worn arguments that have occupied critics concerning postwar Italian Cinema for over fifty years. And yet, *Brutal Vision* over its five meticulously researched chapters proves to be a worthy and needed addition to the renewed discourse concerning art cinema's position and importance in the contemporary moment by reimagining neorealism as a global cinema. Instead of arguing that Italy's neorealist period constitutes a national cinema defined by the aftermath of World War II, Schoonover expertly contends that these films were always designed to engage a global audience. The significance of this claim is two-fold: 1) by repositioning neorealism as a global cinema Schoonover provides the coordinates to replenish the vitality of one of film studies most treasured cinemas; and, 2) in making such a claim Schoonover crafts his argument so as to engage some of the most interesting and present conversations in the study of cinema today.

For Schoonover, neorealism's global nature is defined through a reading practice predicated on a humanistic engagement with the suffering body on screen. In addition to making the distribution of non-Hollywood films viable to a global audience post-War, Schoonover argues, "neorealism's interest in detailing the brutalized human body also underwrites the emergence of a new visual politics of liberal compassion that I call *brutal humanism*" (xiv). "Brutal humanism" serves to name the reading practice Schoonover advocates neorealist cinema offers a global audience: "Italian films use scenarios of physical suffering to dramatize the political stakes of vision and the need for an outside extranational eyewitness. By

grounding global empathy in cinematic corporeality, these films introduce a new species of what Hannah Arendt calls the ‘politics of pity’” (xiv). Schoonover’s engagement with Arendt is strictly limited to the introductory section where her theory of pity serves as an organizing principle for the book’s more ostensible engagement with historical, archival, and reception based research. Mobilizing Arendt’s theory of pity serves Schoonover less as a theoretical intervention and more as a catalyst to understand vision’s principal political function: rendering reality for ethical judgment. In presenting the profilmic body suffering and imperiled, Schoonover demonstrates neorealism’s global need for an extranational spectator in order to identify those who suffer from those who don’t. Ultimately, neorealism’s corporealism opens Italy to a global spectator in order to “turn watching from a passive form of consumption into an activity replete with palpable geopolitical consequence” (xvii). “Through the staging of bodily violence for virtual witnessing,” Schoonover writes, “these films offer up the activity of looking as an exercise of political will” (xvii). Schoonover suggests that witnessing the endangered body “triggers charitable dispositions” implying that “[o]nly through gestures of humanitarian caring are we able to define and experience our humanism” and “a suffering body is needed to understand the category of the human” more generally (xix, xx).

With this idea, *Brutal Vision* connects a variety of contemporary debates concerning the profilmic body in art cinema, the renewed interest in André Bazin, politics and aesthetics, and the global nature of art cinema more generally. In order to demonstrate the efficacy of his repositioning of neorealist cinema, Schoonover organizes the book into five chapters, each of which argues for its theoretical gambit through detailed close readings of individual films and supporting historical and archival research.

Chapter 1 (“An Inevitably Obscene Cinema: Bazin and Neorealism”) finds Schoonover in a sustained engagement with Bazin’s theory of realism, the long take, and the recent return to Bazin currently enjoying so much attention. This chapter argues for the global nature of neorealism through Bazin’s account of the film spectator defined by a “fundamental humanism” and witnessed through on-screen bodies. Chapter 2 (“The North Atlantic Ballyhoo of Liberal Humanism”) continues the argument introduced above by arguing that neorealist aesthetics envisages an ideal spectator defined by liberal humanism. This spectator, specifically American, serves as a “bystander” who “occupies the paradoxical space of secondary

eyewitnessing, a kind of surrogate seeing in which one can always be on the scene, but never of it or trapped in it" (73).

Chapter 3 and 4 continue this direction by taking on two of neorealism's most celebrated filmmakers: Roberto Rossellini. Chapter 3 ("Rossellini's Exemplary Corpse and the Sovereign Bystander") engages Rossellini's work by speculating "whether and how neorealist films might have met an American need to see the Italian as willing to accept his or her own limited sovereignty" (108). If the body can serve as a site of political struggle and looking can be understood as a form of political action, Rossellini's films grant the international spectator a virtual mode of bearing witness to postwar politics on screen. Chapter 4 ("Spectacular Suffering: De Sica's Bodies and Charity's Gaze") moves this discussion to De Sica, whose films are explicitly less concerned with the physical violence of war. De Sica's work is no less important though in the practice of witnessing as an ethical action. For, by and large, they expand the terrain by which to conceive of the body's performative spectacle as a realist technique capable of prompting an altruistic gaze in line with the practice of humanism.

Chapter 5 ("Neorealism Undone: The Resistant Physicalities of the Second Generation") opens up an interesting discussion concerning the second generation of "neorealist" filmmakers in Italy — such as, Fellini, Antonioni, Pasolini, Bellocchio, and Bertolucci—concerning citation and a national aesthetic tradition legitimated through international markets. Schoonover's argument suggests that the early work of these auteurs does not simply legitimate neorealism through visual reference and filmic homage. Instead, these films use neorealist elements as a starting point to critique the way corporealism was mobilized as a transatlantic political tactic of ethical witnessing. In short, "this second generation of postwar Italian films reproaches neorealism's use of the bodily image as a form of compassion-triggering testimony" (186). The explicit citation of neorealist style is, ultimately, a hindrance to the progression of lived life in postwar Italy, as well as a retardation of cinema's progression as an art form. Placed squarely in the middle of the trauma of World War II and the optimism of Italy's "economic miracle," the films of this wave openly question the neorealist optic as an instrument capable of mobilizing the empathy of suffering for political and ethical ends. And, for Schoonover, this set of filmmakers retroactively confirm the global nature of neorealism through its explicit attention to representing social life postwar through this critique which pushes Italian cinema into new territory concerned with the more contemporary developments of *il boom*.



The main contention of this argument rests on the notion that witnessing is, ultimately, a form of political action. Readers of *Brutal Vision* will largely be divided on this point in addition to the merit or necessity to reevaluate art cinema as it concerns the global appeal of one of modernism's most enduring national cinemas. To Schoonover's benefit he openly acknowledges the difficulties that accompany this proposition, even questioning whether it is "ever appropriate to use a body as the unit of measure for political discourse?" in the book's conclusion. These points aside, Schoonover's "brutal humanism" offers an important and intriguing means to understand the historical, optical, political, and ethical nature of neorealist cinema beyond the confines of national borders.