PAINTING, MOVING IMAGES
AND PHILOSOPHY
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PINTURA, IMAGENS EM MOVIMENTO
E FILOSOFIA
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ABSTRACTS

PAINTING AT THE BEGINNING OF TIME: DELEUZE ON THE IMAGE OF TIME IN FRANCIS BACON AND MODERN CINEMA

David Benjamin Johnson (School of the Art Institute of Chicago)

"There is a great force of time in Bacon, time itself is being painted." Gilles Deleuze's short study of the work of the painter Francis Bacon, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, contains numerous assertions of Bacon's ability to paint time. These assertions are in every instance brief; apart from some oblique references to *Chronos* and *Aion*—the Stoic time concepts Deleuze develops in *The Logic of Sense*—Deleuze does little to spell out this idea that Bacon is a painter of time—or, more generally, that time admits of being painted. In this paper, I argue that Deleuze's understanding of Bacon's painterly presentation of the "force of time" can be fruitfully explicated through comparison with the text that immediately follows *Francis Bacon* in Deleuze's oeuvre: his two-volume study of cinema. Focusing primarily on the second of the *Cinema* volumes, I argue that Deleuze's account of post-war cinema's composition of a "direct presentation of time" parallels his account in *Francis Bacon* of the composition of the eponymous painter's pictures and thereby points us toward the fundamental temporal dynamism Deleuze discovers in painting. At the most general level, I argue, these parallel accounts of painterly-cinematic composition identify three essential compositional steps, which I analyze in depth:

1) The elimination of clichéd forms of perception through the careful application of chaotic pictorial elements. This is achieved in cinema through the use of what Deleuze calls *aberrant movement*; in Bacon's painting, through what he calls *the diagram*.

2) The emergence from this chaos of a new, clear image, unclouded by clichés. Deleuze's name for this clarified image in cinema is *pure optical and sound situation*; in Bacon, *the Figure*.

3) The establishment of linkages within this emergent image, through which time is made sensible. In cinema, this linkage occurs between the pure optical and sound situation and a *virtual image*, and its result is a *time-image*. In Bacon's painting, this linkage occurs between the Figure and the color-field surrounding it, and its result is *color-modulatory pictorial rhythm*.

It is here, I argue, in Deleuze's analysis of Bacon's color modulation and the rhythm that underpins it, that we find the sense of his claims for Bacon as a painter of the force of time. Bacon, I argue, creates a kind of painterly image of time through the use of a compositional procedure which is remarkably similar to that employed by the great post-war directors: eliminate clichéd modes of perception through a controlled deployment of chaos, allow a clear image to emerge from this chaos, establish synthetic linkages within this new image.

Keywords: Gilles Deleuze, Francis Bacon, Rhythm; Time; Cinema; Color Modulation.

"EACH SINGLE GESTURE BECOMES A DESTINY": GESTURALITY BETWEEN CINEMA AND PAINTING IN RAÚL RUIZ'S *L'HYPOTHÈSE DU TABLEAU VOLÉ*

Greg Hinks (Trinity Hall, University of Cambridge)

> Paintings do not show, they allude. Paintings, staged through the
> technical method of the *tableau vivant*, do not allude, they *show*!
> —The Collectionneur, *L'Hypothèse du tableau volé* (1978)

With a chiastic flourish, the Collectionneur of Raúl Ruiz's 1978 film essay *L'Hypothèse du tableau volé* rises to his feet, points definitively towards the frame and, with rising intonation, signals that unlike a painting, the *tableau vivant* reveals in its motility what a static painting cannot. The self-reflexive delivery, and the grandiosity of his gesture, indicate that the same gift has been bestowed upon cinema. While the ensuing narrative may portray him as an isolated eccentric, his words and actions speak to a long-held fascination with the relative capacities of painting and cinema when it comes to capturing gesture.

Both cinema and painting can lay claim to an indexical intimacy with gesture: when we look at a painting we can discern the individual gestures of the artist's hand which brought it into being. At the same time, cinematographic arts allow the gestures themselves to be displayed onscreen, although the apparatus which captures them is mechanical. In his foundational 1992 essay "Notes on Gesture", Agamben explicitly cites painting as a medium which is gesturally inferior to cinema: "Even the *Mona Lisa*, even *Las Meninas* could be seen not as immovable and eternal forms, but as fragments of a gesture or as stills of a lost film wherein only they would regain their true meaning." This study will show that it is not singularly in cinema or in painting that pure gesturality might be found, but rather in intermedial spaces such as those opened up by the interactions between cinema and painting.

Ruiz lures the viewer into searching for clues to solve the conspiracy around the paintings by scanning for the smallest movements onscreen. The reconstruction of the paintings as *tableaux vivants* allows the gestures to be interpolated between stillness and movement, between fiction and reality, between paint and the moving image. The *tableau vivant* constitutes an attempt to halt gesturality between two media, to interrupt its ceaseless mediation and discern some deeper meaning through an enhanced interstitial perspective and by perceiving the movements of both the figures in the painting and the actors, who cannot help but tremble as they hold their poses.

This study will explore techniques of anamorphosis, Diderotian dialogue and elliptical production design to observe how cinema and painting gesture towards each other. The opportunity to combine close scene analyses with more abstract forays into psychoanalysis and art history is a luxury afforded by these kinds of interstitial considerations. Gesturality beckons, but as we approach it we cannot help but re-enact its ceremony and gesture towards or beyond ourselves.

Keywords: Giorgio Agamben; Gesture; Intermediality; Painting; Raúl Ruiz.

WHITHER THE SIGN: MOHAMMED KHADDA IN ASSIA DJEBAR'S *LA NOUBA DES FEMMES DU MONT CHENOUA*

Natasha Marie Llorens (Columbia University)

This paper analyses several key scenes in an Algerian experimental film directed by Assia Djebar, *La Nouba des Femmes du Mont Chenoua* (1978). The scenes in question depict "Reflets et ronces", a painting made by Algerian artist Mohammed Khadda in 1976. Beginning in the 1950s, Khadda synthesized modernist techniques of abstraction borrowed from a European visual syntax with Arabic calligraphic marks and references to Amazighen or Berber aesthetic traditions. The linguistic sign is also the basis for Khadda's early theories of postcolonial abstraction, his commitment to abstraction and his rejection of "realism" or visual narrative in painting. *La Nouba des Femmes du Mont Chenoua,* on the other hand, suggests that renewal and healing from the trauma lingering from the war of liberation (1954-1962) results from conversation among women, and it posits the exchange of language as the basis for transformation. At the same time, the film figures an important contradiction in a postcolonial *mise-en-langue*, or existence in language; the language (French) that wounds is also the language that grants mobility. This paper's central argument is that Djebar positions Khadda's painting in two key scenes as a prism through which to examine a rupture in her own relationship to language, especially as this rupture in language is borne out simultaneously in her intimate life.

Keywords: Assia Djebar; Mohammed Khadda; Algeria; Postcolonial Film; Postcolonial Feminism; Language.

MANET AND GODARD: PERCEPTION AND HISTORY IN *HISTOIRE(S) DU CINÉMA*
Pablo Gonzalez Ramalho (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro)

This article intends to analyse Manet's painting occurrences in *Histoire(s) du cinéma* (9, quoted on Céline Scemama's *Partitions*), in order to evolve a possible sense to Godard's statement that Lumière was the last impressionist painter. As Godard's audiovisual claims require aesthetic parameters to reveal historical thesis, philosophy and intermediality are confronted with the commentaries on Manet's paintings. Godard's claim functions as a catalyst to investigate historical relations between culture and art through *Histoire(s) du cinéma,* in chapters 1B, 2B, and notably 3A, the one with a greater number of Manet's paintings' occurrences. Lumière's invention was to prolong

impressionism in the sense that it has the power to *make us think* as well. In *Histoire(s) du cinéma* Godard quotes Georges Bataille's *Manet*, to show the difference between an artform in which the figures seem to say *I* (romanticism), and the other one in which the figures seem to say *I know what you're thinking of* (modernism). But this historical development would have been stopped by wars and imperialisms, and then we should see other kinds of figures, astonishingly, spread through the entire art history, as Godard shows us. They are figures which see and show undoubtful agonies such as war agonies, hideous agonies.

Keywords: Painting; Cinema; Impressionism; Édouard Manet; Jean-Luc Godard.

A WORK OF CHAOS: GIANLUIGI TOCCAFONDO'S ANIMATED PAINTINGS
    Paulo Viveiros (Luosfona University)

Gianluigi Toccafondo is a painter, an illustrator and a director of animation films, born in San Marino in 1965. His films are a reference in the technique of "animated painting". This essay is an analysis of his work from a phenomenological point of view, and a reflection about the uses of drawing and painting in animation too.

Keywords: Gianluigi Toccafondo; Animated Paintings; Formless; Animation; Phenomeno-logy.

ILL SEEN, ILL SAID: THE DELEUZIAN STUTTER MEETS THE STROOP EFFECT IN DIANA THATER'S *COLORVISION* SERIES (2016)
    Colin Gardner (University of California, Santa Barbara)

In his essay 'He Stuttered', Deleuze demonstrates how a dominant language might be 'minorized' from within by placing it within a constant state of disequilibrium or bifurcation, by making it vibrate or stutter, creating, as he puts it, "an affective and intensive language, and no longer an affectation of the one who speaks".

But what if we were to destabilize this disequilibrium still further by creating a rupture between language and sensation, between color and space, stasis and movement? Instead of a Saussurian-based semiotics based on the arbitrary nature of the sign, Deleuze and Guattari turn to the Danish linguist, Louis Hjelmslev (1899-1965), whose system abandons all privileged reference and instead treats language as an organization of mass/matter, which more readily opens it up to the discourse of painting-as-flesh.

Drawing upon the painterly vocabulary of Jasper Johns, amongst others, Los Angeles-based film and video artist Diana Thater explores this pattern of interference or inhibition—a form of "stutter that stutters"—in *Colorvision* (2016), which consists of eight individual monitor pieces, each displaying the name of a color along with a bouquet of flowers in a different, complimentary, color. As in her previous works, Thater uses the colors of the video spectrum: red, green, blue (primaries); cyan, magenta, yellow (secondaries); purple and orange (tertiary). The word "RED", for example, appears with cyan flowers, while the word "CYAN" appears with red flowers.

This slippage between reading and perceiving is based on a series of neurological tests developed by the psychologist J. Ridley Stroop ("The Stroop Effect") who discovered that when the meaning of a word and its color are congruent (e.g. the word BLUE written in blue color), it is easy to recognize and 'read' the actual color of the word). Conversely, when the meaning of the word is incongruent with the color, such as BLUE written in red color, it creates a conflict between the color and the word's meaning and takes slightly longer to read. Conversely, it is also difficult to name the color "red" when it constitutes the word "BLUE". This conflict between word-recognition (which is faster) and color recognition (which is slower) requires extra processing time for the brain to resolve, further exacerbated by Thater's monitor works because we also have to negotiate the vibrating movement of the image as a whole.

This may be a problem to be solved in psychological terms but of course from an artist's and Deleuze's point of view, this *aporia* between reason and sensation is the very definition of a multiplicity: "Creative stuttering is what makes language grow from the middle, like grass; it is what makes language a rhizome instead of a tree, what puts language in perpetual disequilibrium: *Ill Seen*, *Ill Said* (content and expression). Being well spoken has never been either the distinctive feature or the concern of great writers",

or, indeed of great artists who exploit the stutter to create an even greater incidence of cognitive-perceptual skidding.

BLUE RESIDUE: PAINTERLY MELANCHOLIA AND CHROMATIC *DINGNITY* IN THE FILMS OF DAVID LYNCH

Ed Cameron (University of Texas, Rio Grande Valley)

David Lynch's cinematic masterpieces circulate around his twin obsessions: the color blue and melancholia. Lynch simply makes visually literal the colorful allusion to the "blues" to signify a melancholic mood in his films. From Dorothy's infamously fetishistic velvet dress in *Blue Velvet* and the enigmatic blue rose in *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* to the mystifying blue box and key in *Mulholland Drive,* Lynch has always linked the color blue, this essay argues, to melancholia. In her examination of color in the Padua and Assisi frescoes of the 13th-century Florentine painter Giotto, Julia Kristeva argues that color is the primary method whereby instinctual drives get translated into painting and the means whereby imagery decenters narrative convention. Drive, she argues, emerges most forcefully and disturbingly in the color blue. Since blue is perceived only in the retina's periphery, it operates as a means to decenter the object's form, and, since short wavelengths prevail in dim light, blue is the first color seen before sunrise, figuring the interval before the advent of the symbolic exchange. In these ways, blue indicates that which is in excess of the signifier and that which is situated at the heart of melancholia: the Thing.

Coincidentally, in psychoanalytic parlance, the Thing is that enigmatic pre-symbolic leftover to which the melancholic clings and which sustains the depressed state at the edge of significance. Therefore, through a psychoanalytic lens, this essay argues that Lynch's use of blue in his films that specifically deal with depression demarcate that point in the field of representation that remains, much like the melancholic herself, detached from the field of the Other and, therefore, the field of significance. Because

color is fundamentally disruptive to symbolic stability, I argue that the color blue in Lynch's cinematic universe functions in the manner of what Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok would call a cyptonym. Like the *objet a* of psychoanalysis, the color blue in Lynch stands for nothing, for the Thing at the limit of the circuit of significance. Being an accomplished painter himself, Lynch fetishizes the color blue in several of his features to demarcate his aesthetic liberation through and against the narrative norms of cinematic convention. Ultimately, this essay shows that Lynch's strategic use of the color blue to represent the lacking lack—the over-presence of the Thing—minimizes his film's meaningful reception while simultaneously and paradoxically providing poetic insight into the melancholic condition.

ARTICLES | ARTIGOS

PAINTING AT THE BEGINNING OF TIME:
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FRANCIS BACON AND MODERN CINEMA

David Benjamin Johnson (School of the Art Institute of Chicago)

"There is a great force of time in Bacon", Gilles Deleuze writes in his 1981 study of the work of the British painter Francis Bacon, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*. "Time is being painted."[1] Though a number of such appraisals of Bacon's ability to "paint time" appear throughout *Francis Bacon*, Deleuze's philosophical account of this ability remains frustratingly thin. In contrast to his elaborate expositions of other aspects of Bacon's work—his handling of color and space, his use of the triptych form, his treatment of the relation between chaos and figuration, his place in the history of painting—Deleuze gives the issue of time in Bacon's painting scant attention; his longest discussion of it, appearing at the end of Chapter 8, comprises just four sentences. Most of these brief discussions (of which there are ten, by my count) involve the idea that Bacon's compositions express two distinct modes of time: on the one hand, "time that passes", which appears in "the chromatic variation of broken tones" that compose Bacon's distorted human figures; on the other hand, "the eternity of time", which appears in the contoured, monochrome fields that contain the figures.[2] Evocative as this idea may be, however, it explains little. It leaves completely unaddressed what seems to me the fundamental question: How can a painting—an object that, unlike a film or a work of "time-based media", typically contains no moving or obviously changing elements —"render time visible"?[3] Indeed, Deleuze's claim that Bacon's painting presents two modes of time via two orders of chromatic composition seems merely to displace this question, which now becomes: How do variegated figures, which are not in themselves obviously temporal, depict time that passes, and how do monochrome fields depict time as eternity? Deleuze does not offer a clear answer.

To the general question of how a painting can render time visible, one might respond: "A painting can depict a very old thing, an object or a person's face or even a landscape, in whose weathered surfaces we see the effects of time. Or a painting can render time visible by portraying a story, for instance by depicting a sequence of historical, religious, or mythic

events, either as discrete scenes within a single panel or on the multiple panels of a diptych or triptych, as in many early Renaissance paintings." For Deleuze, however, neither of these responses will do. This is because they envision painting's rendering time visible in terms of illustration or narration: illustration of the effects of time, narration of a story that unfolds over time. On Deleuze's analysis—which on this point simply follows remarks made by Bacon himself—Bacon rigorously eschews both illustration and narration.[4] Instead, Bacon's painting aims to "*record the fact*", by which Deleuze means the fact of sensation.[5] Bacon's work, Deleuze argues, presents sensation to sensation; it makes sensation sense itself, its structure and its dynamism. "Sensation is what is painted. What is painted on the canvas is the body, not insofar as it is represented as an object, but insofar as it is experienced as sustaining *this* sensation."[6] Illustration and narration, by contrast, instrumentalize sensation in order to present an extra-sensuous content: a concept or a story.

But Deleuze's rejection of painting that illustrates or narrates in favor of painting that records the fact of sensation seems to point toward another reason to be dissatisfied with his brief remarks about time in Bacon's work. Time that passes, he says, is presented through chromatic variation, and eternal time through monochrome fields—is this not a vision of painting as a kind of metaphoric illustration? It seems hard to conceive of the presentation of passing time via chromatic variation as anything but a visual metaphor illustrating a temporal concept: each chromatic shift is akin to a second that slips by. Similarly with eternal time and monochrome fields: the uniform expanse of the field would be a visual metaphor for the changelessness of the eternal. Must we conclude that Deleuze's understanding of the temporal in Bacon violates the anti-illustrative principle on which much of his account of Bacon's work rests?

I think that Deleuze's claims for Bacon as a painter of time can be salvaged and made intelligible. But to do this, we must look beyond *Francis Bacon*. Where to look? We could turn to almost any work by Deleuze and find rich reflections on time, but he deals most explicitly and intensively with the relation between time and images in the text that, perhaps not coincidentally, appears just after *Francis Bacon*: his two-volume study of cinema. Though the moving image of cinema is *eo ipso* different from the static image of painting, Deleuze's *Cinema* books—*Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*[7] and *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*[8]—offer us important resources for understanding his remarks about time in Bacon's painting. This is especially true of *Cinema 2*, in which, I argue, we find an account of the composition of images

that is remarkably homologous to the account in *Francis Bacon* of the eponymous artist's composition of paintings. Put differently, Deleuze understands the postwar creation of cinematic time-images to be structurally, one might say logically, similar to Bacon's creation of paintings. This homology, I argue, provides us a kind of heuristic tool for making sense of the idea that Bacon is a painter of time. *Cinema 2*, that is, shows us how to read *Francis Bacon* so as to understand Deleuze's obscure claims about the temporality of Bacon's work. This is not to say that we expect to find in one or another of the many types of cinematic time-image described and taxonomized in *Cinema 2* a concept that can be applied, readymade, to explain how Bacon paints time, as if it would be possible ultimately to say that Bacon is a painter of "crystal-images" or of "peaks of present" or some such. To expect such a result would be to obliterate the manifest differences between cinema and painting and to deny the specificity of Deleuze's cinema-concepts. Rather, I argue that *Cinema 2* shows us where in *Francis Bacon* we can expect to find the concept we need to understand Bacon as a painter of time. In other words, *Cinema 2*'s account of the composition of time-images points us, by way of its structural similarity to *Francis Bacon*'s account of the Baconian composition of paintings, toward the concept that will clarify the question of time in Bacon—a concept that, like a purloined letter, was there all along, although Deleuze himself did little to make its significance for the question of painterly time clear. This, we will see, is the concept of *rhythm*.

THE TIME-IMAGE

To avail ourselves of the heuristic I've described, we must first understand Deleuze's account in *Cinema 2* of postwar film's creation of a time-image. Scholars have done a great deal of careful work to explicate Deleuze's philosophy of film in general and the concept of the time-image in particular, so I will keep my reconstruction brief and schematic.[9]

Cinema presents images of time, Deleuze argues. Classical prewar cinema and much postwar Hollywood cinema present their images of time, he says, "indirectly"; in these films time appears as derived from or dependent on the well-coordinated movements depicted on the screen. Deleuze calls such an indirect cinematic image of time a *movement-image*. But beginning with Italian neorealism, Deleuze argues, postwar cinema elaborates a new image

of time. Instead of indirectly presenting time as derived from movement, modern cinema presents time *directly*, as the very condition of movement and change. Deleuze calls this new, direct cinematic image of time a *time-image*. It is in Deleuze's account of the composition and nature of the time-image that we find resources for making sense of Bacon as a painter of time.

The composition of the time-image begins from the decomposition of the movement-image; the former must, in some sense, be won from the latter. Despite the initial inventiveness of the compositional techniques employed by the prewar cinema of the movement-image, many of these techniques had by the middle of the century become familiar, had become clichés that a new generation of filmmakers would have to surpass if they were to create anything truly new. But more fundamentally, Deleuze argues, the compositional techniques of the movement-image are in themselves, in their very functioning, clichéd. Movement-image cinema constructs its images to tell a recognizable story, a story that "makes sense", by establishing causal and explanatory linkages among shots and the movements they depict. Following Bergson, Deleuze calls these "sensory-motor linkages". These sensory-motor linkages secure continuity from image to image and from shot to shot, but at the cost of subordinating image to linkage, of minimizing everything excessive or sui generis in the image. Sensory-motor linkages ensure that each image of a film is *recognizable*, and therefore, Deleuze says, *tolerable*, in relation to the other images of the film. They enable us to recognize easily and to interpret quickly the movements depicted on the screen, connecting images of movement in such a way that they conform to what everyone already knows—about good and evil, heroism and cowardice, love and hate, but also about cause and effect, action and reaction, identity and contradiction, experience and psychology. This is why they are clichés.

The first step in modern cinema's composition of the time-image is the interruption of these clichéd sensory-motor linkages, which it achieves by making movement within the shot or the linkages between shots abnormal, disorienting, irrational, or indifferent. Think, for instance, of the jump cuts of Godard's *À bout the souffle* (*Breathless*, 1960), or the intentionally out-of-sync vocal dubbing of Fellini's *Satyricon* (1969), or the meandering, drawn-out panning shots of Tarkovsky's *Stalker* (1979). Deleuze calls this sort of abnormality in the image *aberrant movement*.[10] Aberrant movement acts as a kind of distanciator or alienator; it blocks the continuous flow of shot into shot and movement into movement, and thereby

blocks us from identifying easily with the characters on screen, or even with the point of view of the camera understood as a kind of surrogate human consciousness. In this way, aberrance defamiliarizes the image, extricating it from the circuit of perceptions, emotions, and actions, extricating it thereby from the clichés of sensory-motor linkage.

With the continuity of sensory-motor linkages thus blocked, a new kind of image can appear on the screen: what Deleuze calls a *pure optical and sound situation*. Invoking Alain Robbe-Grillet, Deleuze characterizes pure optical and sound situations in terms of their descriptive function: these images, freed from the univocal demands of explication and narration, simply describe a scene or a vision, depicting its qualities and distances, rather than leveling it down to an explanation of the actions it shows. A pure optical and sound situation, Deleuze writes, "brings out the thing in itself, literally, in its excess of horror or beauty, in its radical or unjustifiable character, because it no longer has to be 'justified,' for better or for worse".[11] Here we find the second compositional step in modern cinema's creation of a time-image: the extraction of a pure optical and sound situation from the circuits of sensory-motor linkage.

For cinema to present a direct image of time, however, something more is needed; description alone will not suffice. The pure optical and sound situation, its sensory-motor linkages attenuated, must enter into a different kind of linkage with a different kind of image. But what kind of linkage is possible, and to what kind of image, other than another sensory-motor linkage to another shot? How, in other words, will modern cinema articulate the pure optical and sound situation without collapsing back into the clichés of classical cinema? The answer: the image will become self-referential—or better, auto-affective. The image, that is, will establish a linkage with itself, but "itself" in the mode of its own potential or power—its own virtuality. "For the time-image to be born, Deleuze writes, "the actual image must enter into relation with its *own* virtual image as such."[12] To make sense of this idea, we must first say something about Deleuze's understanding of time.

The conception of time in the *Cinema* books is manifestly indebted to Bergson. Many of the concepts Deleuze employs in these books, however—particularly in the second volume—originate in his work on Kant.[13] Crucially, we find one of these Kant-derived concepts at the point in *Cinema 2* where Deleuze comes closest to offering an explicit definition of time: "time itself, pure virtuality which divides itself in two as affector and affected, 'the affection of self by self' as definition of time".[14] The formulation "affection of self by self" first

appears (to the best of my knowledge) in Deleuze's 1978 lecture course on Kant, given at the University of Paris 8: time, he says, is "the form under which we affect ourselves, it's the form of auto-affection. Time is the affection of self by self".[15] Variations on this formulation recur in several texts from the 1980s and 90s, in each case (with the exception of *Cinema 2*) appearing in the course of remarks on Kant's philosophy of time.[16]

What does it mean to define time as the "affection of self by self"? Deleuze develops this definition in his reconstruction of Kant's critique of Descartes.[17] Descartes says: That I am thinking shows me indubitably that I exist. The clarity and distinctness with which my act of thought demonstrates the fact of my existence show in turn that my existence is determined in terms of my thought: *I am a thing that thinks*; the *I am* is determined by the *I think* to be a *thinking thing*.[18] Kant objects:[19] Yes, the fact of my existence is given in my act of thinking—it is evident from my thinking that I am—but the determinability of my existence by my thought is not thereby given. For me to say *I am a thinking thing* requires that the *I am* be available to thinking in a form that would enable thinking to determine it as such; the *I am*, in other words, must show up as a kind of thing that could be determined as a thinking thing. But this does not follow from Descartes's observation of the *I am*'s evidence in the *I think*. Under what form, then, does the *I am* show up as determinable by the *I think*? Under the *a priori* form of inner sense, Kant says—and this is time. The *I am* can be determined by the *I think*—or, put differently, one can cognize oneself—only insofar as the self appears to itself as a phenomenon in time. Deleuze argues that this temporalization of the structure of self-determination has far-reaching ramifications that radically alter the Cartesian picture. The determining act of cognition—the *I think*—is an act undertaken by the self as a spontaneous power. But the phenomenal self thereby determined is, qua phenomenon, passive. Thus time, as the ground of this phenomenality, effects a split in the self, Deleuze argues, a split that functions as a transcendental difference: time splits the spontaneous self as thinker from the passive self as thought. Insofar as the self is determinable only in time as a phenomenon, it cannot, contra Descartes, be determined as a thinking thing, i.e. as spontaneity.[20] It can only be determined *by* an act of thinking, which, Kant writes, "exercises that action on the passive subject, whose faculty it is, about which we rightly say that the inner sense is thereby affected".[21] Deleuze concludes: "time is the formal relation through which the mind affects itself, or the way we are internally affected by ourselves. Time can thus be defined as the Affect of the self by the self".[22]

Time separates the self-as-spontaneity from the self-as-passive-phenomenon and is thus the form by which the self affects itself in determining itself. Though *Cinema 2* articulates the idea of time as auto-affection in Bergsonian terms, i.e. in terms of a split between an actual present that passes and a virtual past that is conserved in itself, I contend that Deleuze's Kantian interpretation of time remains foundational for his conception of cinema's direct presentation of time in a time-image.[23] A time-image, we noted above, is a kind of compound image in which a pure optical and sound situation—an image whose sensory-motor linkages have been attenuated by the unchecked aberrance of the movement it depicts—is linked with a "virtual image". The establishment of this linkage presents a direct image of time, an image of the affection of self by self. How does this work? Deleuze does not offer a precise definition of "virtual image"; instead he, as it were, describes extensively around this concept, offering numerous examples of virtual images in postwar film and characterizing the varieties of virtual image (dream-images, mirror-images, world-images, crystal-images, seed-images). What all of these examples and varieties of virtual image share in common is this: in each case, the virtual image presents a latency, a potential, or an incompossibility in relation to the optical and sound situation to which it is linked and which it doubles. The virtual image offers a potential determination or functions as a determinative power in relation to the actual image it links up with; it doubles this image, but doubles it differentially, with a difference of potential that makes a new determination possible. The time-image, then, as this relation between a virtual image and its pure optical and sound double, presents an image of the affection of self by self, an image of time as the differential form of determinability. Alain Resnais and Alain Robbe-Grillet's *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961), a film Deleuze discusses repeatedly in *Cinema 2*, plainly illustrates this relation. The man, X, claims to have met the woman, A, previously at Marienbad (or somewhere like Marienbad), where they promised one another that in the future they would run away together—a claim A denies, insisting she has only just met X. The image of X and A is thus a doubled image: X's account of the relationship presents a virtual determination with respect to A's, and vice versa. Resnais and Robbe-Grillet's refusal to provide an answer as to whose story is true and whose is false ensures that the relation of virtual determinability in the image will never collapse into a fully determined actuality. Did X and A actually meet in the past, or is X's story a falsehood? Will A turn out to be a liar? An amnesiac? Will X turn out to be a lothario? A madman? The irresolution of the image with respect to such questions reve-

als time as the form of auto-affection in the image. Time thus appears here, as Deleuze says in both *Cinema 2* and "On Four Formulas That Might Summarize the Kantian Philosophy", as a vertigo, or an oscillation.[24]

In summary, *Cinema 2* offers an account of modern cinematic composition as a three-stage process that culminates in the creation of a time-image. These steps are:

1) The elimination of clichés and concomitant weakening of sensory-motor linkages in the image through the use and proliferation of aberrant movement.

2) The creation of a new image, a pure optical and sound situation, whose perceptual qualities, no longer subordinated to the demands of clichéd motor patterns, come to the fore as such.

3) The coupling of this pure optical and sound situation with its own virtual image, through which an image of time as the affection of self by self emerges.

We will see in the next section that *Francis Bacon* develops a homologous account of Bacon's compositional process—a homology that will help us to solve the problem of time in Bacon's painting.

COLOR MODULATION

In broad terms, Deleuze is concerned in *Francis Bacon* to explicate what he sees as the expression of a "logic of sensation" in Bacon's work. For Deleuze, Bacon is a great painter for the same reason that Michelangelo, Van Gogh, Cézanne, and Klee are great painters: they create works that *clarify sensation*; in their paintings sensibility encounters not just a beautiful or sublime image, not just a condensation of the plastic givens of two-dimensional composition, not just a translation of emotion into expressive marks; in these painters, sensibility encounters the very conditions and dynamisms of sensation itself, as these are expressed in the image, its expressive marks, and the plastic givens of its construction. Deleuze's account of the compositional process by which Bacon achieves such a clarification of sensation is remarkably homologous to the compositional process he describes in *Cinema 2*. By exami-

ning this homology, we can begin to understand Deleuze's assertions concerning time in Bacon's painting.

Like the directors of modern cinema, Bacon begins with a struggle against clichés. Contemporary life, Deleuze argues, is saturated by clichéd images—advertisements, propaganda, television programs, personal photography. Such images, together with the clichéd modes of seeing they organize, preexist any act of painting; they are already there on the painter's canvas and in her mind before she even begins to paint. If she is not content simply to reproduce the familiar images that dominate modern life, then, she must find a way past the clichés overwriting her painting in advance. She must find a way to access a properly novel vision. Bacon, Deleuze shows, has found a method not only to surpass such clichés, but to turn them to his advantage. Bacon begins a painting by sketching out some image he has in mind. This image inevitably contains clichés. Echoing remarks made by Bacon and presaging his own remarks about cinematic clichés, Deleuze associates the clichés of this initial image with the twin impulses to narrate and to illustrate. To free the image from these clichés, Bacon at some point breaks off from delineating the image and, through the use of an aleatory mark-making process, disrupts it. He hurls paint at the canvas; he scrubs some area of the painting with rags; he covers a portion of the image with quick, stippled brushstrokes—in short, he employs a chaotic painting procedure, a mark-making process not fully under his control, to interrupt his initial image and thereby to obstruct his original, clichéd plan. Deleuze calls the chaotic zone of marks thus produced "the diagram".

The diagram functions not only to disrupt the clichés inevitably contained in Bacon's initial image, however; it at the same time generates a new image. Bacon allows the visual interaction between the diagram and his initial image to suggest a new vision: a body of some kind—typically human, or at least humanoid—that he could not have planned or foreseen. Freed from the clichés of illustration and narration, this new image can be encountered purely in terms of its sensuousness, its existence as "fact". Following Bacon, Deleuze reserves the name "Figure" for this new image. Importantly, the Figure is born of the chaos of the diagram, but it is not itself chaotic; Bacon carefully models the Figure through subtle gradations of impure or "broken" tones, a "flow" of "millimetrical variations".[25] The Figure is thus order that comes from disorder, a form created through deformation. And the diagram, concomitantly, must be understood as a medium of properly creative destruction: it is the chaos that deforms and neutralizes the cliché, but it is at the same time the "germ of or-

der", as Deleuze says, that converts the deformed cliché into the rudiment of a non-clichéd Figure. Importantly for Deleuze (for reasons we will see below), Bacon incorporates the diagram into the image as he proceeds; he does not paint entirely over it but rather retains some part of it as a localized zone of compositional chaos lying in close proximity to the Figure.

The deformation of the cliché and the extraction of the Figure from the chaos of the diagram, however, are not sufficient for the clarification of sensation at which Bacon's painting aims, according to Deleuze. Like the cliché-bucking, aberrance-born optical and sound situation of modern cinema, the Figure must be linked to something else—not, as in cinema, to its own virtual image, but rather to a different element of the image. Bacon completes the painting by establishing linkages between the Figure and the pictorial space that surrounds it, which he fills with contoured, monochrome fields of flat, unadulterated color. The linkages he creates, Deleuze argues, are of a particular type: they are modulatory color relations. *Color modulation* between the Figure and the surrounding color fields, Deleuze argues, is the relation in which Bacon's paintings find their dynamic and structural completion.

What does Deleuze mean by "color modulation"? In brief, he means a continuous modeling of pictorial form through the establishment of a complex regime of color relations. Color modulation may be contrasted with the classical technique of *chiaroscuro*, which builds an image through the modulation of value, of relations of light and dark. In color modulation, variations in value take a back seat to variations in saturation and hue, whose progressions and interactions alone determine the contours of the picture; a human torso, for instance, is not painted as a luminously modeled volume emerging from the darkness engulfing it, but rather as, say, a mottled umber shape standing out against the ultramarine expanse surrounding it. In Bacon's hands, modulation becomes a relation not just among individual colors, but between two orders of color, or "two modes of clarity": the Figure, with its "millimetrical flow" of broken tones, and the color field, with its flat expanse of pure color. The modulatory chromatic relations within and between these two orders generate the entire structure of Bacon's paintings. Thus, color can be seen—literally—to be the genetic element of Bacon's paintings, and modulation the genetic relation. It is in this sense that Bacon's painting can be understood to clarify sensation or express a logic of sensation: it displays in the image the genetic elements and relations that produce the image, and it thereby grants sensibility access to its own genetic conditions as these are expressed in those elements and relations. Bacon's painting, as it were, composes a sensation in which we sense

the composition of the sensation. This is "the 'coloring sensation'", Deleuze says, "the summit" of the logic of sensation.[26] In composing such a coloring sensation, Bacon makes visible a "power" that Deleuze will identify "as the essence of painting": *rhythm*.[27] We will see what exactly Deleuze means by rhythm presently.

For the moment, let us observe that in this very brief and basic reconstruction of Deleuze's analysis of Bacon we catch a glimpse of a compositional process that is remarkably similar, *mutatis mutandis*, to the one described in *Cinema 2*. Bacon's compositional process, on Deleuze's account, goes as follows:

1) Bacon begins a painting with a particular image in mind but at some point deforms it through the imposition of the diagram, a zone of random, chaotic marks, which eliminates clichés.

2) Bacon allows the diagram's deformation of his initial image to suggest a new image, the Figure, which that could not have been predicted.

3) Bacon completes the painting by establishing modulatory chromatic relations between the Figure and the flat field or fields of color that surround it.[28]

Abstracting from the particulars of Deleuze's accounts of painting and cinema, we get the following, general description of what we might call modern image-composition:

1) Eliminate clichés through the use of chaotic or disorienting phenomena.

2) Extract from the wreckage of the now disordered or deformed cliché a new image, a descriptor-image or a fact-image.

3) Establish within the new image linkages through which a transcendental or genetic structure is expressed.

It is with the third step that the time-image comes into view in cinema, in the linkage of the pure optical and sound situation with its virtual image. Treating the homology between *Cinema 2* and *Francis Bacon* as a heuristic for understanding Deleuze's claims for Bacon as a painter of time, we can expect to find the sense of these claims in the corresponding step in *Francis Bacon*, i.e., in the establishment of modulatory color relations between the Figure and

the color field and the concomitant realization of a sensuous pictorial rhythm. Time in Bacon's work, in short, would emerge in the discovery of rhythm.

RHYTHM AND TIME

Deleuze's discussion of rhythm in *Francis Bacon* begins from a consideration of the nature of sensation in the work of Cézanne, whom Deleuze repeatedly treats as Bacon's most direct aesthetic forebear. "Sensation", Deleuze writes in respect of Cézanne, "has one face turned toward the subject [...] and one face turned toward the object. [...] As a spectator, I experience the sensation only by entering the painting, by reaching the unity of the sensing and the sensed".[29] This unity is precisely what we saw in our discussion of color modulation above: in Bacon's hands—and in a different way, Deleuze suggests, in Cézanne's—the painting constructed through color modulation displays color as its genetic element, and thereby composes a sensation in which sensibility encounters its own genetic conditions. Deleuze argues that Bacon is able to render this unity of sensing and sensed visible, is able to deploy color modulation in this sensuously revelatory way, by virtue of his careful treatment of the "vital power that exceeds every [sensuous] domain and traverses them all". This power, Deleuze says, "is Rhythm, which is more profound than vision, hearing, etc. [...] What is ultimate is thus the relation between sensation and rhythm."[30]

What does Deleuze mean by "rhythm"? In his Translator's Introduction to *Francis Bacon*, Daniel W. Smith points to an answer, for which we must again turn to Deleuze's interpretation of Kant.[31] In an exegesis of Kant's theory of the sublime, given in the same 1978 lecture course on Kant mentioned earlier, Deleuze develops a Kantian account of rhythm that, as Smith says, "forms a kind of complementary text to *The Logic of Sensation*".[32] On Deleuze's reconstruction, the experience of the sublime has primarily to do with a fundamental perceptual operation that Kant calls *comprehensio aesthetica*—aesthetic comprehension.[33] Aesthetic comprehension, Deleuze says, names the process by which I grasp in every perception a subjective unit of sensible measure against which I estimate the magnitude of the elements in that perception. "When I see a tree, for example, [...] I say that this tree must be as big as ten men … I choose a kind of sensible unit to carry out my successive apprehension of parts. And then, behind the tree, there is a moun-

tain, and I say […] it must be ten trees tall. And then I look at the sun and I wonder how many mountains it is."[34] This process of aesthetically comprehending a unit of measure for each perception, Deleuze says, turns out to constitute the foundation of the syntheses of perception that Kant, in the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, identifies as grounding all experience. These syntheses are: the synthesis of apprehension, through which I successively grasp the parts of my perception; the synthesis of reproduction, through which I reproduce the (just-apprehended) parts of my perception as I apprehend new ones; and the synthesis of recognition, through which I relate my spatio-temporally determinate perception to the form of an object in general.[35] Deleuze's argument for the fundamentality of aesthetic comprehension in relation to these syntheses goes as follows: in order for the most fundamental of the syntheses of perception, that of apprehension, to perform its function of successively grasping the parts of a perception, I must first determine what will count as a part. When looking, for instance, at Bacon's 1969 *Study for a Bullfight No. 1*, I am able successively to apprehend the parts of the image—the compound bull-bullfighter figure in the center of the canvas, the mottled ellipse on which the figure seems to be standing, the arced section of wall behind the figure, the contoured orange color-field in the background, etc.—by virtue of the fact that I have first determined these indeed to be parts to be apprehended. Aesthetic comprehension, "a lived evaluation of a unit of measure", makes this determination possible insofar as it enables me to estimate the magnitude of what I perceive and thereby to determine what will count as an appropriate part in relation to that magnitude.[36] In the case of *Study for a Bullfight No. 1*, my aesthetic comprehension determines the parts mentioned just above, and not, say, the individual patches of mottled yellow and blue in the central ellipse, as appropriate parts to apprehend. If I were standing only a few inches away from the painting, however, my aesthetic comprehension of its magnitude would be very different, and those individual patches of yellow and blue might show up to me as apprehendable parts.

This latter qualification points to an important feature of aesthetic comprehension: it varies constantly with our perceptions. As my perception meanders from this object to that, my activity of aesthetic comprehension varies in response. This constant variation of aesthetic comprehension, Deleuze says, describes a *rhythm*. Rhythm, he is quick to point out, is not equivalent to tempo or cadence or meter; rather, meter—which is to say measure—depends on rhythm. "Beneath measures and their units, there are rhythms which give me, in each

case, the aesthetic comprehension of the unit of measure."[37] Rhythm, then, denotes the order of continuous fluctuation that characterizes the aesthetic determination of magnitude on which the organization and coherence of perception rest. Rhythm, in short, is the foundation of perception.

This foundation, however, is not entirely stable; it "comes out of chaos", Deleuze says, and it constantly courts the "catastrophe" that will return it again to chaos. What does it mean for rhythm to return to chaos? It means precisely the irruption of the sublime. Certain phenomena—those, Kant explains, "the intuition of which brings along with them the idea of infinity"—exceed our capacity to find an appropriate unit of measure by which to estimate their magnitude.[38] In these perceptions, Deleuze says, the rhythm of aesthetic comprehension breaks down, and with it, the syntheses of perception: "I can no longer apprehend parts, I can no longer reproduce parts, I can no longer recognize something. … [T]his is because my aesthetic comprehension is itself compromised, which is to say: instead of rhythm, I find myself in chaos."[39]

Bringing these insights to bear on *Francis Bacon*, we can conclude that when Deleuze attributes Bacon's great achievement as a painter to his treatment of the "vital power" of rhythm, he means that Bacon is acutely sensitive to and able precisely to manipulate variations in aesthetic comprehension, in perceptual magnitude. Bacon's sensuously clarifying color modulation is nothing but the rhythmic variation of perceptual magnitudes—the extensive magnitudes of size and distance, and the intensive magnitudes of hue and saturation. In beholding Bacon's paintings, we undergo precisely this rhythmic variation.

Furthermore, Deleuze's conception of the sublime as a dissolution of rhythm into chaos appears quite clearly in his account of Bacon's painting. "We can seek the unity of rhythm", he writes, "only at the point where rhythm itself plunges into chaos, into the night, at the point where the differences of level are perpetually and violently mixed."[40] We have already encountered this point in Bacon's painting where rhythm plunges into chaos: it is the diagram. The diagram is a source of sublime chaos in Bacon's painting, where it interrupts the rhythm of Bacon's initial image. This initial image, we saw above, is always plagued by clichés; we may thus say that the rhythm it interrupts is a clichéd rhythm, a rhythm that determines familiar magnitudes, worn-out distances and qualities. Now, the Kantian sublime does not terminate in the breakdown of the syntheses of perception; for Kant, this breakdown is redeemed by the fact that it awakens in us a feeling of respect for "the superiority

of the rational vocation of our cognitive faculty over the greatest faculty of sensibility"—a feeling of respect, i.e., for the supersensible in us.[41] Is there a corresponding redemption of chaos in Deleuze's account of Bacon? We already know that the answer is yes: "the diagram is indeed a chaos, a catastrophe, but it is also a germ of order or rhythm".[42] The diagram makes possible the Figure and the operation of color modulation. Thus, in contrast to the Kantian sublime, where the breakdown of one faculty is redeemed by the elevation of another faculty, in the Deleuzian sublime the breakdown is redeemed in the very same faculty: through the diagram, sensation is renovated. Clichéd sensation is disoriented and converted into a superior or even, we might say, transcendental sensation: a "coloring sensation" in which rhythmically modulated color expresses the genetic conditions of sensation itself.[43]

Bacon's work, in short, enables us to sense the rhythm of aesthetic comprehension at the foundation of our sensation. This rhythm is the "vital power" by which sensibility determines itself—determines how it will apprehend a sensuous manifold—in accordance with the object it senses. Is this not simply to say that rhythm is the affection of self by self? Is this not to say, in other words, that rhythm is time?[44] This would not be the same aspect of time that we encountered in examining *Cinema 2*; there the affection of self by self was the *I think*'s spontaneous determination of existence—the time of thought. Hence Deleuze's emphasis in that book on modern cinema as a cinema of thought. Here, in *Francis Bacon*, we are dealing with a different aspect of time: the time of sensation, time or rhythm as the form under which aesthetic comprehension determines the sensibility of the sensible. Finally, then, we see clearly the sense in which Deleuze can say that there is a great force of time in Bacon, Bacon is a painter of time, Bacon renders time visible: through color modulation Bacon enables sensibility to sense the rhythm, the time of sensation, by which self affects self sensibly. In fact, in the sublimity of his work, Bacon enables us to sense this time in its very genesis, in its emergence from chaos. In this way, *Francis Bacon* helps to clarify a rather obscure remark about the sublime that Deleuze makes at the end of "On Four Formulas That Might Summarize the Kantian Philosophy": the Kantian sublime, he says, is "the source of time".[45] Bacon's diagram—and, in a different way, cinematic aberrant movement—deforms clichéd temporality and in so doing provides sensibility—and in cinema, thought—with a chaotic ground upon which to compose a superior time. Bacon, we may say, is a painter at the beginning of time.

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1. Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 42.

2. Ibid., 115.

3. Ibid., 53. Of course, many paintings *do* change over time: colors darken, varnishes crack, owners re-stretch and resize canvases, vandals attack paintings, conservators restore them. But we tend to regard such changes as accidents that befall a painting, and not as essential changes that belong to the work of art as such.

4. See David Sylvester, *Interviews with Francis Bacon* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975), 18, 22. Bacon, however, is not as categorical in his dismissal of illustration as Deleuze is. See Sylvester, *Interviews*, 126-28.

5. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 32. Deleuze takes the phrase "record the fact" from Bacon's interviews with Sylvester. See Sylvester, *Interviews*, 41.

6. Ibid., 32. Deleuze is referring in this passage to the work of Cézanne, not Bacon, but he is doing so in order to draw out the affinities between the two, which serve as a kind of motif throughout the book. Deleuze goes on in the next sentence: "This is the very general thread that links Bacon to Cézanne: *paint the sensation*."

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

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

9. See, e.g., David Deamer, *Deleuze's* Cinema *Books: Three Introductions to the Taxonomy of Images* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016); Felicity Colman, *Deleuze & Cinema: The Film Concepts* (New York: Berg, 2011); Paola Marrati, *Gilles Deleuze: Cinema and Philosophy*, trans. Alisa Hartz (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008); Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema* (New York: Routledge, 2003); and D.N. Rodowick, *Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997).

10. See Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 36ff.

11. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 20.

12. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 273.

13. Gregory Flaxman has recently argued for the importance of Kant—as well as Hölderlin—for the understanding of time in *Cinema 2*. See Flaxman, "Chronos Is Sick: Deleuze, Antonioni and the Kantian Lineage of Modern Cinema", in *At the Edges of Thought: Deleuze and Post-Kantian Philosophy*, ed. Craig Lundy and Daniela Voss (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015). Deleuze, for his part, asserts that Kant and Bergson are not as distant as Bergson claimed. See *Cinema 2*, 82.

14. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 83.

15. Gilles Deleuze, Kant lecture, March 14, 1978, trans. Melissa McMahon, accessed 8 July 2018, https://www.webdeleuze.com/textes/66.

16. See Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: The Athlone Press, 1984), ix; Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 31; and Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchill (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 32.

17. One finds this reconstruction in each of the texts cited in the preceding note, as well as in Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 85-87.

18. See René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol. II, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch (New York: University of Cambridge Press, 1984), 16–19.

19. For the passages in Kant that Deleuze is reconstructing, see Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), §24–25, B152–B159.

20. This is to say nothing of the problem of Descartes's self-determination as a thinking *thing*, i.e., his attribution of substantiality to the thinking being. For Kant's critique of this aspect Descartes's claim, see his discussion of rational psychology at *Critique of Pure Reason*, B421-B422.

21. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B153-B154, 257-258, emphasis removed.

22. Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, 31.

23. This is especially clear when, in the second half of *Cinema 2*, Deleuze develops his account of modern cinema as a cinema of thought. Here, many of the concepts that in *Difference and Repetition* he draws from Kant's understanding of time come to the fore: the otherness of the I ("I is another"), the thinking subject as riven by a fracture or a crack (*fêlure*), the powerlessness or "impower" (*impuissance* or *impouvoir*) of thought. Compare Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 133, 153-54, and 166-70 with Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 86-87, 199-200. For a helpful reconstruction of the Bergsonian bases of Deleuze's account in *Cinema 2*, see Marrati, *Gilles Deleuze: Cinema and Philosophy*, 68-77; and Deamer, *Deleuze's* Cinema Books, 5-73.

24. Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, 31; Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 84.

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25. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 121.

26. Ibid., 3.

27. Ibid., xxxii.

28. Darren Ambrose has posited a similar three-stage formulation of Deleuze's account of Bacon's compositional process. See Darren Ambrose, "Deleuze, Philosophy, and the Materiality of Painting", in *Gilles Deleuze: The Intensive Reduction*, ed. Constantine Boundas (London: Continuum, 2009), 116-117.

29. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 31.

30. Ibid., 37.

31. Daniel W. Smith, "Deleuze on Bacon: Three Conceptual Trajectories in *the Logic of Sensation*", in Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, vii-xxvii.

32. Smith, "Deleuze on Bacon", xv.

33. Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 5:251. Deleuze pays remarkably little attention in this lecture to the role of reason in Kant's account of the sublime.

34. Deleuze, Kant lecture, March 28, 1978, trans. Melissa McMahon, https://www.webdeleuze.com/textes/68, accessed July 8, 2018.

35. For these syntheses, see Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A98-A111. See also B160-B162. We should note that Kant does not himself say that the syntheses of perception are founded on aesthetic comprehension, and it is not clear that he would agree to this claim.

36. Deleuze, Kant lecture, March 28, 1978.

37. Ibid.

38. Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 5:255

39. Deleuze, Kant lecture, March 28, 1978.

40. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 39.

41. Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 5:257.

42. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 83.

43. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze refers to such an operation of sensation as "the transcendent exercise" of sensibility. See Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 140ff.

44. In his discussion of the Kantian and Hölderlinian sources of Deleuze's "third synthesis of time" in *Difference and Repetition*, Arkady Plotnitsky has shown that the relation between rhythm and its "counter-rhythmic" interruption, here understood in terms of "caesura", lies at the heart of the Hölderlinian reformulation of Kantian time that provides the core concepts for Deleuze's third synthesis. We can thus begin to see the logic of Deleuze's later account of sublime rhythm already in *Difference and Repetition*, underpinning the account of time that will prove foundational for all of his future work on that topic. See Arkady Plotnitsky, "The Calculable Law of Tragic Representation and the Unthinkable", *At the Edges of Thought: Deleuze and Post-Kantian Philosophy*, 134-137.

45. Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, 35.

"EACH SINGLE GESTURE BECOMES A DESTINY": GESTURALITY BETWEEN CINEMA AND PAINTING IN RAÚL RUIZ'S *L'HYPOTHÈSE DU TABLEAU VOLÉ*

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> Paintings do not show, they allude. Paintings, staged through the technical method of the *tableau vivant*, do not allude, they *show*![1]
>
> — The Collectionneur, *L'Hypothèse du tableau volé* (1978)

With a chiastic flourish, the Collectionneur of Raúl Ruiz's 1978 film essay *L'Hypothèse du tableau volé* rises to his feet, points definitively towards the frame and, with rising intonation, signals that unlike a painting, the *tableau vivant* reveals in its motility what a static painting cannot. The self-reflexive delivery, and the grandiosity of his gesture indicate that this same gift has been bestowed upon cinema. While the ensuing narrative may portray him as an isolated eccentric, his words and actions speak to a long-held fascination with the relative capacities of painting and cinema when it comes to capturing gestures. Both arts can lay claim to an indexical intimacy with gesture: when we look at a painting we can discern the individual gestures and imperceptible movements of the artist's hand which brought it into being. The allure of a painting such as Vermeer's *Girl with a Pearl Earring* (1665) consists at least partly in the awareness that the titular earring has been created by just two brushstrokes. At the same time, cinematographic arts allow the gestures themselves to be displayed onscreen, although the apparatus which captures them is mechanical. Virginia Woolf's now infamous lament that "words are an impure medium; better far to have been born into the silent kingdom of paint" has endured manifold literary interpretations, each new derivation and deviation of her words testifying to the force of her aphorism.[2] This desire for purity leads towards a realm of proto-communication, a "silent kingdom", a domain which is not a "medium" because it is mediality itself. If it were possible for the two aforementioned indexical gesturalities to coalesce, it would be in the intermedial encounters between the filmic and plastic arts. Common uses of the noun "gesture" refer to bodily movements which complement the spoken word or obviate the need for it, or designate actions which are aesthetically grand but ethically or materi-

ally meaningless: a "political gesture". Gesture as it is to be understood here encompasses both of these vernacular definitions. It refers to methods of communication which rise out of language but are incommensurable with it, and in so doing reaches beyond questions of meaning and meaninglessness. Gestural encounters between painted and cinematographic artworks reveal the significance of gesture not only to the media themselves, but also to the way in which the individual works are produced and received.

It is in these terms that Giorgio Agamben defines gesture in his foundational 1992 essay "Notes on Gesture". Agamben pathologises a world in which gestures "lose their ease" and are no longer produced unconsciously or instinctively.[3] In the late Victorian period, moments where the communicability of gesture broke down, such as Tourette's syndrome, were monitored and researched as abnormal phenomena, whereas now behavioural tics are commonplace as gestures become more and more inscrutable. When gestures are transfigured as images, they are more than mummified. While it does hold that photographic images abstract the original gesture and constitute "the reification and obliteration of a gesture", the indexicality of such images allows them to "preserve the *dynamis* intact".[4] Agamben explicitly cites painting as a medium which is gesturally inferior to cinema: "Even the *Mona Lisa,* even *Las Meninas* could be seen not as immovable and eternal forms, but as fragments of a gesture or as stills of a lost film wherein only they would regain their true meaning."[5] The following study will show that it is not singularly in cinema or in painting that pure gesturality might be found, but rather in intermedial spaces such as those opened up by the interactions between cinema and painting.

Despite, or perhaps as a result of, its extraordinary brevity, Agamben's essay has reinvigorated the field of gesture studies and inspired a broad sweep of writings which apply his ideas to film more concretely. In particular, an essay in *Cinema and Agamben* by Libby Saxton underlines the gestural significance of the series of *tableaux vivants* within Jean-Luc Godard's *Passion* (1982) and the gestural quality of the paintings which inspire it. The paintings which form the film's archive "evoke movement that might come to be" within their own stillness, a phrasing which argues together with Agamben that the *tableau* is a "fragment" compared to something more like a "whole" offered by the cinematic *tableau vivant.*[6] As Alain Masson argues, "gesture does not allow itself to be reduced to an immediate and simple signification, value or function. Quite often it is an enigma as

much as an index."[7] There is an uneasy relationship between what the gesture shows and that to which the gesture alludes.

Early ontological film theory uses painting as a fulcrum to establish medium specificity, and dares not acknowledge the profound connections between the media lest this endanger the establishment of a theory of film. When André Bazin claims that "in achieving the aims of baroque art, photography has freed the plastic arts from their obsession with likeness", he cleaves painting and photography somewhat crudely.[8] Painted and photographic or cinematographic images continue to obsess over movements and gestures, to represent the stillness behind the movement depicted in a realism which transcends "photorealism". Roland Barthes designates these suspended moments the *numen* of painting when they transcend the empirical and portray "a gesture apprehended at the point in its course where the normal eye cannot arrest it", a distinction not granted to the vast majority of "shock" photographs.[9] More recent works have explored the relationship between cinema and painting, including Andrew's *Film in the Aura of Art* (1984), which views the interactions through a Benjaminian optic, and Dalla Vache's *Cinema and Painting* (1996), which mostly seeks to marry individual artistic movements to individual films and filmic techniques. Several monographs have sought to identify 'painterly' approaches in the oeuvre of various auteurs, including Mactaggert's *The Film Paintings of David Lynch* (2010). Emma Wilson's subtle reading of Otero's *Histoire d'un secret* (2003) in her monograph *Love, Mortality and the Moving Image* (2012) is centred around the scene in which the filmmaker runs her hands along works painted by her late mother: an intermingling of painting and cinema allows for a haptic, affective bond between generations. While the hapticity of oil paintings is crucial within this and other films, the analysis which follows will focus on the moments in which filmed paintings are not affective in their hapticity but gestural in their tactility and motility. Overall, previous entries in scholarship on the topic of gesture have considered it as subsidiary to another discipline or concern, whereas the hyper-mediated nature of gesture means that it cannot be fully subsumed by another branch of theory.

Questions of gesturality, cinema and painting coalesce in *L'Hypothèse du tableau volé*. It may predate Agamben's work by over a decade but the way in which it animates a series of paintings by the controversial (and fictional) artist Tonnerre seems to anticipate and respond to questions of gesture and intermediality. The debates between the two protagonists, which recall a Diderotian dialogue, encourage the observer to lurk in the spaces between the

plastic and cinematographic arts. Close readings of the film reveal a multiplicity of gestures between painting, cinema and the written word. Through its sequencing of linked paintings and *tableaux vivants*, *L'Hypothèse du tableau volé* reconstructs not only a lost painting but also a lost pre-language of gestures which the most hierophantic spectator struggles to decipher.

Figures 1-2: The painting of the crusaders playing chess (top) and its recreation as a *tableau vivant* (bottom). Screenshots from *L'Hypothèse du tableau volé* (© INA).

For much of *L'Hypothèse du tableau volé*'s gestation, there was no stolen painting at all. Planned as a collaboration between Ruiz and Pierre Klossowski, the film would have seen the latter occupy a dual role as both art collector and fictive artist. Klossowski's unexpected departure shortly before production was due to begin left Ruiz in a position similar to that of his protagonists: he had acquired a set of paintings and hired actors to play the 'Person-nages des Tableaux' but had to piece a narrative together on his own.[10] Thus a film intended

to animate academic discourse became a parody of it. In borrowing the structure and conventions of detective stories, Ruiz lures the viewer into searching for clues to solve the conspiracy around the paintings by scanning for the smallest movements onscreen. If the fourth painting in Tonnerre's scandalous septych can be discerned or derived from the six which remain, it can only be situated in relation to the others through the analysis of the minute gestures hidden in the compositions. 'For the painter it sufficed to interpret in his sober and magisterial style the energy of the figures, expressions, attitudes and gestures'.[11] The reconstruction of the paintings as *tableaux vivants* allows the gestures to be interpolated between stillness and movement, between fiction and reality, between painting and the moving image. Elsaesser argues that the 'enigma resides […] in the surreal match between voice and image'.[12] This is, however, just one of the intermedial interactions which resonates from a wide variety of perspectives throughout the film. The reconstruction of paintings through the medium of the *tableau vivant* constitutes an attempt to halt gesturality between two media, to interrupt its ceaseless mediation and discern some deeper meaning through an enhanced sense of perspective and by perceiving the movements of both the figures in the painting and the actors, who cannot help but tremble as they hold their poses.

A dialogue between two Parisian narrators on art criticism and the language of gesture, Ruiz's film enjoys an intertextuality with the diverse works of Diderot even though he is not cited explicitly. Long before Agamben, Diderot suggests that a painting might be a fragment of some larger whole: "He who walks through a gallery of paintings creates without realising the role of a deaf person who enjoys watching mutes who are communicating on subjects they know."[13] The spectator in the gallery is forced to examine paintings in their stillness, which fosters a hyper-awareness of the gestures between the figures depicted in a tableau. Diderot even posits a method for transforming a theatrical production into a gestural *tableau vivant* when he describes a series of visits to the theatre. As the curtain rose he would put his fingers in his ears and rely on his sight alone to understand the play. Even though he could not hear a word spoken, "I was seen shedding tears in the sad parts, always with my ears plugged."[14] When asked why he was performing such a counterintuitive gesture, he replied that he listened by "blocking my ears to hear better".[15] A similar effect is attempted cinematically in presenting a series of mute players in black and white. Without colour or dialogues (on the part of the extras), the figures onscreen become figurations whose every corporeal movement can be charted and analysed. Ruiz

shares Diderot's fascination with the hermeneutics of gesture, but is more ambivalent about its universality. From the beginning, the way in which he chooses to film the paintings questions the divisions between painting and performance.

From the first sequence, Ruiz calls into question the notions surrounding gesture which underpin the ontological distinctions between media, most notably the idea that painted images are by their very nature static and cinematic ones motile. The opening shot is of a narrow, iconically Parisian street lined with parked cars. Forked branches spindle out of a barren tree in the far distance. The length of the shot, and the rigidity of the camerawork, bring to mind a landscape painting before the title card has appeared. The sky is an incandescent glow of white light which imparts an almost beatific radiance to the street below. This would not be a mistaken overexposure from a Director of Photography as noted as Sacha Vierny, whose legendary collaborations with Alain Resnais before *L'Hypothèse du tableau volé* (*Nuit et brouillard* [*Night and Fog*, 1956], *Hiroshima mon amour* [1959], *L'année derrière à Marienbad* [1961]) and afterwards with Peter Greenaway (*A Zed & Two Noughts* [1985] and *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover* [1989]), speak to the same fascination with modern urban architecture and the navigation of bodies through interior spaces as his work here. The urban "still life" is framed so as to allude to an oil painting. Conversely, when the camera interacts with the *tableaux* themselves, it manages to animate those gestures which were always already discernible within the painted artworks.

The first glimpse of the titular paintings of *L'Hypothèse* approaches one of the scandalous tableaux, step by step. The shot seems to suggest that approaching the frozen gestures within a painting with a surgical, empiricist eye might allow a hidden meaning to reveal itself. However, before any telling details can be discerned, the camera sweeps around the painting and the static figures appear to shift as the viewer's perspective is radically realigned. Just for a moment the portrait becomes anamorphic and seems to be at once still and mobile. While paintings as they are traditionally displayed must remain still, they are able to alter their form depending on the point from which they are being observed, luring their spectators into moving instead. This technique which animates a painting by moving the beholder is known as anamorphosis (literally "re-shaping"). Lacan's notorious lecture on the simultaneous presence of two contrasting signifiers in Holbein's *The Ambassadors* (1533) is filled with remarks on the individual movements required when we look at a painting. He tells his audience that he hopes that the copy of the painting he has brought along "has circulated enough to have passed between everyone's

Figures 3-5: Ruiz traces an arc around one of the scandalous paintings in a single shot.

Screenshots from *L'Hypothèse du tableau volé* (© INA).

hands".[16] Paintings are not merely consumed visually: approaching and analysing a painting requires an endless series of shifting movements. The form of the skull appears

to a viewer of Holbein's image only at the moment when "you turn away"—only by moving to the outer edge of the painting and genuflecting at its foot can the *memento mori* be discerned.[17] The painting remains still, while it is the spectator who performs the gesture necessary to unlock another point of view. The French language is particularly porous to dialogues which embrace the congruence of knowledge and perspective. An individual layer of perspectival space and a tabulated set of ideas can both be designated with the same noun: *plan*. Theorising about a work of art and gesturing about one emerge as inherently complementary ways to approach hermeneutics.

Figure 6: Velázquez, *Las Meninas* (1656) (Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid).

One of the strategies employed by the two narrators is the dismantling of the composition by imagining the appearance of the tableau from each of the characters' perspectives in turn. Most thrillingly, the sixth painting is performed through a web of *tableaux vivants* in which the actors point out of their individual tableaux into the next. The gestures within and between the paintings are as significant as the Collectionneur's narration from the *roman à clef*. The leaps between different perspectives and performances echo the hierophantic incandescence enjoyed by Foucault in the opening chapter of *The Order of Things* (1966). Large sections of Foucault's analysis of Velazquez's *Las Meninas* (see Figure 6) could have been delivered by the Collectionneur or his unseen interlocutor. Even the concept of marginal anamorphism is evoked by Foucault, who describes how the painter

Figure 7: The *tableau vivant* of Diana and Actaeon from *L'Hypothèse du tableau volé*.
Screenshots from *L'Hypothèse du tableau volé* (© INA).

the canvas has oriented himself in relation to his work: "by keeping his distance, the painter has placed himself aside the piece on which he is working"—exactly as a spectator of *The Ambassadors* would.[18] The *telos* of his imagined spectators is not the discovery of a hidden cult or conspiracy, as in the case of the Collectionneur, but the revelation of the painter's image of the spectators themselves "transcribed by his hand as if in a mirror".[19] Foucault leads the spectator's gaze from the painter to his unknowable canvas, to the window which spills light out of the painting itself, to the mirror (a dialectical dead end) and beyond. Ruiz's film contains even more deceptions and "false paths", as the characters follow the trail through not one but several interlinked paintings. The rays reflected in the mirrors (see Figure 7) appear to connect the paintings, but fail to shed an interpretative light on what might hold them together. Similarly, Foucault unveils Velázquez's composition as a representation of representation. "[Classical representation] undertakes to represent itself here in all its elements, with its images, the eyes to which it is offered, the faces it makes visible, the gestures that call it into being."[20] *Las Meninas* orchestrates perspectival deceptions to lead the spectator's interpretative gaze through reflections, shadows, mirrors and pools of light. The turning point in Foucault's reading occurs when he refuses to allow himself to be misled by these diversions and scrutinises the movements of the figure at the threshold at the back of the composition. Like the smile of the page facing out of the painting of the crusaders and looking outside the frame in Ruiz's film, his actions are only visible to someone who beholds the painting as he resides out of

the line of sight of all characters within the composition. Not only is he pulling on a curtain (an act which recalls the gesture performed by Toto in *The Wizard of Oz* which unmasks the "man behind the curtain"), he is also mid-step, halfway down a staircase and, most significantly of all, positioned at an open doorway, a figuration which is particularly relevant to the manner in which the characters of Ruiz's film travel between the paintings.

Figures 8-9: The Collectionneur awkwardly avoids opening doors before the reveal of the first *tableau vivant* (top) and after the examination of the third (bottom). Screenshots from *L'Hypothèse du tableau volé* (© INA).

In a film so intensely preoccupied with dialogues of gesture, it is worth following how the Collectionneur careens through his rambling mansion. During his opening monologue, he opens a drawer, empties it of a vast number of articulated mannequins and sits two of them down facing each other before depositing the rest in an adjacent drawer lined with an anatomical drawing. Much as he attempts to perform a re-articula-

tions of others' gestures, he is the walking proof of Agamben's claim that people are forgetting how to gesture. The sequence immediately following his confident assertion that the *tableaux vivants* are able to show that to which paintings only allude sees him retreat into a tenebrous corner of the room (see Figure 8). A few seconds later, the door leading out to the first *tableau vivant* creaks open. Conventions of the haunted house movie are adopted and reconfigured to demonstrate the Collectionneur's own impotence when it comes to the autonomy of his gestures. The Collectionneur appears to have activated some unseen mechanism to open the door rather than committing himself to the gesture of opening it of his own accord. Each time he uses such surgically precise mechanisms to move through space, he unlearns some of the subtlety that consists in physically opening a door. After finding the mask in the third *tableau*, there is a protracted sequence in which the Collectionneur displays great hesitation in his interaction with a door (Figure 9). He looks at it quizzically before prising it open just a fraction and sliding backwards across the threshold. The Collectionneur may re-orient himself in paintings and use mirrors to put himself at impossible vantage points, but his gestures reveal him to be a man losing his grasp on his own sense of personal space as mediated between interior and exterior. Adorno speaks to this exact fear in *Minima Moralia*: "Technification is making gestures in the meantime precise and rough—and thereby human beings."[21] Gesture is a realm of pure mediality, and the act of opening a door enhances an understanding of how interior and exterior space mediate each other. Over- or undetermined actions such as the creaking door "drive all hesitation out of gestures, all consideration, all propriety".[22] If the techniques used to decipher the paintings are applied to the movements undertaken by the characters within the film, the slow discovery that the protagonists do not know how to mediate their own gestures threatens to negate their findings within the *tableaux* and *tableaux vivants*.

The dialogic duel between the two narrators is a carefully choreographed sequence of gestures and fanfares. Beneath the illusion of dialectical progress lies a chain of feints and argumentative loops. Gesture is not an entirely "silent kingdom": Agamben takes care in specifying that gesture can be expressed with noises, that the essential "silence"' of cinema does not stem from the presence or absence of sound.[23] In another moment of intertextuality with Diderot, the relationship between the two protagonists is strongly reminiscent of the rapport between Moi and Lui in the "satire second", *Le Neveu de Rameau*: the former

is the first to speak and, despite his role as a "point of view" for the reader, does not con-
cede any details about his appearance or movements. In Ruiz's film, the corresponding
character is known to the viewer only as an acousmatic voice. As we cannot see his ges-
tures, he can maintain an enigmatic distance from an observer, yet this allows him to be
outperformed by the Collectioneur. As Ropars argues, "according to Ruiz […] one must
rule the system through an absent narrator, who integrated with the viewer but finds
himself interrupted by the character in his story, a chatty and very visible collector".[24] The
voice-off is just as spatial as it is acoustic: it functions as a deictic gesture that points to the
space beyond the frame. Like the Collectionneur, Diderot's Lui is a wild tangle of gestures
and gesticulations. He waxes lyrical around a vast web of topics with such rhetorical
prowess that it takes a degree of concentration to realise how little of any import is being
said. The two narrators elaborate their theories and deliver readings of the paintings in a
manner which is highly gestural. The dialogue's gestural turn is suggested by a series of
phatic words such as *Hélas* (alas). Loops within sentences leave the viewer with a sense
that different perspectives illuminate different meanings. Even when the Collectionneur is
seated in the background, positioned and lit in such a way that he resembles a motionless
bust, he still mediates his expression seemingly to cause confusion. "Two remarks… two
remarks concerning the paintings… and two further remarks… two more remarks… but
those of a more general character."[25] The pauses which punctuate his speech obfuscate the
meaning of what could have been a simple sentence: at its close it is unclear whether four,
six or eight "remarks" will follow. The various steps in the argument surrounding Ton-
nerre's painting acquire a kind of gestural shorthand: for example, when the Collection-
neur repeats "paintings do not show, they allude", he makes an almost involuntary circu-
lar motion with his right hand which mirrors the spiralling nature of his argumentation.
The unravelling argument is irreducible from the hand movements and shuffling foot-
steps which accompany it. Both give the illusion of progress while often only serving to
bewilder the spectator even further. The dialogue has no particular end or goal, as one
conspiracy always seems to give in to another. It also denies an audience the complete sat-
isfaction which would allow it to be an end in itself. Each struggle within the dialogue to
wrestle gesture back into the realm of communicability only ends up producing more ges-
ture. The dialogue becomes a vast sequence of imperceptible shifts and configurations

mediated by art which transcend meaninglessness and seek to represent the pure mediality behind communication.

The rhythms and dialectical fugue of the dialogue are complemented by Jorge Arriagada's score. Far from operatically omnipresent, the piercing, short bursts of staccato strings cannot help recall the gestures of the orchestral conductor and the precisely coordinated movements of the violinist. The isolated percussion instruments, particularly the drums, underlay the gestures enumerated onscreen with an eerie, acousmatic echo. Even more uniquely unsettling is the soprano whose voice bookends the film. The soprano's song initially appears to be a chant in some unknown, indecipherable language, before it emerges that the lyrics are in fact the poem "Napoleon" by Walter de la Mare. "What is the world, O soldiers?/It is I:/I, this incessant snow,/This northern sky;/Soldiers, this solitude/Through which we go/Is I." In its full textual form, the poem inverts its meaning as a reader progresses from the first verse to the last. From the evidence of the first half, the listener has the impression that Napoleon is an entirely self-centred individual who thinks he has inherited the world. In the second half this confidence is shown to have crumbled to an Ozymandian expression of a destroyed ego. As the song begins, the volume fades up reticently such that most viewers would only hear the second half of the poem. Just as there is a missing painting, there is a missing verse which haunts the film. Through the combination of these various techniques, the score punctuates and complements the visual and dialogic exploration of gesture which is occurring within the diegesis.

CONCLUSION

> We would dearly like to know what was going on in Rimbaud's head while he was writing *Le bateau ivre*, in Mozart's head while he was composing his symphony *Jupiter*, to understand the secret mechanism which guides the creator on their perilous adventure. Thank God, what is impossible for poetry and music, is achievable in painting! To know what is going on inside the head of a painter, you just need to follow their hand. [26]
>
> — Henri-Georges Clouzot, *Le mystère Picasso* (1956)

In the first movements of his art film *Le mystère Picasso* of 1956, Clouzot proclaims *ex cathedra* to have solved the titular mystery, the "secret mechanism" which animates artistic

creation.[27] Paintings, he claims, are composed of a vast number of human gestures, and the act of deciphering them reveals the essence of both painting subject and painted object. As Clouzot's film unspools, the opportunity to observe the artist at work is foreclosed: while the individual brush strokes are visible on the screen, for the bulk of the film the artist's hand itself is elided, the painted glass becoming coterminous and coexistent with the frame. The opening monologue emerges as something of an empty gesture. Ruiz's preoccupation with capturing the brushstrokes of the painter would later find expression in *Miotte vu par Raúl Ruiz* (2001) which approaches that lofty goal towards which Clouzot gestures through techniques including hand points-of-view (POV) shots of the paintbrush, canted angles and a translucent mesh of superimpositions. In *L'Hypothèse du tableau volé,* the second narrator believe he is close to the truth when he claims that "every movement made by a human being leaves an imaginary outline comparable to a curve".[28] The temptation to bypass language, social codes and media to connect with a deeper significance is irresistible for the two interlocutors. Ruiz's protagonists struggle to interpret gesture out of and between artworks in a way which leads to a ceaseless proliferation of gesturality across media. Hermeneutics produces more gestures, which produce more medium and elaborate a vast web of intermediality. *Las meninas* as read by Foucault is a representation of representation; Ruiz's film conveys the communication of (in)communicability, especially as the actors start to blink and lose their long-held postures at the film's conclusion.

Futile as it may appear to speculate around the silent kingdom of gesture with the cacophony of terminology and theory, *L'Hypothèse du tableau volé* offers a glimpse of what might happen if gestures were left unscrutinised and degenerated into empty gestures. An authoritarian regime would seek to establish itself first in the subliminal domain of gesture: "Such a cult is practically equivalent to military discipline […] the military manoeuvres, the grandiose parades, are only one aspect of the ceremony."[29] The figure of Baphomet who is at the epicentre of the occult themes within the paintings, "an immaculate body without a soul", is so disquieting precisely because it has no features, no independent movement, no *gestus*.[30] Hanging from the ceiling and revolving with metronomic regularity, this figure manifests what would occur if the "imaginary outline" of gesture were to become the solid border of conformity and of totality.

"So, let's forget, let the paintings fade, disappear, disappear, so that all that remains are the lone, isolated gestures: the gestures of the ceremony."[31] The final words of the Collectionneur express that heady dream that gesture might be extricated from painting, or indeed from a *tableau vivant*. The character tries, and fails, to catch gesturality in the interstices of painting and theatre. Through the framing device of the film, Ruiz clashes these two media not only with cinematographic images but also acousmatic and charismatic voices alongside a knot of literary references. Gesture begets gesture, and can be glimpsed only in those moments at which it crosses from medium to medium. Ruiz's film would find itself at the centre of a canon of a gestural film theory, were such a branch of theory possible. Antithetical to medium specificity, pure mediality cannot be captured within one single discipline or medium. Each single gesture becomes destined to repeat itself. Gesturality beckons, but as we approach it we cannot help but re-enact its ceremony and gesture towards or beyond ourselves.

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1. *L'Hypothèse du tableau volé*: "Les tableaux ne montrent pas, ils font allusion. Les tableaux, mis en scène par le moyen technique des tableaux vivants, ne font pas allusion, *ils montrent* !"

2. Virginia Woolf, "Walter Sickert", in *Collected Essays II* (London: Hogarth Press, 1972), 236f, also cited in Sharon Maus, *"Words are an Impure Medium": Virginia Woolf's Appropriation of Visual Art* (San Marcos, TX: Texas State University, 2005), Frédéric Regard, *Mapping the Self: Space, Identity, Discourse in British Auto/biography* (Saint-Étienne: Université de Saint-Étienne, 2003), 199, and Jack Stewart, *Color, Space and Creativity: Art and Ontology in Five British Writers* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2008), 26.

3. Giorgio Agamben, *Means Without End: Notes on Politics* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2000), 52.

4. Ibid., 54

5. Ibid., 54f.

6. Libby Saxton, "Passion, Agamben and the Gestures of Work", in *Cinema and Agamben: Ethics, Biopolitics and the Moving Image*, ed. Henrik Gustafsson and Asbjørn Grønstad (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 61.

7. Alain Masson, "D'où vient le geste?", in *L'acteur de cinéma: approches plurielles* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2007), 87: "Le geste ne se laisse réduire ni à une signification ni à une valeur ou une fonction immédiates et simples. Bien souvent, c'est une énigme en même temps qu'un indice."

8. André Bazin, *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma?* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1981), 12: "La photographie, en achevant le baroque, a liberé les arts plastiques de leur obsession de la ressemblance."

9. Roland Barthes, *La Chambre claire* (Paris: Editions de l'Etoile, 1980), 32f: "Un geste saisi au point de sa course où l'œil normal ne peut l'immobiliser."

10. Michael Goddard, "Impossible Cartographies: Approaching Raúl Ruiz's Cinema, " *em questão* 19, no.1 (2013): 27.

11. *L'Hypothèse*: "Il a suffit au peintre d'interpréter dans son style sobre et magistral l'énergie des figures, des expressions, des attitudes et des gestes."

12. Thomas Elsaesser, *European Cinema: Face to Face With Hollywood* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005), 253.

13. Denis Diderot, *Lettre sur les aveugles. Lettre sur les sourds et muets*, ed. Marian Hobson and Simon Harvey (Paris: Flammarion, 2000), 100: "Celui qui se promène dans une galerie de peintures fait, sans y penser, le role d'un sourd qui s'amuserait a examiner les muets qui s'entretiennent sur des sujets qui lui sont connus."

14. Ibid., 101: "on me voyait répandre des larmes dans les endroits pathétiques, et toujours les oreilles bouchées."

15. Ibid., 101: "me boucher les oreilles pour mieux entendre".

16. Jacques Lacan, *Les quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1973), 82: "a circulé assez pour qu'il ait passé maintenant entre toutes les mains".

17. Ibid., 83: "vous vous détournez".

18. Michel Foucault, *Les mots et les choses* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), 19: "en prenant un peu de distance, le peintre s'est placé à côté de l'ouvrage auquel il travaille".

19. Ibid., 22: "transcrits par sa main comme dans un miroir".

20. Ibid., 31: "[La représentation classique] entreprend en effet de s'y représenter en tous ses éléments, avec ses images, les regards auxquels elle s'offre, les visages qu'elle rend visibles, les gestes qui la font naître."

21. Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia* (London: Verso, 2005), I.19.

22. Ibid., *Minima Moralia*, I.19.

23. Agamben, *Means Without End*, 58f.

24 Marie-Claire Ropars-Wuilleumier, *Écraniques: le film du texte* (Lille: Presses universitaires de Lille, 1990), 102: "il faut régir le système par un narrateur absent, qui s'assimile au spectateur mais se trouve inter-pellé par le personnage de son récit, un collectionneur bavard et bien visible".

25. *L'Hypothèse tableau*: "Deux remarques… deux remarques concernant les tableaux… et deux remarques encore… deux remarques de plus… mais celles-là de caractère générale."

26. *Le mystère Picasso*: "On donnerait cher pour savoir ce qui s'est passé dans la tête de Rimbaud pendant qu'il écrivait *Le bateau ivre*, dans la tête de Mozart pendant qu'il composait la symphonie *Jupiter*, pour connaître le mécanisme secret qui guide le créateur dans son aventure périlleuse. Grace à Dieu, ce qui est im-possible pour la poésie et la musique, est réalisable en peinture ! Pour savoir ce qui se passe dans la tête d'un peintre, il suffit de suivre sa main."

27. *Le mystère Picasso*: "mécanisme secret".

28. *L'Hypothèse*: "tout mouvement effectué par un être humain laisse un tracé imaginaire assimilable à une courbe".

29. *L'Hypothèse*: "Un tel culte est pratiquement équivalent de la discipline militaire […] les manoeuvres militaires, les défilés grandioses, ne sont qu'un aspect de la cérémonie."

30. *L'Hypothèse*: "un corps immaculé sans âme".

31. *L'Hypothèse*: "Alors, oublions, laissons les tableaux s'effacer, s'évanouir, s'évanouir, afin qu'il ne reste plus que les gestes seuls, isolés: les gestes de la cérémonie."

WHITHER THE SIGN: MOHAMMED KHADDA IN ASSIA DJEBAR'S *LA NOUBA DES FEMMES DU MONT CHENOUA*

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INTRODUCTION

Assia Djebar's film, *La nouba des femmes du Mont Chenoua* (1978), posits language as the vector through which Algerian women integrate the trauma of the war of liberation from the French, but also by way of a contradiction: The French language, which implies a secular education for women and their physical mobility, is juxtaposed to Tamazight, a dialect of the Berber language used by a significant non-Arab ethnic minority in Algeria. Djebar positions both mobility and the subjective integration granted by Tamazight as necessary to her central protagonist Leïla's recovery, yet Djebar also understands the French language as part of the structural logic that has injured her and her avatar in Leïla. This wound is addressed through memory work and a return to the mother tongue.

Djebar leaves the aforementioned contradiction profoundly unresolved in *La nouba*, though she does imply the possibility of resolution, if all women were to speak openly about their experiences during the war. Into this knot of unresolved postcolonial tension, Djebar inserts a painting by iconic Algerian modernist artist Mohammed Khadda. Khadda was vociferous throughout the latter half of the 20th century in his defense of abstraction as an aesthetic language already proper to the Algerian territory. He saw abstraction as a necessary political corrective to social realism in painting, which he felt functioned too easily as ideological propaganda. In this paper, I will establish the fact that Djebar's relationship to language is ambivalent in order to suggest that she uses Khadda's work, which is bound up in his theory of language, to magnify the stakes of her ambivalence.

SYNOPSIS

La nouba is the first film made by a woman since Algeria's independence and it is largely credited as the first film made about women's experience of the war.[1] *La nouba* garnered

international critical acclaim almost immediately: it was presented at the Venice Film Festival in 1979, where it won the grand prize. Today it is one of a handful of Algerian films from the 1970s subtitled into English and available commercially on DVD. Critically, it persists as a foundational referent for the work of anamnesis with regard to women in Algerian society.

While filmmaker Assia Djebar is primarily known as a novelist, *La nouba* and a second film she made in 1982, *La Zerba ou les chants de l'oubli*, are considered a turning point in her work. *La nouba,* in particular, is read as Djebar's return to her ancestral roots in order to re-connect with her maternal language, or to an authentic discourse of self.[2] Healing from lingering war-related trauma is depicted as a process rooted in conversation with other women. *La nouba* is also significant in the corpus of Algerian cinema for its experimental structure and the fact that it documents the lives of women in rural Algeria in the 1970s.

Structured around the character Leïla, an architect played by Sansan Noweir, *La nouba* chronicles Leïla's return to the village of Cherchell on Mount Chenoua, a Berber-dominated coastal region seventy kilometers west of Algiers along the Mediterranean, more than a decade after the end of the war of liberation from the French (1954-1962). Leïla travels to Cherchell to accompany her husband Ali in his convalescence from a riding accident suffered during the course of his work as a veterinarian. In a voiceover to the film, which is understood to be Leïla's inner dialogue, it is revealed that she is struggling with psychological wounds that linger from her experiences during the war. Her parents and her uncle were killed, her brother disappeared, and she was imprisoned and tortured. As she waits for Ali to heal, she begins to drive alone throughout the region asking at neighboring farms for news of her brother. Her restless searching provides the pretext for discussions with a number of women who live in this rugged, rural landscape and who are Djebar's extended family in real life.[3] Leïla's voiceover articulates the impetus for her movement as a search for language:

I am not looking for anything. I just remembered that I was looking. I am not looking for anything, but I listen. It is for you that I would like to listen. […] I am beginning to listen to you. You the women of my Chenoua. Open a door, greet, say nothing, let them speak. Is it the past or the present which is coming back to me?

With her listening, Leïla is constituting a *nouba* of women. *Nouba* is defined at the outset of the film as "the history of women who speak in their turn" and is based on a classical form of Andalusian music resembling a rhythmic symphony.[4] More colloquially, the term also refers to a festival, a wedding party, or to the military music of North African sharp-shooters on parade.[5] The women in *La nouba* speak about the land they inhabit, their contributions to the war effort with supplies, and in some cases about their arrests and torture. They speak about these things simply, as matters of fact.[6]

Formally, *La nouba* is characterized by the heterogeneity of its source material.[7] Djebar juxtaposes documentary material from the French National Audiovisual Institute's photography and film archives with quasi-documentary footage of women going about their lives in the village. Leïla and Ali's crumbling marriage and the healing work each has come to Cherchell to accomplish act as a frame for a broad range of filmic war memorialization: re-enactments of 19th century French military campaigns, references to stories of women's heroic action and death throughout the early 20th century, and dream sequences in the past and the present. It produces a representation of women's history as hybrid, composed both of fact and fiction, inconsistently objective.

The question of Leïla's fictionality, or the extent to which her character is meant to read as a surrogate for Djebar's own experience, is complex.[8] *La nouba* is not literally autobiographic, but it draws heavily on Djebar's bilingual and postcolonial experience of language, as well as on her childhood in Cherchell. The ambivalent quality of Leïla's fictionality is accentuated by the fact that Djebar's literary oeuvre is constituted by a mix of historical fiction and autobiographical material.[9] Maria Flood argues that fiction and documentary go beyond Leïla's function as a stand-in for Djebar, but exists already in the film's structure:

> Djebar presents the spectator with a set of undeniably real people, and this raises the question of whether Djebar is creating a fictionalised community of real individuals, or representing an existing social and political collectivity. The use of photographs from the war, the documentary-style shots of Algerian villages and rural settings, the real testimonies given by the women as well as the role of Lila as Djebar's fictional double in the film, all render the issue of community as real or represented particularly pertinent.[10]

What is at stake in Djebar's structural ambivalence is whether Leïla stands in for a universal figure, or whether her experience should be read exclusively in relation to women of Djebar's class, education, and proximity to the war of liberation. The film, and much of its critical literature, makes a universalist claim, but I argue that key scenes in the film are limited to women of Djebar's class and education.[11] This tension between a broad "history of women who speak in their turn" and the narrative of an individual with a particular relationship to language and to conjugal intimacy is key in so far as it marks the difference between a nationalist discourse on the role of women in Algeria postwar and the claims of Algerian feminists throughout the 20th century.[12]

Chandra Talpade Mohanty points out that colonialization dominates through "discursive or political suppression of the heterogeneity of the subject(s) in question", which is to say it functions by imposing abstract, general categories onto the lived experiences of its subjects as a means of control.[13] Mohanty draws a sharp structural parallel between this aspect of colonialism and feminist discourse produced in the "West" about "third world women", arguing that such discourse reproduces a colonial logic of homogenization. This type of feminist discourse, according to Mohanty, "discursively colonizes the material and historical heterogeneities of the lives of women in the third world, thereby producing/representing a composite, singular 'third-world woman'—an image which appears arbitrarily constructed but nevertheless carries with it the authorizing signature of western humanist discourse."[14] Mohanty's injunction, which I extend to include Algeria, is to think feminism as that which is drawn directly from the lived and differentiated experiences of women in that postcolonial context, as constituting a necessary deconstructive response to colonialism's suppression of heterogeneity.

With this injunction in mind, from a juridical point of view, rural Algerian women were not emancipated with independence, their significant participation in and sacrifice for the war effort notwithstanding.[15] Nor did they all enter into language in a manner analogous to Leïla who, as Djebar's double, can be assumed to have studied at a secular French school. Leïla/Djebar's departure from traditional education for women, her bilingualism, and her freedom to choose whether or not to veil, condition her access to a driver's license and an SUV, for example, and her ability to cover broad distances alone and at will in search of others' testimony. Leïla exists in language—which is not simply a matter of communication but also of subjective experience—in a very different sense than do the

women she listens to. This difference marks the limit of the film's universalism, complicating the film's implicit feminism.

TWO POSITIONS IN THE LITERATURE: DONADEY AND KHANNA

The majority of the critical literature on *La nouba* reads it as a successful attempt to represent and give voice to Algerian women and their experiences during the war. For Anne Donadey, for example, Leïla is emancipated when she establishes the continuity of oral transmission through her roaming conversations with village women, and through her identification with their memory of colonial violence.[16] Donadey interprets the film's structure as palimpsestic, meaning that all transmission takes place at least partially at the expense of some earlier understanding of the same event. The film thus erases or occludes histories in order to produce a history of the occluded feminine voice.[17] By acknowledging the history of violence to women, and by employing a structure that avows the violence of its own capacity to occlude the past, Algerian women are pictured emerging from their muteness.[18]

Ranjanna Khanna, by contrast, sees *La nouba* as an example of what she calls "fourth cinema", meaning that it provides a space in which fragments of different epistemological registers (sound, documentary footage, archival footage, acted screenplays) settle together without false resolution, "an unsutured moment of representational breakdown", and the necessary breakdown of a visual regime at least partially constituted by the exclusion of women.[19] Khanna articulates fourth cinema explicitly as critique of third cinema's structural masculinism. She argues that the relationship between the camera and the weapon— one that third cinema insists on—is privileged at the expense of any complex representation of women.

Further, a privileged relationship between camera and weapon fails to acknowledge that the representational absence of the feminine stabilizes both revolutionary and nationalist discourses, in Algeria in particular.[20] Third cinema is in danger of making a hero of the armed and usually masculine revolutionary while erasing the complex role that rape and sexualized violence played in the colonizer's effort to dehumanize and subjugate the colonized, effectively allowing masculinism to persist in post-revolutionary governments

and regimes. Rather than think the camera as a weapon, Djebar thinks the camera as one way of producing the source material for a collage of images and sounds. For Khanna, *La nouba* is emancipatory not principally for the platform it provides women to speak their truth, but because its chaotic experimentation with source material makes mastery impossible—the self-mastery of the filmmaker or of any of the revolutionaries she represents, but also mastery of any one representational idiom over any other, a point which echoes Mohanty's analysis of postcolonial feminism as necessarily heterogeneous. *La nouba* should be read as structurally feminist, especially in its apprehension of language, rather than a film about women that is therefore emancipatory.

DJEBAR: AN AMBIVALENT THEORY OF LANGUAGE

Djebar displaces the authority of the official discourse in favor of formal and oral cacophony, and, contrary to Khanna who sees that displacement happen at the level of the film's editing structure, I see that displacement is most vividly in Djebar's ambivalent relationship to language, privileging an oral experience of language over its written discourse. Djebar identified as a Francophone writer throughout her career, and she is lucid about the complexity of writing in the colonizer's language.[21] In *Algerian White*, for example, published many years after *La nouba*, during the Black Decade, Djebar implicates the French language in the problem of appearing in language to other Algerians across class lines. She recounts her friendship with Abdel Kader Alloula, an Oranian playwright assassinated in 1994 during the Black Decade, in these terms:

> On the few occasions, it seems to me, where I must have started spontaneously a sentence in my local urban dialect, I knew immediately that I appeared precious—to Kader—even perhaps outdated, and that because of the softness of the dental consonants in the accent of women from the place where I was brought up—so quickly went back to the impersonality of French. In a second, by the flash of his gaze, I understood: speaking Arabic together, we were becoming excessively so, I an old-fashioned *bourgeoise* and he a crude rough village lad![22]

French allows each of the friends to escape the explicit markers of their class status in what is otherwise a society marked with rigid hierarchies; it grants them rhetorical homelessness. Yet Djebar is also lucid about the price of being untethered from space by language, or from the upper-class that her accent alludes to. She claims French as a paternal language in an interview with Mortimor from 1985, remarking directly on the contradiction between the history of violence embedded in the French language and its capacity to personally set her free of the strict separation of the sexes and seclusion within the home:

> If the first stage is to recover the past through writing in French, the second stage is to listen to women who evoke the past by speaking, and in the mother tongue. Then, evocation in the mother tongue must be brought back toward the paternal language. French is also for me a paternal language. The language of yesterday's enemy became for me the father's language, because my father was a teacher in a French school. Yet in this language there is death, by way of the testimony of the conquest that I retrieve with it. But it also contains movement and the liberation of the female body because, for me as a young girl attending French school, it was also means that I could escape the harem. Nonetheless, when the body once again becomes immobile, the mother tongue becomes memory and the song of the past.[23]

French is correlated to open space, while Arabic and the Chenaoui dialect are correlated to the mother and to the dark, recessed spaces like the womb, the cave, and the harem.[24] Djebar equates the French language with death, but also with the father and with freedom, whereas her mother tongue, never specified but at least here implied to be a dialect of Arabic, is the language of containment but also of dreams, the subconscious, and therefore the language that touches the experience of trauma most directly. Djebar sees one of the principal tasks of *La nouba* as seeking the mother tongue, and all the memory it contains, in order to bring it out into space, in order to emancipate memory by recourse to film, to editing, and to free movement. Thus, the characteristics of Djebar's paternal language are implicated in the recovery of her maternal one.

By 1995, at the release of her autobiographical novel, *Vaste est la prison*, Djebar evinces an even more nuanced sense of the role language plays in her self-perception and in her Algerian identity. In an interview with Lise Gauvin, she describes a contradiction between

Arabic and French. She relates that in the early 1980s she realized that she could speak neither of love nor of desire in French. Already a woman in her forties, she writes:

> [A]s soon as I needed to express love—in my intimate life, I mean—French became a desert. I could not say the slightest tender word or speak of love in this language, to the point that it was a real womanly interrogation. Therefore, with certain men with whom there may have been a play of seduction, as there was no way through to the maternal language, an invisible barrier remained in me.[25]

French, in Djebar's view, does not grant equal access to all forms of space, nor even to all experiences of the body in space. It frees Djebar in thought, but it also builds a wall between herself as a speaker and her desiring body.

La nouba is a film about the capacity of oral language to metabolize traumatic experience, and it places women's oral histories at the center of memory work with regard to the war of liberation in Algeria. But *La nouba*'s operative theory of language is riven with internal contradiction: How to speak and be free in a language (Arabic) that would close the woman into the home but is also the language from which feminine memory stems? How to leave and move freely if to do so entails an estrangement from both the mother tongue and the conjugal bed? I propose that this contradiction is reified by Leïla's difficult marriage to Ali and thus her complex relationship to her own desire.

As the only prominent male figure in the film and Leïla's narrative foil, Ali comes to signify the masculine agent of history and of language and to provide a screen onto which Leïla can project her ambivalence about the place of women in language. To drive this point home, Djebar places Khadda's painting in the background of scenes in which Leïla is in direct conflict with Ali.[26] The choice of artist is not accidental, as Khadda's position as a modernist painter and his own writing from the period places him at the center of debates about postcolonial aesthetics and language.

KHADDA: A POSTCOLONIAL THEORY OF PAINTING AS LANGUAGE

Mohammed Khadda trained as a typographer in Algeria, but had no further formal art education before moving to Paris in 1953, the year before the war of liberation broke out

in Algeria, with his friend and fellow artist Abdallah Benanteur. He remained in Paris un-
til 1963, just after independence, where he is said to have been influenced by Cubism and
Abstract Expressionism.[27] Upon his return to Algeria, Khadda joined poet and political
militant Jean Sénac to found "l'École du Noun", or the School of the *Noun*, which is the
name of the "n" sign in Arabic script. This group was later known at the school as the
"École du Signe", or the School of the Sign.[28] He is among the handful of artists that cura-
tor and art historian Nadira Laggoune-Aklouche refers to as Algeria's "modern masters"
along with Baya, M'hamed Issiakhem, Denis Martinez, and Choukri Mesli.[29]

Khadda argued against either a return to Ottoman-era miniatures or to classic Islamic
calligraphy as an authentic point of origin for the cultural expression of the newly inde-
pendent nation. Especially in his early period, from the 1960s through the late 1970s, he
claimed formal abstraction was an expression of Algerian radicalism, especially when
grounded in an experimental approach to Arabic calligraphy and an Amazigh legacy of
geometric abstraction. Abstraction, for Khadda, constituted a more authentic expression
of national identity than Ottoman inspired miniature painting, social realism and other
didactic forms of representation.[30]

Throughout the 1960s and '70s, Khadda's intellectual project was mainly devoted to
one problem: How to use a radical formal language taken, in part, from Parisian art circles
to describe the experience in language (*mise en langue*) of post-colonial subjectivity? At the
same time, how to translate the linguistic sign as abstraction to canvas and think its parti-
cipation in a modernist semiotic universe? [31] Michel-Georges Bernard describes the lin-
guistic aspect of Khadda's project as part of Arab society's understanding of the material
world, writing that Khadda's "abstraction is first that of the Letter. The stone welcomes it
and becomes a book, pottery becomes earthenware books, glass and enamel all become
loquacious, they say, happy to recite a verse, a sura. The same is true for walls, tools;
everyday objects never cease to speak in Arabic culture."[32] François Pouillon points out
that Khadda was the only Algerian artist of his generation to write extensively and fluen-
tly on aesthetic philosophy, noting a profound commitment in Khadda's manner of using
language, both the French he largely wrote in and the Arabic calligraphic sign his early
paintings largely referenced: "He has a material relation to the written thing: a labored-
over, strongly written phrase that never gives way to the pen. Khadda writes as he engra-
ves, his interest is to enter the texture of things, to print something material […]"[33] Khad-

da conceives of language as a structural system that renders the world, but which is also embedded in the stuff of the world.

Khadda's graphic sign is at once abstract and grounded. It can drift and become polysemous, but only when grounded in a profound understanding of its support, whether canvas or metal plate or socio-linguistic territory. An understanding of language as that which is at once abstract and grounded differentiates his view from that of the *Aouchem* movement, contemporaneous to the School of the Sign, with which he was himself briefly associated. Khadda denounced what he saw as the group's superficial view of language, which he argued was limited to the declarative manifesto rather than embracing an understanding of the relationship between linguistic semiotics and aesthetic semiotics.[34]

AMBIVALENT REFLECTIONS: "REFLETS ET RONCES"

The painting of Khadda that appears in *La nouba* is hard to see given the quality of the films availability commercially at the time of this writing, but I identify it as a work from 1976 entitled "Reflets et ronces", "Reflections and Thorns" in English, though in Djebar's film the canvas is shown upside down.[35] Painted on a rectangular canvas, a field of blue is divided by a horizon line from the foreground below it with sharp, angular brushwork that transgresses from one zone to the other. Shown upside down, as it is in *La nouba*, the painting represents a city-scape arching aggressively into the sky. Seen in its proper orientation, it depicts a city stretching along a coastline and reflected in its water. The sea's mirroring effect renders it impossible to discern an absolute boundary between that which is proper the city, a "thorn", and that which is proper to the Mediterranean, a "reflection."

The title, "Ronces et reflets", gives an important indication of how to read Djebar's inclusion of this work, as Khadda refers to torturers as those who mime *ronces* or thorns in a statement dedicating an exhibition of his work to his friend and Algerian poet Bachir Hadj Ali in 1970: "[M]en, diabolically mimicking briers and *thorns,* braid barbed wire where other means are enclosed and crushed."[36] In 1966, Hadj Ali published a memoir about his torture at the hand of Algerian security forces in 1965, which he had written on toilet paper, rolled into empty cigarette tubes during his incarceration, and smuggled out of the prison during conjugal visits with his wife.[37] The Algerian torturers mimic the

thorns, which presumably refer to the French colonizers who used torture systematically throughout the war. "Ronces et reflets" is thus a portrait of a sea-side city, but also play on the illusory character of the enemy-torturer in the postwar period, as the Algerian government under its second president Houari Boumédiène brutally repressed the Algerian communist party (*Parti Communiste Algérien* or PCA) to which Hadj Ali belonged.

To what end does Djebar employ the painting's appearance in her film? How does it function as a text within the overarching narrative structure of *La nouba*? Its placement is enigmatic for its orientation, upside down in the first scene and propped vertically behind Ali in the second, but also for its appearance only at moments of crisis within Leïla and Ali's marriage. The painting dates from 1976, the film from 1978, they were produced at roughly the same time in the context of Algiers cultural scene, in which the overlap of social circles would have certainly put Khadda and Djebar in regular contact. The extent to which the reference to torture would have been legible at the time beyond this elite social circle is unclear. What is more certain is the fact that the painting can be read as representative of his ideological position in the postwar period, a position that was intimately tied to the linguistic sign.

"Ronces et reflects" surfaces in two different scenes in Djebar's film. The first instance is a sequence of shots that introduces the viewer to Ali and to Leïla, depicting them at home in a modest rural house, each lost in their own pain. The second is a scene at night, when Leïla is asleep in a large bed alone after having put the couple's child to sleep. Both scenes represent moments in the narrative in which the alienation between Ali and Leïla are at their most intense.

HOMELAND

In the second scene of the *toushia*, the overture or the opening scene of *La nouba*, Leïla leaves her place by an open window and turns toward the interior of the room, musing, "I am fond of my memories…" as she makes her way along one wall toward Khadda's painting. The camera frame stops short of showing the whole work at first. The painting is propped on an easel or a stand in the corner of the room. It doesn't hang on the wall as one might expect, it isn't integrated into any domestic installation. The rest of the room is

bare of rugs, furniture or decoration of any kind. It is empty of everything save Leïla, Ali and his wheelchair, and the painting.

Figures 1-2: Screenshots from *La nouba des Femmes du Mont Chenoua* (© ENTV).

Leïla unfurls a white silk scarf from its place on her shoulders, tosses it lightly onto the base of the easel, and rests her wrist on the rim of the canvas. "And finally, finally I will return to my homeland",[38] the voiceover says, the implication being that the painting represents Leïla's homeland, though it is an abstract work that renders no clear image of land, especially in its position upside down. The shot pans back to show the entire canvas, and Leïla standing beside it. "If only you would speak, but you don't want to", the voiceover intones. Ali wheels slowly into the shot so that he is filmed at a slight angle from behind. He stops in front of Leïla. They are watching each other from either side of the painting, which seems to divide them and to fill the space of their separation at the same time. The voiceover continues, "But if you did, you'd say", then pauses as Leïla peels herself off the wall to advance into the room with a measured if absent-minded rhythm to her movements, until she

blocks the camera's view of the painting. When she is finally standing between him and the canvas, she speaks softly: "Long years have passed and you have not returned." Her tone is quiet, and she observes Ali without rancor but rather with softly detached observation. The scene compares a conjugal estrangement to the estrangement from a homeland from which Leïla has also long been absent, Mont Chenoua, with Khadda's abstract city by the sea, turned upside down, that is figured in the painting.

The montage throughout the *toushia* functions as a way to establish the symbolic nature of Ali and Leïla's relationship, and to represent their estrangement from each other, but the painting's appearance and placement implies broader stakes. I see it as a signifier of Leïla's estrangement from language, from her husband, from her native village—it is meant to signify that the problem of return for Algerians postwar is located in language. In that sense, Khadda's painting can be read a prism through which to examine a rupture in Leïla's own relationship to language, or to signify the presence of the letter and the word as an abstraction that floats against its own ground anxiously. Crucially, this rupture mirrors (or reflects) the rupture in her marriage produced by her homelessness in language.

THE MASCULINE FIGURE

The second scene in which the painting appears is a sequence twenty-five minutes into the two-hour film. It depicts Leïla going to sleep after having told a bedtime story to her daughter Aisha, while Ali watches from the doorway. He gazes into the room from his wheelchair as his wife tosses in her sleep, and behind him the same painting as before is visible, hung vertically, almost propped haphazardly. It reads like graffiti in the background of a street scene, it has the same quality of artificially accidental signification. Ali tries to rise, perhaps to join his wife in bed, but he finds that he is too weak and collapses back into the shadows.

At the moment of his collapse, the film cuts to documentary footage from the war of liberation, which depicts French soldiers shooting Algerians dead in the streets, men who are apparently unarmed, men who seem to be simply going about their daily lives. This documentary material belongs to the French National Audiovisual Institute's photography and film archives, and this footage has come to be iconic. It is brutal footage, especially in the visual correlation it draws between the bodies of Algerians falling to the ground and the

rack of weapons the footage cuts to after one fusillade, as though to emphasize that the act of killing is linked to an idea of Algeria and its people as property of the French and of the settler colonial society. Then the camera returns to Leïla, slowly closing in on her face as she appears to sleep peacefully, finally, before cutting to a black screen.

Figures 3-4: Screenshots from *La nouba des Femmes du Mont Chenoua* (© ENTV).

The film edit suggests what Djebar's shooting notes confirm, that the cut to archival images is meant to signify Leïla's war-related nightmares and to imply that her sleep is perpetually troubled by traumatic flashbacks. She writes:

Irrespective of the intellectual work or other sort of activity, while we make the film I turn in an empty bed. Does the film raise the issue of the sexual relations between men and women? Ali falls after a vain attempt to enter the bedroom. This fall corresponds to the scene of bodies being shot in Leïla's dream. Question: Is there a relationship between the impotence or the power of men and war?[39]

Clearly the answer to Djebar's closing question is yes, but the conditions of that answer are complex, both in the broader context of Algerian nationalism postwar and in the film's diegetic narrative. Marnia Lazreg, in her now classic 1994 sociology of the changing structure of women's lives between the 19th and late 20th centuries, *The Eloquence of Silence*, argues that French colonialism was bent on undermining Algerian masculinity through small, daily humiliation and through professional displacement at home and abroad, which had the effect of successively breaking apart rigid gender roles and the division of space that accompanied them. Jean Paul Charney, a French legal scholar writing in 1965, is even more explicit on this point, writing that "Man, driven toward domestic life (by his struggle against colonization) which disabled him, will directly and often closely manage the household."[40]

The correlation between Ali's collapse and anonymous Algerians being shot more than a decade previously may signify that Leïla is dreaming the symbolic death of Ali's masculinity at the hands of the French, a death that makes him unfit to share her bed. But it is also possible to read the crumpling figure as Ali's execution in Leïla's subconscious mind, with death as his punishment for thinking he could trespass into her bedroom. In either case, this scene suggests that violence operates in a feedback loop from colonizer, to colonized man, to colonized woman, back to colonized man. The way violence circulates through these subject positions mirrors Djebar's ambivalence with regard to language: it does not suggest a clear a path to emancipation from the dehumanizing wound colonialism inflicted, nor does it resolve the question of why Khadda's painting haunts the background of this circular movement of postcolonial affect. It is as though the painting were the discursive ground for the figure of the masculine Algerian subject postwar, at once an illustration for this wish to reunite and a portrait of his muteness and impotence. Instead, Khadda's sophisticated use of competing aesthetic languages—French abstraction, Amazighen geometry, and the Arabic calligraphic sign—are indexed by Djebar to Ali and to his failure.

CONCLUSION

Considering Khadda's influential artistic project to create a hybrid aesthetic formal language, "Reflets et ronces" might have signified a bridge between husband and wife forged in communication between genders in postwar Algeria. It might also have signified

Djebar's investigation of the relationship between cultural production, such as film, litera-
ture and painting, and the socio-linguistic context in postwar Algeria, as her own contra-
dictory relationship to the French language mirrors Khadda's relationship to a European
syntax of abstraction in key ways. The direct association *La nouba* makes between the
painting and the two principle instances of Ali's failure, however, coupled with the disori-
entation of the painting in space indicates a different reading: I read Djebar's use of
Khadda as instrumental rather than discursive. The painting is positioned as a sign of
language rather than as speech, meaning that it is incapable of responding, on a profound
level, to the film's feminine figure, Leïla, just as Ali is incapable of responding to her spee-
ch and incapable of joining her in sleep.

My critical reading is based largely on the painting's placement and filmic treatment,
but it is worth pointing out that this reading is also analogous to Ratiba Hadj-Moussa's
analysis of Djebar's use of other source material, namely to documentary footage from the
war of liberation and footage of women speaking about their experience during the war.
According to film scholar Ratiba Hadj-Moussa, *La nouba* exists in a temporal void between
the empty dogmatism of early Algerian cinema and the moment when Algerian cinema
turns resolutely toward the authority of the documentary genre, or toward a belief in the
real. *La nouba* is located in the breach between a tendency toward mythologizing and he-
roic fictions in one period of the nation's filmic history and an opposing tendency toward
equally mythologizing and heroic "truths" in the subsequent period.[41]

Hadj-Moussa also articulates a "hesitation" in the center of the film, which she reads
as evidence of the difficulty of trying to metabolize that which history has excluded (wo-
men's voices) without objectifying either the women speaking or the established past that
their speech is meant to trouble. As a result of this difficulty, one that I agree *La nouba* does
not resolve, Hadj-Moussa argues that the film is in danger of becoming a sign of the wo-
men's constitutive exclusion from the writing of history, rather than their meaningful in-
tegration into it.[42] Further, Hadj-Moussa argues that the placement of "real" wartime ima-
ges in the second sequence in which Khadda's painting appears, misunderstands their
enormous historical incomprehensibility as documents of violence. These film sequences
are used as objective referents, but the events to which they refer are unending in their
consequences and, as a result, they are unstable.

Khadda's painting is deployed with a similar intent and with an analogous effect: it becomes a sign of the written word and of the masculine subject presumed to bear it, rather than an instrument to synthesize visual languages. Any potential Khadda's aesthetic legacy might have had to destabilize the origin of language is guarded against by virtue of its semiotic insertion into *La nouba*, and specifically its identification with Ali. In other words, Djebar (perhaps inadvertently) neutralizes Khadda's radical aesthetic project with regard to language, just as she reifies women's testimony and instrumentalizes images of graphic violence drawn from the French national archives. It is in this sense that I argue that Khadda is used to magnify Djebar's ambivalence with regard to the role of language in a postcolonial context.

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1. The title translates to "The Nouba of the Women of Mount Chenoua". To the point of which filmic representation of women's involvement of war came first: Ahmed Bedjaoui cites Egyptian Youssef Chahine's film about Djamila Bouhired, *Gamila l'Algèrienne* (1958) as the first to focus specifically on women's role in the struggle for independence, and outlines the appearance of women and their experience in other films of the 1960s in his chapter on the subject: Ahmed Bedjaoui, "Femmes dans les représentations filmiques de la guerre de libération", in *Cinéma et guerre de libération: Algérie, des batailles d'images* (Alger: Casbah Editions, 2014), 183-206.

2. Djebar makes this point in an interview with Mildred Mortimer from 1985: "Quand je me pose des questions sur les solutions à trouver pour les femmes mes dans des pays comme le mien, je dis que l'essentiel, c'est qu'il y ait deux femmes, que chacune parle, et que l'une raconte ce qu'elle voit a 1'autre. La solution se cherche dans des rapports de femmes. J'annonce cela dans mes textes, j'essaie de le concrétiser dans leur construction, avec leurs miroirs multiples." Mildred Mortimer, "Entretien avec Assia Djebar, Écrivain Algérien", *Research in African Literatures* 19, no. 2, special issue on Women's Writing (1988): 205.

3. Djebar is direct about her investment in the representation of young women in an interview with Tamzali (1979/2001): "Moi, au lieu de montrer une dizaine de femmes en train de papoter dans leur cuisine, j'ai pris une jeune femme que j'ai libérée dans l'espace, car c'est là le vrai changement : elle est libérée par mon imagination et par mon espoir, car je souhaite que la majorité des femmes algériennes circulent librement et qu'elles soient bien dans leurs peau en circulent—c'est le deuxième problème : bien circuler, pour voir et entendre, et n'avoir pas à échapper toujours au regard de l'autre. Et pendant que ma caméra circule dans l'espace avec mon héroïne au fur et à a mesure le documentaire est là pour montrer ce qui existe c'est-à-dire des femmes…" Wassyla Tamzali, "Le cinéma: pour chercher les mots des autres", *Lectora 7* (2001): 115.

4. In an interview in 1996 with Lise Gauvin, Djebar notes that her mother descended from the Andalusian Arabs, and that she had a classical education in both poetry and music from this period. She also notes that this heritage was only legible—to Djebar, at least—in Arabic. She writes, "Quand elle était dans sa langue arabe, elle réapparaissait dans tout son raffinement: pour moi elle est une aristocrate, avec une culture spécifique que je fais remonter jusqu'à la période andalouse ; elle est héritière des femmes andalouses. Elle avait ses cahiers de poésie arabe, elle chantait l'arabe classique et elle parlait un arabe dialectal. Lorsqu'on est allé vivre au village, j'ai compris que son arabe dialectal était un arabe raffiné qui n'avait rien à voir avec l'arabe des paysans dépossédés. Même dans la langue, l'enfant arrive bien à sentir à quel niveau se situent les adultes. Puis quand je me suis rappelée comment elle parlait aux voisines françaises, femmes d'instituteur, comment donc elle s'essayait au français, m'est parvenue à travers les décennies sa voix qui devenait une voix de fillette. Quand vous débutez dans une langue, vous en avez d'abord la maladresse ; pour l'enfant qui écoute ainsi sa mère, c'est comme si cette dernière perdait un peu de son statut." Assia Djebar and Lise Gauvin, "Territoires des langues: entretien", *Littérature* 101, L'écrivain et ses langues (1996): 77.

5. This ritual is sometimes also referred to as a *fantasia* which is the title of Djebar's 1985 novel, *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1993). See also Burton Holmes, *Burton Holmes Travelogues* (Chicago, IL: Travelogue Bureau, 1914), 99.

6. The women's tone was formally important to Djebar. She felt that their familiar speaking patterns constituted an alternative to the overblown, official language of the revolution: "Non, j'ai voulu une sobriété du style quand il y avait rappel de la souffrance. Quand j'écoutais des femmes de ma région, j'ai remarqué que plus les femmes avaient souffert, plus elles en parlaient sous une forme concise, à la limite presque sèchement. Pour moi la voix de ces femmes est 1'opposition voulue a tout le style officiel. Que ce soit en Algérie ou ailleurs, après une guerre, il y a une manière 'ancien combattant' avec des discours très pompeux sur la souffrance et la mort des autres. Mais ceux qui ont souffert eux-mêmes et qui vingt ans après en parlent d'abord en général ils n'aiment pas en parler, ils en parlent, c'est par allusion. […] Dans le film *La nouba des femmes du mont Chenoua* je ne décris pas les femmes ; je les entends. J'ai photographie ces femmes et je les ai fait tourner. Elles sont elles-mêmes dans le film. Les femmes n'apparaissent que trois ou quatre minutes chacune ; quand elles parlent, elles parlent très sèchement. La manière dont elles parlent me parait très importante. Par exemple, l'une raconte l'histoire de la mort de son frère. Elle dit que le frère a été tue et qu'elle voulait trouver le cadavre. Quand elle raconte cela elle est photographiée ; elle parle presque froidement." Mortimer, "Entretien avec Assia Djebar", 202.

7. Réda Bensmaïa, for example, argues that "the aesthetic of the fragment" governs the work and constitutes its filmic significance. See Réda Bensmaïa and Jennifer Curtiss Gage, "La nouba des femmes du Mont Chenoua: Introduction to the Cinematic Fragment", *World Literature Today* 70, no. 4, Assia Djebar: 1996 Neustadt International Prize for Literature (1996): 877-884.

8. Critic and activist lawyer Wassyla Tamzali was onsite for the production of the film in the 1970s. She has written extensive, first-hand, contemporaneous film commentary. She articulates the relationship between Leïla and Assia Djebar explicitly: "Avec Leïla l'héroïne du film, je dirais Leïla/Assia, nous remontons le temps et le Mont Chenoua, les montagnes de l'enfance de la réalisatrice." Wassyla Tamzali, "Commentaire de Wassyla Tamzali", see http://www.maghrebdesfilms.fr/nouba-des-femmes-du-mont-chenoua-la.html, retrieved 8/21/2017. Film producer and historian Ahmed Bedjaoui championed Djebar's right to make the film in his role as co-director of *Radio-Télévision-Algérie* (RTA), he writes of Leïla as a surrogate for Djebar: "Elle est à la fois l'épouse de l'invalide (à l'amour) et le reflet fidèle de l'écrivain qui prend du recule, comme pour mieux contempler le monder des femmes et le handicap de l'homme." Bedjaoui, *Cinéma,* 191. See also Anne Donaday's citation of comments from a conference in Montreal where Djebar was present: "Both documentary and fiction, *La nouba* follows the filmmaker's 'alter ego,' Leïla, as she questions her relatives, thus reactivating her own memory of a war in which she lost many loved ones (Djebar, commentary in Montreal, 1994)." Quoted in Anne Donadey, "Rekindling the Vividness of the Past: Assia Djebar's Films and Fiction", *World Literature Today* 70, no. 4, Assia Djebar: 1996 Neustadt International Prize for Literature (1996): 885.

9. For Assia Djebar's autobiographical novels, see specifically her Algerian Quartet, *L'Amour, La Fantasia: Roman* (Paris: Jean-Claude Lattès, 1985), *Ombre sultane: Roman* (Paris: J.-C. Lattès, 1987), *Vaste est la prison: Roman* (Paris: A. Michel, 1995), and *Le Blanc de l'Algerie: Recit* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2002).

10. Maria Flood, "Common Vulnerability: Community and its Presentation in Assia Djebar's *La nouba des Femmes du Mont Chenoua*", *Modern & Contemporary France* 21, no. 1 (2013): 74.

11. When reading these scenes, I conflate Leïla/Djebar in order to mark this ambivalence. For a more a critical perspective on *La nouba*'s universalism see Jane Hiddleston's argument via Jean-Luc Nancy's concept of the inoperative community, Jane Hiddleston, *Reinventing community: Identity and difference in late twentieth-century philosophy and literature in French* (Oxford: Legenda, 2005), which Flood cites and elaborates on in Flood, "Common Vulnerability", 75, 86; see also Maria Flood, *France, Algeria and the Moving Image: Screening Histories of Violence 1963-2010* (Cambridge: Legenda, an imprint of the Modern Humanities Research Association, 2017), 58-79.

12. See Flood's discussion of the way the Algerian postwar government positioned women in order to bolster its own political mythology: Maria Flood, "Deep Wounds: Personal and Collective Histories in Assia Djebar's *La nouba des femmes du Mont Chenoua*", in *France, Algeria and the Moving Image*, 61-65.

13. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses", *Feminist Review* 30 (1988): 61. For an articulation specific to the Algerian context, see Marnia Lazreg, "Feminism and Difference: The Perils of Writing as a Woman on Women in Algeria", *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 1 (1988): 81-107.

14. Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes", 62.

15. For a critical account of how women's experience as militants during the war and in the decades that followed is grounded in extensive oral histories, see Natalya Vince, *Our Fighting Sisters: Nation, Memory and Gender in Algeria, 1954-2012* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015). Vince argues that women found themselves confronted by a strong resistance to their participation in public political life after the war, and that this experience contrasted sharply with the exceptional freedom they were granted during the fighting and in various capacities. Vince also notes that women's experience postwar depending largely on women's level of education, which was determined both by class and by an urban/rural divide, with rural women left without commemoration at the national level and without the economic benefits of a war pension. For specific passages, see pages 130-131 on war pensions, pages 164-67 on women's contributions of their gold to the national gold reserves, which impacted rural and lower-class women the most intensely, and page 235 for a discussion of these women's absence in official war commemoration ceremonies. Djamila Amrane's account of women's participa-

tion in the war is based on privileged access to the Algerian archives of war veterans, though it does not present a critical view of the state vis-à-vis the unequal compensation given to female combatants. See Djamila Amrane and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Les femmes algériennes dans la guerre* (Paris: Plon, 1991). See also Assia Djebar's collection of short stories, *Femmes d'Alger dans leur appartement: nouvelles* (Paris: Des femmes, 1980), which focuses primarily on the difference between men's experience of decolonization and women's experience of it.

16. Anne Donadey, "Rekindling the Vividness of the Past", 885-892.

17. Donadey, "The Multilingual Strategies of Postcolonial Literature: Assia Djebar's Algerian Palimpsest", *World Literature Today* 74, no. 1 (2000): 27-36.

18. It is worth noting here that Marnia Lazreg, in her foundational sociological study of Algerian women's lives in the 19th and 20th centuries, argues that the very idea that Algerian women were silent was a "colonial notion" that fundamentally misunderstood the nature of a society segregated by gender. She argues that women used non-verbal communication to speak to one another in the presence of men, but that amongst themselves they spoke freely and at length—in fact, the oral traditions prevalent in many parts of Algeria made women sonic repositories of history-as-fable. See Marnia Lazreg, *The Eloquence of Silence: Algerian Women in Question* (New York: Routledge, 1994), especially 106-13.

19. Ibid.

20. Ranjana Khanna, *Algeria Cuts: Women and Representation, 1830 to the Present* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), 124.

21. For a general discussion about the status of language in Algeria, see Anne-Emmanuelle Berger, *Algeria in Others' Languages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002). Djebar speaks directly to this point, and with great nuance, in her interview with Lise Gaudin: Assia Djebar and Lise Gaudin, "Territoires des langues: entretien" *Littérature* 101, L'écrivain et ses langues (1996): 73-87. For a linguistic analysis of *La nouba* as a record of Algerian dyglossia, a situation in which colloquial and literary Arabic and also Tamazight are used within the same community by the same speakers under different conditions, and an analysis of Leïla's aphasia, or her muteness, see Ziad Bentahar, "A voice with an elusive sound: aphasia, diglossia, and arabophone Algeria in Assia Djebar's The Nouba of the Women of Mount Chenoua", *The Journal of North African Studies* 21, no. 3 (2016): 411-432. Bentahar notes that Djebar understands literary Arabic, or fusha, as intimately linked to a nationalist postwar discourse, and this with the center of power that has excluded the testimony of the women she films. While Bentahar does not relate the linguistic situation in Algeria specifically to traumatic experience, or the postcolonial theories of language, I think his analysis could easily facilitate this kind of argument.

22. Assia Djebar, *Algerian White: A Narrative* (New York: Seven Stories, 2003), 16.

23. "Si le premier volet est de ramener le passé à travers l'écriture en français, le deuxième est d'écouter les femmes qui évoquent le passé par la voix, par la langue maternelle. Ensuite, il faut ramener cette évocation à travers la langue maternelle vers la langue paternelle. Car le français est aussi pour moi la langue paternelle. La langue de l'ennemi d'hier est devenue pour moi la langue du père du fait que mon père était instituteur dans une école française ; or dans cette langue il y a la mort, par les témoignages de la conquête que je ramené. Mais il y a aussi le mouvement, la libération du corps de la femme car, pour moi, fillette allant à l'école française, c'est ainsi que je peux éviter le harem. Toutefois lorsque le corps est redevenu immobile, la langue maternelle, elle, est mémoire, chant du passé." Mortimer, "Entretien avec Assia Djebar", 201 (translation mine).

24. The voice-over that Leïla speaks throughout the film was first written in French and then translated to Arabic, but the original text was also inserted into the film in the form of French subtitles. See Donadey, "Rekindling the Vividness of the Past", 889.

25. "… dès que j'étais dans un besoin d'expression amoureuse—je veux dire dans ma vie de femme—le français devenait un désert. Je ne pouvais pas dire le moindre mot de tendresse ou d'amour dans cette langue, à tel point que c'était un vrai questionnement de femme. Ainsi avec certains hommes avec qui pouvait se dérouler un jeu de séduction, comme il n'y avait pas de passage à la langue maternelle, subsistait en moi une sorte de barrière invisible." Djebar and Gauvin, "Territoires des langues", 79.

26. Tamzali confirms that the painting is by Khadda in Djebar's production notes. Wassyla Tamzali, *En attendant Omar Gatlato: regards sur le cinéma algérien* (Alger: En.A.P, 1979), 103. The identification of the exact painting is my own, I have found no other reference to it.

27. Mary Vogl, "Algerian Painters as Pioneers of Modernism", in *A Companion to Modern African Art*, ed. Gitti Salami and Monica B. Visona (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2013), 197–217. See also Naget Belkaïd-Khadda, "Présence de Khadda", in *Khadda* (Alger: Musée National de Beaux Arts d'Alger, 2011), 28-33. For an account of this period from the perspective of Jean Sénac and his close friends, see a collection of previously published writing edited with archived personal writing on art: Jean Sénac, *Visages D'algérie: Regards Sur L'art* (Paris: Paris-Méditerranée, 2002). For an account of the period centered on "Aouchem" co-founder Denis Martinez, and based largely on the author's interviews with him, see Cynthia Becker, "Exile, Memory, and Healing in Algeria: Denis Martinez and *La Fenêtre du vent*", *African Arts* 42, no. 2 (Summer, 2009): 24-31. On the

relationship between painting and revolutionary nationalism see Kateb Yacine, *Œil-de-lynx et les américains, trente-cinq années de l'enfer d'un peintre* (Ministère du Travail et des Affaires sociales, Alger, 1977). For a contemporary summary in less poetic form, see Nadira Laggoune-Aklouche, "Résistance, appropriation et réappropriation dans l'art Algérien", *Modern & Contemporary France* 19, no. 2, (2011): 179-193.

28. However, countering this literature in an interview with the author on January 16, 2019 in Algiers, artist Hellal Zoubir noted that the School of the Sign and the Aouchem group were at fierce intellectual odds, with Khadda as the artistic figurehead for an Arabic linguistic tradition, and Aouchem devoted to Imazighen-inspired geometric abstraction. Given that the debate about the place and significance of the Berber minority in Algeria is so central to postwar politics about language in particular, this point deserves more research outside of the established (published) histories.

29. Gerhard Haupt and Pat Binder, "Art and Curatorial Practice in Algeria: Interview with Nadira Laggoune", *Nafas Art Magazine*, October 2009, retrieved 27 June 2018 from http://universes-in-universe.org/eng/nafas/articles/2009/algeria_art_curatorial_practice.

30. For a counterargument to Khadda's view on the legitimacy of Algerian artists' claim to abstraction, see Bernard Aresu, "Mémoire de signes: l'abstraction chez Jean-Michel Atlan et Mohammed Khadda", *The French Review* 83, no. 6, ALGERIE/FRANCE (2010): 1272-87. This argument, in my view, is orientalist and Euro-centric.

31. For Khadda's own analysis of his work and those of his contemporaries on the question of abstraction as political, see Mohammed Khadda, *Feuillets épars liés: [essai sur l'art]* (Algiers: Société nationale d'édition et de diffusion, 1983) and Khadda, *Eléments pour un art nouveau: suivi de Feuillets épars liés et inédits* (Algiers: Éditions Barzakh, 2015 [1971]). For information on his life and participation in the struggle for independence, see Khadda, *Mohammed Khadda* (Algiers: Ed. Bouchène, 1987) and Nicolas Surlapierre and Khadda, *Les casbahs ne s'assiègent pas hommage au peintre Mohammed Khadda, 1930-1991* (Paris: Snoeck Ducaju Zoon Editions, 2012).

32. "Cette abstraction est d'abord celle de la Lettre. La pierre l'accueille et devient livre, comme sont les livres faïences, le verre et l'émail qui tous deviennent loquaces, disent, content, récitent un verset, une sourate. Ansi les murs, les outils, les objets quotidiens ne cessent-ils dans la culture arabe de parler." Bernard, *Khadda*, 59 (translation mine).

33. "Il a un rapport matériel à la chose écrite: une phrase travaillée, fortement inscrite et qui ne s'abandonne jamais au fil de la plume. Khadda écrit comme il grave, avec un souci d'entrer dans la texture des choses, d'imprimer une matière". François Pouillon, "Penser le patrimoine algérien: révolution et héritage dans les écrits sur m'art de Mohammed Khadda", in *Mohamed Khadda: Une vie pour oeuvre*, ed. Malika Dorbani-Bouabdellah (Alger: Musée national des beaux-arts d'Alger, 1990), 80.

34. Pouillon, "Penser le patrimoine algérien", 84.

35. A reproduction can be found in the exhibition catalogue for a 2011 retrospective of Khadda's work at the Modern Art Museum of Algiers (MAMA). KHADDA: Transformer son identité en termes d'avenir (Algiers: Musée nationale d'art moderne & contemporain, 2011), 188-189. The work is in the collection of Rachid Boujedra, an Algerian novelist, poet and playwright. My reading of the canvas' orientation is based on its presentation in the catalogue, but also on the artist's signature in the lower left-hand corner.

36. "[D]es hommes, mimant diaboliquement les ronces et les épines, tressent des barbelés où sont enclos et broyés d'autres hommes." Quoted in Bernard, *Khadda*, 106 (n. 28).

37. Ali B. Hadji, *L'arbitraire: Suivi de Chants pour les nuits de septembre* (Arbitrary: [variously translated as *Despotism*] Songs to follow the nights of September) (Paris: Les Éditiones de Minuit, 1966).

38. The Arabic term she uses is *aardi*, which is the term for ground and land, and then a possessive form. It translates literally to *my ground*, or *my earth*.

39. "Quel que soit l'activité intellectuelle ou autre, on tourne pendant le film autour d'un lit vide. Le film pose-t-il le problème des relations sexuelles homme/femmes ? Ali tombe après avoir vainement essayé d'entrer dans la chambre. Cette chute correspond à celle des corps fusillés dans le rêve de Leila. Question: y-a-t-il une liaison entre l'impuissance ou la puissance de l'homme et la guerre?" From Djebar's notes taken during the filming of *La nouba*: Tamzali, *En Attendant Omar Gatlato,* 100.

40. Quoted in Lazreg, *The Eloquence of Silence*, 106, n. 26: Ministère de la Justice: Avant-Projet de Code de la Famille, 1401H-1981, 10. In the original French: Jean-Paul Charnay, *La vie musulmane en Algérie d'après la jurisprudence de la première moitié du XXe siècle, 1991* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1965), 389.

41. "Après un discours inutilement pléthorique sur la guerre (années 1960), mêlant la pire version hollywoodienne à une langue de bois quasi stalinienne, la cinématographie algérienne, pour ne s'en tenir qu'à elle, s'est détournée du passé glorieux, devenu suspect, pour s'ancrer, non sans raison, dans le présent factuel. Entre les deux existe un vide. C'est dans ce vide, dans ce double silence—silence des femmes et silences des films—que *La nouba* vient s'inscrire. Il constitue une sorte de réaction à l'amnésie, au refoulé de l'histoire, qui a fait des femmes des héroines désincarnées, don on disait qu'elles étaient là pour justifier et faire accepter le

fait qu'elles ne soient plus. Le film opère dans cette torsion, de l'affirmation à la dénégation, du passé au present." Ratiba Hadj-Moussa, *Le corps, l'histoire, le territoire: Les rapports de genre dans le cinéma algérien* (Montréal: Éditions Balzac, 1994), 198.

    42. "Mais la marque en tant que signifiant du savoir historique, sur l'histoire, en tant que produit de la mémoire, de ses hésitations, des objets et de leurs restes tend dans *La nouba* à se défiler, se dérober, à recuser sa fonction de marque. Je m'explique: j'ai avancé que *La nouba* est traversé par un procès d'historisation qui cherche à recadrer des faits, des moments qui se sont déroulés dans le passé et, qu'en un certain sens, le film y serait lui-même le signe." Ibid., 200.

GODARD AND MANET:

PERCEPTION AND HISTORY IN *HISTOIRE(S) DU CINÉMA*

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INTRODUCTION

Godard's historical claims in *Histoire(s) du cinéma*[1] offer a certain number of questions about the history of cinema. As they are audiovisual claims, the parameters for such analysis should be aesthetical, so that the historical sense may gain new and unsuspected coverage, as it deviates from the veracity of the written languages' regime. This article intends to analyze the presence of Manet's paintings in *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, in order to investigate Godard's claim that Lumière was the last impressionist painter.[2] Two main parameters will be used. The first is taken from Henri Bergson's philosophy, and the second from later aesthetic concepts, notably through Jonathan Crary and Jacques Aumont. Framework, in its use by cinema, video and paintings, are deepened through Bergson's philosophy. It integrates, as a select action, the perception process. Visuality, on the other hand, responds to the kind of veracity which is implied in an audiovisual history work. The veracity implied in this kind of history work is far from the classical historiographic veracity, although it does encounter, in certain recent critical theories such as intermediality, sufficient support to confirm its procedures.

Furthermore, veracity implies, in experimental cases like *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, differences on the status of historical documents, as well as in the relations between them and their legends. This phenomenon leads to a tension, not just between history as a science and social struggles, but also between culture and art. Ágnes Pethö's intermediality, and James S. Williams' essays on the question of the relationship between culture and art, in Godard, will be recalled, as well as Daniel Fairfax's syndialectical proposal.

In *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, Godard uses many different kinds of visual materials, including paintings, photographs, caligramatic writings, and an enormous VHS' movie archive to tell (his)tories about, and through, cinema. The "s" between parentheses has the sense of multiplicity, both quantitative, due to the numerous different types of raw material, and qualitative, because Godard's procedures intended to respond his kind of historical ap-

proach. Resonating Walter Benjamin's historiographic reverse, by taking the point of view of the oppressed in history, Godard effusively plays with the status of the relations between documents and their legends. Godard determines history, as also being the history that did not happen due to oppressive strokes. *Histoire(s) du cinéma* intends to tell the history of films that were never made. It claims, though, for a different kind of approach concerning history documents, and that's what Godard does in a very bergsonist way, by replacing unicity to rhythmicity. Coordination between historical documents and their legends are placed into a montage of multiple environments, which does not recognize stable relations. This procedure is very close to bergsonist descriptions on perception, and it inaugurates a new kind of veracity.

We owe to Gilles Deleuze[3] a proper reconciliation between Bergson and cinema's moving images, since Bergson, as well as phenomenology, sees in cinema an ambiguous alliance to talk about perception. One of the most important things in Deleuze's work is precisely how he shows in which way Bergson differs from phenomenology, in his apparently equal attitude towards cinema. However, putting aside Deleuze's explanations, we will also consider Bergson's theory as its embraces, on its own, the nature of perception.

It is quoted by Jacques Aumont[4] that "cinema is an invention without any future", a statement made by the Lumière brothers which has a great charge of ambiguity. On one hand, we have the history of cinema up until our days, that apparently nullifies Lumiere's statement. But on the other hand, the history of painting leads us to another perspective. To confirm this statement, there is the coincidence between the end of impressionism and the beginning of cinema, meaning, in James S. Williams' words, seeing cinema and painting as included in the "universal chain and metamorphosis of artistic form",[5] Both the first cinema and the impressionism have apparently had the same attitude towards images. Langlois states the imponderable in life, Aumont calls visuality the kind of approach which, differing from the romantic spirituality, was born with modern times, and privileges images where they stand by themselves, that is, on its presence.

Godard's point of view[6] towards Lumière's statement is that cinema had no future because it was the art of the present. Also, because it was to be interfered by imperialism. The "gentle alert by the two brothers",[7] as it leads to the present, poses the question about cinema's nature, how it uses human perception, and what is revealed about it. Cinema is intrinsically interconnected with other arts, as it is, in a way, interconnected with itself.

Therefore, co-relating painting with cinema must reveal something of its own nature. As Aumont remembers, painters like Poussin, Velázquez or Chardin had already worked hard towards showing moments of life in its imponderability. However, by the time impressionism ended and cinema started to grow, painting wouldn't show imponderable things, such as shining leaves, or flourishing clouds. Instead, these elements would be presented in an ironic, parodistic way. We can preliminarily conclude that, in a way, cinema substituted impressionism in the task of showing life's visuality, and in that sense, Lumière was the last impressionist painter. It's just natural to think that cinema would also be substituted, and therefore it would have no future. But it is still alive.

When we say impressionism, we are not saying painting as a whole. When we say cinema, what are we saying? Godard establishes a difference between culture and art, as we'll see through James S. Williams' essays,[8] which work this question with consequences in history's determinations. *Histoire(s) du cinéma* is, in a great deal, about the end of silent cinema. We can primarily say that silent cinema created new documentary and fictional conditions that were neglected further up, notably with speaking films and at the time of the World War II. *Histoire(s) du cinéma* is also, the manifest of this claim. The utilization of Manet's paintings functions as a way to pose questions to these novelties that cinema, as well as other arts, were creating. This is called by Godard the inception of (modern) art.

Lumière's statement appears in *La Chinoise* (Godard, 1967), in a Langlois' quotation. It works as an actualization of these questions in the field of history struggle. Anne Wiazemsky says that "the revolution is a violent insurrection, in which one class overthrows the other", and that hers is a "philosophy class." This puts the question of history in terms of thinking. Thinking though, will be determined as a political gesture, often associated with handwork, such as painting and montage. In this sense, we can ask how the utilization of impressionist paintings by Godard in *Histoire(s) du Cinéma*, privileged by the figure of Manet, elucidate visuality in the way the modern project intended to materialize life's image.

As Bergson might ask, what is the difference in kind shown by Godard's (video) movie re-framing of *The Plum* (*La Prune*, 1878), *Boating* (*En Bateau*, 1874), *The Dead Christ with Angels* (*Le Christ mort et les anges*, 1864), *The Balcony* (*Le Balcon*, 1869), *Nana* (1877), *Olympia* (1863), *Berthe Morisot with a Bouquet of Violets* (*Berthe Morisot au bouquet de violettes*, 1872), *A*

Bar at the Folies Bergère (*Un bar aux Folies Bergères*, 1882) and *The Fifer* (*Le Joueur de fifre*, 1866)? What does it show us at the present time?

CINEMA REPLACES OUR GAZE WITH A PAINTING THAT CONFORMS TO OUR DESIRE

In order to analyze the use of paintings by a number of film makers, André Bazin[9] evokes an education process which takes place, or should take place, regarding the appreciation for paintings. His well-known point is that cinema is a great ally, considering its larger scope of social influence. For Bazin, cinema appears as a savior, which would rescue painting from its restricted field, educating more people, permitting a spectator to "make that effort of abstraction as a result of which he can clearly distinguish between the mode of existence of the painted surface and of the world that surrounds him."[10] The idea is due to Bazin's claim that cinema helps painting appreciation without interfering on its pictorial nature, because cinema intends a "secondary realism" that guarantees painting's own reality, making an abstraction of it. It means that cinema deals with painting's abstraction, not exactly with itself—colors, for example, can be put aside, as well as the original framings. It also means that, there are a number of painting characteristics that aren't brought out, but only appear through the abstractionism operated by the cinema. "Secret virtualities", says Bazin. Cinema doesn't betray painting, but it aids painting, revealing something of it, which belongs to it, and most likely would have rested virtual without the aid of cinema. Analyzing *Le mystère Picasso* (1956), Bazin baptizes *pictorial duration* the virtual characteristic of painting, which cinema turns visible, where the moments are its frames. As we see Picasso's painting being made in front of our eyes, we observe that the forms are completely dependent on the unveiling of the paint. We could even say that, if there are forms, they are made mostly by our minds, when we recognize a point, a trace, a bull, a bird, etc. Cinema replaces our gaze with a painting that conforms to it. Cinema is "legitimately and intimately organized in aesthetic symbiosis with pictorial event"[11]

How does this process take place? How does cinema aid painting, or interact with it? In order to respond to this question, it is necessary to establish some of the inner differen-

ces between cinema and painting, because their symbiosis is more about its final effect than about the way it interacts, in the genetic sense. In other words, there must be, beyond external differences, an inner distinction, belonging to both painting and cinema. In any case, this is what we can infer from Bergson's philosophy.

When Bazin compares the cinema / painting mixture with early animations, saying that forms engender forms, without the need to ever justify it, he talks about a "shooting time"[12] which, beyond what we see, is considered to be concrete. What we see are forms, but the duration of things has no forms, it just engenders forms. In this sense, one of the main tasks of art is helping us to create good forms. Bazin believes in art as a form of salvation, and that's one of the possible senses to his statement made famous through Godard's quotation: "cinema replaces our gaze with a world that conforms to our desire."[13] Painting does too, and the reason why Bazin got so excited about Clouzot's film is because it shows, beyond Picasso's forms, its creativity movement, engendering forms.

But let us not forget our problem, which is not about the cinema / painting mixtures and what they make visible, but *how* it happens, and why we need to see each of their inner differences. And here, the confrontation between Bazin's inspiration and Deleuze's interpretation of Bergson, must reveal what that difference is. Bazin's idea is that *Le Mystère Picasso* is a revolutionary film because it shows the duration of the painting creational process. He makes the defense, for example, of Clouzot's "acceleration" technique (cutting some dead spots), by stating that it is aesthetically justifiable to shred the shots, because that's what montage does. This apparent contradiction, between stating cinema / painting symbioses and their radical difference, is dissolved by Bazin when he defines his real praise of Clouzot's film. When he analyzes the utilization of color tricks, his fundaments become clearer. He makes a difference between "natural" perception and "cinematographic" or "pictorial" perception, defining the last ones as mental.

This is a phenomenologist point of view, and its difference from the Bergsonian becomes clear with the aid of Deleuze. In his defense against what he called Bergson's unfair statement about cinema, Deleuze remembers that phenomenology occurs from a "natural perception condition." In that respect, Bergson considers that it happens from an "a-centered universe of images which acts and reacts immediately".[14] The difference is that in the first point of view the images are illuminated by our minds, while in the second, the images are subtracted, darkened off and enframed, from an a-centered universe. It is possible

to say, in both cases, that, perception deforms the universe of images, and the difference between phenomenology and Bergson is *how* they make this statement.

If phenomenology is right and the way perception modifies the universe of images is by adding something to it (light, color, forms, etc.), then cinema finds in painting, films such as *Le mystère Picasso* its great target, thus explaining Bazin's excitement. But, if perception modifies the universe of image by subtraction, as Bergson states, then Deleuze is right to say that cinema is capable of re-engendering something from an a-centered universe of images. Natural perception leads to nature as God. That's why arts are forms of salvation, because they can aid us to get in touch with the natural world, overlapping human condition. But an a-centered universe of images leads to a stranger definition of the universe, that is, a multiplicity irreducible to unities. And perception would be the way in which living creatures modulate this multiplicity in order to nourish and multiply.[15] This would be the form of salvation implied in the resurrection of matter through its self-engendering process, a continuous and creational struggle for survival.

In this sense, what is important is the way in which the enframing work is done and the contributions of film and painting to it. In other words, it's not that painting and film are symbiotically together concerning the very duration of the artistic process. What seems to be more useful to see is the ways in which film and painting enframes matter. That is, again, the opposite of what Bazin explained. With his centripetal/centrifugal theory, he looked at the manners in which framing was undone. Regarding the nature of Bergson's theory, we ask, on the contrary, how framings are done. It rests to see its political applications regarding history.

FRAMINGWORKS

One of the most common analysis on Manet's paintings is of their framing works. Paul Valery, was one of the first to state that, in Manet, the act of enframing is almost the same thing as the act of showing.[16] This is due to the closeness of the figures to a pure paint materialism, which was one of the novelties brought out by Manet. In this condition, framing, both limits the paint and visually legitimates what the so-called deconstruction of the subject produces in terms of iconicity. For T.J. Clark, analyzing *Olympia* (1863), for

example, "Olympia's face is framed, mostly, by the brown of a Japanese screen, and the neutrality of that background (what is shown is the back of the screen, the unpictured part) is one of the things that make the address and conciseness of the face the sharper."[17] In Manet, framing functions as a renovator of an a-centered heterogeneity which undoes the subject's general lines. For Jonathan Crary, in his remarkable analysis of *In the Conservatory* (1879),[18] Manet makes visible the visuality regime which takes place through XIXth century's transformations. Science and art, as they penetrated the subtlest depths of subjectivity, transformed the dynamics of freedom and control through the social body. This is far from a stable object/observer relation. Crary underlines the multiple senses of the word *serre* in the French original title (*Dans la serre*) which means *greenhouse,* but also *closed place,* as well as, *to hold tight.* This is very close to Foucault's idea, while analyzing *An Bar at the Folies Bergère* (1882),[19] that, one of Manet's most important procedures is the repetition of the frame throughout the paint, which is also, in a way, what Crary called "compression and restriction systems."[20]

For Crary, it has the sense of showing constraint of bodies implied in modernity's transformations, as well as its correlative change in attention. For Foucault it is a technique that changes the viewers' status towards the painting. And for a lot of others, Manet's enframing procedures nourishes a great number of interpretations, from class struggle to social criticism, from feminism to the pure essence of time. The viewer is forced to work at the picture. That is exactly what's political about it. How does framing work in relation to the viewer? As Malraux would say, when Griffith repeated a plan of an actress which moved him, but with the camera closer to her, he changed the relationship with the spectator.[21]

The idea that framing in Manet is repetition, leads us, for example, to later modernist Alfred Hitchcock. This is related to modern art tendency to show the construction elements rather than to hide them. That is why this political act concerns the critics of the modes of production. In Foucault's words, "far from wishing to make the viewer forget the rectangle on which he paints, he does nothing but reproduce it, insist on it, double it and multiply it in the very interior of his picture."[22] This is a way to control the tendencies inside the frame. In this manner, the elements will just produce rhythmicity with the proliferation of geometric forms, instead of being supports for space illusions, like *quattrocento* painting did. The problem with this proliferation which does not involve realistic space

illusions is closer to the problem of time concerning perception. And it leads back to Bergson. Instead of being an illumination in the condition of a *natural perception,* as phenomenology states, Bergson describes perception as a work of "joining together, by the continuous thread of memory, instantaneous visions of the real", and that gives birth to a "particular rhythm of duration."[23] This is, in Bergson, the very nature of perception, it is space being just a utilitarian tool, which has no other function rather than to promote action. Besides, space risks to overlap the action realism that is, duration's rhythm. It becomes clear than, why Jonathan Crary talks about Manet's images as a "holding action."[24]

It remains to be said that this is very close to Benjamin's historical materialism project, from which Godard takes inspiration, in a great deal. Benjamin states an urgency in rearranging the status of historical elements in historiography, in a way that, the *citations à l'ordre du jour*[25] encounter their foundations more in a presentation than in a representation. This similarity between Manet's enframing, Bergson's philosophy, and Benjamin's materialism will be prolonged by Godard in his historical project with three main characteristics: 1) the status of historical elements as painting/film, music/image, fiction/documentary are to be rearranged, not from a fixed position to another one, but in-between multiple relations, as intermediality helps us see; 2) original materiality is to be necessarily manipulated, as it implies the exercise of thinking, which is like thinking with gestures; 3) cinematographic dialectic montage (the *third image*) is to be interfered by videographic fragmentation, not to dissolve it but to repeat it differentially, as we'll see through Daniel Fairfax's essays. This also has the function of opening up the original material to the net of relations and senses in which it is inserted. In this sense, James S. Williams says that "Godard's videographic montage displaces and disperses the potential power of painting."[26]

HISTOIRE(S) DU CINÉMA

As *Histoire(s) du cinéma* assumes the role of telling the history of cinema, a genre normally written in book form, it gains in intermediality the status of an in-between work. Ágnes Pethö[27] transcends the relationship between different medias, and shows that cinema's own complexity is due to the fact that it is composed by multiple layers, as intermedia archeological procedure shows. This is comparable to the difference between culture and

art, as we'll see through James S. Williams, once cinema's domain, as a whole, can be determined as cultural with artistic movements in-between (early silent montage schools, *nouvelle vague*, neorealism, etc.). Each of these artistic movements has their particular history, how they were born, grew up, died, and also the specific problems to what they responded. Because cinema belongs to the XXth Century, these problems concern mostly wars and resistance, as James S. Williams shows. The procedures through which Godard distributes these questions through multiple audiovisual materials, are shown by Ágnes Pethö not as an inner look from a film-maker, but an outer look, as his *Histoire(s)* covers the majority of important European struggles, without resting attached to any of the forms it has been through.

Histoire(s) du cinéma systematically deconstructs elements of representation regimes, such as continuity, contiguity and linearity. It does so, by telling political history of the regimes that caused destruction, thus, making a lot of experiments impossible. These practices were driven towards a different direction, other than the classic hegemony. Artistic movements appear and fade through modern times. What we see in *Histoire(s) du cinéma* is an effort to tell how it happened concerning cinema. And it is interesting that, the only way in which cinema didn't substitute the impressionist task—to make imponderable things visible—, was by agreeing with Godard's claim that impressionism was already the silent film— as Lumière was the last impressionist. Of course, they were different things, but what Godard is saying is due to his thesis on the economic attacks to the talking film. It was a mega-range economic solution, and reached the entire world at that time. A lot of thinkers regretted this offensive, although it is not easy to see its objectiveness. This happening is easily included in history's evolution, therefore it gained the character of necessity. Because of that, it is hard to see this attack as a stroke. However, an attentive look at history information should solve this problem.

Attentive, in *Histoire(s) du cinéma* and its multiplicity of elements, means complex. Godard's reflections about the very nature of images which appeared in his first films have a great deal of Bergson's philosophical influence, similar to a number of thinkers and artists such as Robert Bresson, Marcel Proust and Georges Bataille. To "keep a margin of indefinite"[28] is one of the lessons from *Notes on the Cinematographer* by Robert Bresson.[29] It expresses the director's minimalist way of presenting cinematographic events, through his effort to make cinematographic images gain independence from other representative

regimes. One of the ways through which cinematographic image obtains its independency from other arts is, of course, silence. Here we can consider the economical level in which Bresson utilizes his sound bands. Besides, we can also remember cinema's photography inheritance. From chapter 1B on of *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, a number of paintings are added to the inheritance of silent cinema.

Chapter 1B's title, "Une histoire seule" ("A lonely history"), evokes the idea of silence, and the "exhaustion of everything that communicates through immobility and silence."[30] Godard had already expressed this idea at the Adorno Awards in Frankfurt am Main: "Histoire is alone, far from man."[31] In this sense, there is a perfect marriage between cinema and history. That is so, because, if cinema inherits silence as an essential element, then history, being independent from man's interpretations—one of the ways to interpret its loneliness—should find itself a good way of expression. Not only the silence of photography, but that one of an impressionist painting. "Cinema inherited from Zola a family album, that is, Proust and Manet."[32] It is important to evoke here Godard's claim that Kodak family photos are not what they could be, that is, an aid to see life in a more positive way and, therefore, improve it. That is due, as Godard says, to the fact that "the century that created (image) techniques, created crap as well."[33] By calling it a family album, what Proust and Manet did, is not just a *blague*, because in fact, both of them utilized everything an artist does to create their art forms, that is, life around them.

THE PLUM (1877)

It is known that *The Plum*—the first Manet to appear in *Histoire(s) du cinéma* (chap. 1B), as it belongs to Manet's more naturalistic late period—shows a lot of details, surrounding the female figure, that guide our eyes through an infinite camp of naturalistic interpretations.[34] The scenario is probably the *Nouvelle-Athènes,* a café frequented by Manet, Degas, Monet and others.[35]

Figure 1: Édouard Manet, *La Prune* (National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC).

There is the balcony that separates, so to speak, the girl from us, spectators, and then, her dress under the balcony. On the upper side there is a grid-like painting which gold frame is enframing the girls' head. We have the sofa, the (unlit) cigarette between her fingers, the (untouched) plum liqueur, and her (lost) gaze outside the frame. These recognitions are determined as naturalists, because they do not intend to create a moral interpretation towards the scene. Instead, it points at something we can call *dynamic differences* that dislocates the fact that is shown (a girl sitting at a table with some plum liqueur and a cigarette). *How* is she sitting there? That's not easy to answer, because the impossibilities implicated in the details—the fact that the cigarette is not lit, the plum liqueur untouched, and her eyes lost—block, so to speak, possible moral generalities, in other words, it prevents a progressive story to be imagined. As it is blocked out, what rests is something like a pure and indomitable fact.

"Everything is relative, we are surrounded by relative truths, and there is nothing but relative truths…",[36] says Renoir (the son), in chapter 1B, whose voice is included on a vast, complex and discontinuous net of sounds and images. This is not to say that Godard and Manet's procedures are tautologically the same. But there is truth here, and it's Godard's thesis that both impressionism and cinema were (modern) art's infancy, that they had a project in common. Such a project can be understood as a metaphor to a social political one, but let's stick to its aesthetical dimension, for the time being. *Louis Lumière* (Rohmer,

1968) shows in his Renoir and Langlois' interview the idea that would be used by Godard in *La Chinoise*. One of the most important ideas, expressed by both Renoir and Langlois, is that we can see, through Lumière's work, human thinking being objectively constructive in its four dimensions. Through Lumière's enframing the choices we see are the product of a thought which is occupied with the life of millions of details that compose the most ordinary facts, such as a train arriving at a station, or the workers coming out of factories. "This is a change on history of human thinking transmission",[37] said Renoir.

The modern project, as shown in *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, didn't work out in the sense that it ended violently with wars and historical catastrophes. Although cinema survived its own history, as the very existence of Godard's work states, some affirm that its own creative evolution movement has come to a stop. It might not be productive to ask questions like, 'what would have been done to close-ups if organic model hadn't become hegemonic?', or 'what if sounds wouldn't have been imposed?'. However, Godard also used cinema techniques (despite reworking these techniques while using video) which were invented at the time cinema could be called kinship with impressionism, and present impressionism paintings included. What we have, as a result, is that history is confronted with itself. The girl from *The Plum* is inevitably listening to what the history of the voice-over has to tell. We can resume it like this: Lumière and the Impressionists are modern art's infancy. An art form that was born full of light and new forms, and betimes would see imperialism and destruction ending (almost) everything. "One or two World Wars would be sufficient to pervert this state of infancy, and would lead to television, this imbecile and sad adult."[38]

Figure 2: *La Prune* manipulated by Godard.

As the iris extracts the face of the girl in a very Bergsonist way, we can point out two complementary effects it produces. The first one is that, we can no longer perambulate through all the naturalistic details with which Manet used to compose his paintings. Concentrating on the girl's face, we connect affective qualities. Oddly, what seemed to be a lost gaze, as it had lost the tension between the impossibilities that surrounded the girl— unlit cigarette, untouched plum liqueur—now, doesn't seem so lost anymore. As we only see her face, the rest of the world became a virtual dimension that, without an actual point in which stand for its (im)possibilities, encounters in her face and gaze the only points where to bet their possibilities. The second difference is in regards to the voice over, which makes the girl's gesture resemble that of someone who's been listening. Listening to the voice of Godard telling the story of the XXth century, how cinema was affected by it and, also, how his voice affected cinema. Ultimately, we can say that the iris effect concentrates virtual tension on the face of the girl, and, as it goes along with the voice over telling the history of both early cinema and impressionism, the painting is set on a *mise-en-abyme,* in which it is confronted with its own history.

BOATING (1874)

The first consequence is that in history, as knowledge, suffers a polarity change. It stops being something added by human thinking to historical elements, and becomes a thought on itself. In Godard's words, a form that thinks. That's the very nature of the "family album inherited by the cinema from Proust and Manet",[39] that is, from modern art. Expressing impressions of everyday life in a different way. Extracted from impressions what would become light, color, forms. Manet's *Boating* (1874) appears straight ahead *The Plum,* and it's the same story, but this time a man stares at the viewer. The model was Rodolph, Manet's brother-in-law at that time.[40] As Georges Bataille remarks were very sharp, it happened with this painting exactly what we saw about *The Plum*. A certain "delay-action effect",[41] which postpone everything we could generally associate with the elements given to us. In this case, the water, the boat, and the boat ride. In addition, there are some special ambiguities such as, the background rises parallel to the picture plane and blocks the view into the far distance.[42] The man's hands are somehow suspended before we slowly un-

derstand that he is guiding the ruder. And that, to say it again, it is made purposely in the sense of running out from realism, with the effects of showing imponderable things. There were x-ray demonstrations that showed that Manet even changed the man's hand, which was more realistic, holding a rope, in this suspended gesture.[43] Godard's enframing work with the iris, the same as with *The Plum*, intensifies here the virtual qualities rather than realistic ones. What we can see here again is the increase of virtual tension towards the figure, in this case, a man.
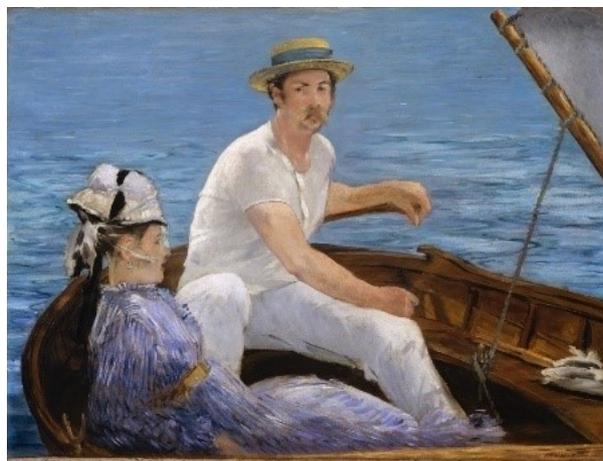
Figure 3: Manet, *En Bateau* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York).

As this painting appears in superposition to *The Plum* and the woman's intensified gaze, it's not difficult to think about the desire, and the relations between a man and a woman. But on a larger range, just like what was shown in the figure of Nana,[44] in this context, it makes us think about women's destiny through the XXth century. The man here in *Boating* is guiding the female figure, and this is very symbolic if we think about how Godard comprehends the female gender relations. He said in an interview that men create techniques as women have the task to create other human beings. But techniques became brutal as they overcame imperialism, and women were made do things they hadn't been cut out for. There's a group of analysis which appears through *Histoire(s) du cinéma,* which we won't cover deeply here, being sufficient to say that Godard approaches the hysteria phenomenon, in which he left open for us to think that it is about an effect on women's health, of the kind of life produced by modernity and its error and historical tragedies.
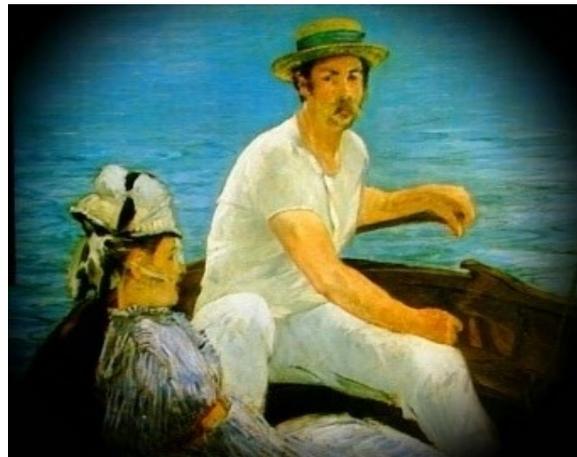
Figure 4: *En Bateau* manipulated by Godard.

THE DEAD CHRIST WITH ANGELS (1864)

The Dead Christ with Angels appear in chapter 2B: "Fatale beauté" ("Fatal Beauty"), in a context in which the voice over is talking about cinema being something beyond an art, or a technique. A mystery, or something related to medicine—Godard's father was a doctor and he often utilizes the metaphors of medicine, talking about cinema, for example analogies between film and x-rays. Let us remember here that naturalism has always been put next to the function of diagnosis, and to medicine science itself, as Zola's usage of Claude Bernard's work manifests. The use of sacred figures, and their confrontation between cinema's iconic images such as Elizabeth Taylor, is one of the most commented characteristics of Godard's work. Historical confrontation, here, has the meaning of a judgment. Certainly, it's not a judgment as we know, the one made by external forces into life on earth. The judgment that Godard produces is more like historical images among themselves, as he remarks, "You can show the past and the present. A thought is there, as well as a wish to judge. There is a story."[45]
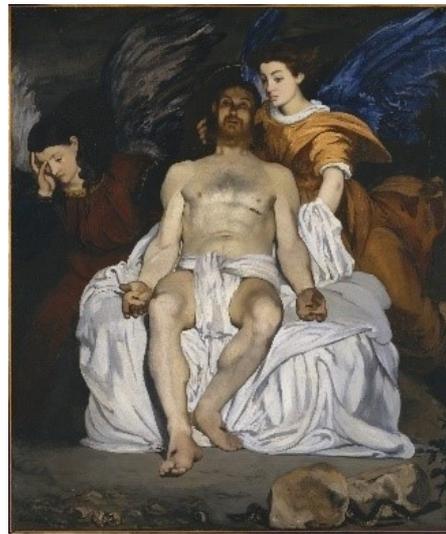
Figure 5: Manet, *Le Christ mort et les anges* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York).

Here, however, because of a similar effect to the one utilized on *The Plum* and *Boating*, Christ takes the place of a deadly wounded man treated by a woman. This is due to an enframing work on the painting that subtracts a chosen figure from among the elements surrounding Christ and the angel, present on the original painting, and also, because of the relation with the context created by the voice over—in this case, a medical one. According to François Cachin, "critics who reviewed the Salon of 1864 attacked the inappropriateness of the too realistic, cadaver-like body of Christ."[46] Godard's re-enframing kept Christ's wounds, which is told by the Bible to have been done by a soldier with a spear, while Christ was being crucified. On a joyful, ironic letter, Baudelaire warns his friend that the side of the wound is wrong, as it was apparently on the right side. "By the way, I understand that it was Christ's right side that was pierced by the spear. In that case you'll have to change the wound before the opening. And take care not to lay yourself open to laughter."[47] Although we can find some paintings showing the wound on Christ's left side, most of them show it on the right side. The important thing here is the fact that Godard not only kept the wound (he could have enframed only the faces, for instance), but he added a purple color tone into the video reproduction of the paint, emphasizing that this is a dead body. And he did so, because Chapter 2B: "Fatale beauté" is, great deal, about death, mostly of beautiful revolutionary women who died in struggle, as it appears to be, by the fact that this chapter is dedicated to Michele Firk, a French critic and militant who shot herself dead in 1968 when she was to be captured, and Nicole Ladmiral, a French actress that, ten years earlier, committed suicide in a similar situation.

Figure 6: *Le Christ mort et les anges* manipulated by Godard.

One thing gratefully remarked by Georges Bataille on his *Manet*, which Godard quotes in chapter 3A: "La monnaie de l'absolu" ("The coin of the absolute"), is the fact that Manet's paintings operate a "negation of eloquence", introducing with Manet, the concept of "the indifference to the meaning the subject."[48] This operation gives birth, as we saw, to "imponderable plenitude"[49] of forms and colors in its presence. Bataille remembers that "Manet once said that he would have to come into the world blind, and then regain his eyesight, so as to see forms and colors independently of the objects and their utility to which, by force of habit, we relate them."[50] It happens that, this "indifference to the meaning" makes Manet's paintings very much vulnerable to the uses of cinema. As Bresson stated, "if an image, regarded apart, expresses something clearly, and if it involves an interpretation, it won't transform on the contact with other images, (…) it is definitely unusable by cinematography's system."[51] Well, Manet's painting, being as much as "meaningless" on themselves, are totally, in this regard, usable by cinema. From that point of view Godard didn't even have to manipulate them, change their colors. This fact reflects the very nature of Godard's manipulation. We can say that Godard just prolongs one of the main features of Manet's paintings, their indifference, which has an effect, on the other hand, to let differences cross them.

THE BALCONY (1868)

James S. Williams, in his deep analysis of chapter 3A, the one with the greatest number of Manet's paintings' occurrences, underlines the increasingly serious fashion in which Go-

dard deals with contemporary events in Europe since the late 1980s. Williams point is that (European) art and culture are open questions in *Histoire(s) du cinéma,* questions of form. Godard states that culture is the rule and art is the exception. Asking about the specific nature of art as an exception, he states that European art in XXth century is the diagnosis of a collapse through which European culture fell apart in its modern project. The privilege of cinema here is due to its nature as the avatar of the modern visuality regime. Cinema is able to tell its history, and Godard shows it, by putting into play the instances of perception which aren't anything but rhythm, as we have seen. This accords perfectly with a desire that has been fragmented, impeded to form a cultural unity. It rests that, so called modernist critical strategies such as parallaxes, repetitions and digressions, become the only instruments against narrative progression,[52] which is very close to what has been called by the impressionists as the rupture with the rhetorical painting by impressionists.[53]

Figure 7: Manet, *Le Balcon* (Musée d'Orsay, Paris).

Chapter 3A starts with a very piercing speech written by Victor Hugo in 1876, out of a sense of outrage against the brewing of the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-8. The speech, pronounced by Godard, is accompanied by images of barbarism and the contemporary Bosnian war of 1992-5. We can say that Godard is repeating Hugo's speech, with the purpose of actualizing it, and he cuts the speech where Hugo claims for a unifying solution in which western European nations should engage. Godard denies Hugo's conclusion and reproduces only two thirds of Hugo's speech, cutting it after the statement that humanity has its own 'question'—the little child in the mother's stomach.[54] Cutouts and repetitions

have here the sense of actualization. Godard enframes both the sounds and the images in order to repeat (or reproduce) them, actualizing, there is, creating new tones and relations. This is the history of cinema. After Hugo's speech sequence, Godard reproduces Bazin's essays title, "What is cinema?", actualizing it. If Bazin was preoccupied in defending cinema as an educational art form, Godard uses it to pose questions through its own meanings. One could say that the idea of salvation approximates both of them, but this approximation requires a great deal of discernment.[55] It is, anyway, a modernist procedure which Godard actualizes. The gesture of actualizing Hugo's speech with Bosnian images resonates that one in which Manet painted Goya's *Third of May*, but with Maximilian.

Figure 8: *Le Balcon* manipulated by Godard.

Imperialist attacks, takeover of media (radio, television, cinema)—digital media's takeover will be questioned later on, in *Notre musique* (2004), *Film Socialisme* (2010), and notably in *Adieu au langage* (2014)—this is cinema in the sense that intermediality will fundament. That's what goes after Hugo's speech, precisely in the dimension of war and resistance, and Godard poses these questions through sound and image. It is important to remember here that James Agee, for whom chapter 3A is also dedicated along with Gianni Amico (Godard's assistant in *Vent d'est* [1970]), wrote a script to Charles Chaplin in 1948, in which the tramp survived a nuclear holocaust. It is in this context that we see the first Manet, Berthe Morisot's face, enframed from *The Balcony* that originally shows three figures geometrically the at balcony. We have Berthe Morisot as the vertex of a triangle. "Lost in his thoughts", Godard, "having *Manet*'s book from Georges Bataille", notices on Chapter 3A, that Manet's female figures seem to say "I know what you are thinking of" (*Je sais*

a quoi tu penses).[56] And that, this is a good way to understand the historical transition of romanticism, in which the figures seemed to say "I", and modernism, with the occurrence meaningless figures, as Bataille states. "Manet's *Execution of Maximiliano* is Goya's *Three of May*, less what the picture means. *Olympia* is the *Maja* naked [...]. As *The Balcony* is *Majas at the Balcony*, less what the two Goya's mean."[57]

What Godard does here, with his enframing, is to give a face to that historical understanding, showing the nature of this thought in a place where it is meaningless. In this sense, it was already Malraux who said that "the face of a very beautiful star belongs at the same time to the real world of feminine beauty and to an unreal world that exists only through photography [...] perhaps the world of the first imaginary museum meets that of silent cinema."[58] These zero degrees of alterity, which in this context, both impressionism and cinema brought on their modern project effort, gain through Godard's montage in *Histoire(s) du cinéma* a melancholic tone, because of what came next. "It will suffice one or two world wars to pervert this state of infancy."[59]

NANA (1877)

Figure 9: Manet, *Nana* (Kunsthalle Hamburg, Hamburg).

Nana incarnates the female figure of money and power perversion, because "XIXth century, which invented all techniques, invented crap too."[60] Godard uses Flaubert's Bovary to tell this story. And we can say it's the same thing with Zola's Nana. It's the destiny of men, which's effects on its health and capacity to create is made visible through

women, maybe because their sensibility is made as a privileged target to social tragedies, as hysteria's history can tell. Nana's exaggerated usage of makeup was very well analyzed, as it pathologizes the character, conferring to her face an unveiled naturalist feature. Marni Kessler says that "her dusts and perfumes and rouges and creams render her simultaneously irresistible and the epitome of vice for Muffat, who, at one point, describes Nana as the devil. Her makeup becomes the outward sign of her carnality, her mark of vulgarity, the very thing that makes her so enticing."[61] It is remarkable that Godard chooses to show Nana's make-up artifacts, in order to show only her face. This has a similar effect to that of Morisot's pendant at *The Balcony,* that is, it just reinforces the piercing eyes. If the whole painting with its elements and geometric compositions are nutrients for a naturalist regard, in order to decline meaning through hierographic details, when the emphasis is on the face though the presence of one or two elements have the other function of reinforcing its hollow expression. Besides, as chapter 3A's theme is fatal beauty, Godard states that "deep down, cinema isn't part of communication industry, neither of spectacle, but of cosmetic industry, mask industry."[62] It is remarkable the fact that in early romantic paintings, female figures like Nana would have been painted from the back, and here Nana is turning as symbolizing the arrival of modernity. And in *Histoire(s) du cinéma,* enframed by Godard, Nana expresses modernity's new possibilities, as well as its tragedies.

Figure 10: *Nana* manipulated by Godard.

In order to understand that, we need to observe Godard's dialectical paradoxes, as well as when he says that "in expression there is an impression movement which do not

come from us."[63] Godard also states a paradox between fiction and documentary. For him, fiction is a moment of the look. The one in which we recognize crime proofs. As we see both Nana from the painting and Nana from Renoir's film, each of them functioning as the expression of the other. And they have the same history. Godard makes us recognize in fiction a document of the history, of history's crimes. Catherine Hessling, the actress who made Nana's part in Renoir's 1926 film, went to Berlin at the same time spoken film and Nazism were stroking. And "Zola finished his book with the words 'to Berlin, to Berlin.'"[64] In this case we can apply what Malraux said about the photography of statues, the enframing work has the function to add fiction values to a document, by changing its original scale.[65] A new way of understanding historical fatality is born, as in Jean Cocteau's *The Imposter*: "He fell, he became deaf, blind. 'A ball,' he said to himself, 'I'm lost if I do not pretend to be dead.' But in him fiction and reality were one. William Thomas was dead."[66]

"In expression movement there is a great impression movement which do not come from us".[67] What Godard is saying, in the first place, in a very Bergsonist way, is that history comes first. That is, it is not a mental addition to the elements that can be determined as documents. History is the whole, from which we extract, subtracts, the stories we tell. That is the sense of the statement "history alone", because it is alone from human thought. Therefore, the works of art as documents are not something to be enlightened by our thoughts, as they already have their own life, and they appear to us, as Deleuze would say, forcing us to think. That's why Godard says "I was alone, lost, as it is said, in my thoughts, and arrives Zola, having finished Nana with the words 'to Berlin, to Berlin', and arrive Catherin Hessling, forty years later, as by chance, she takes a train to Berlin…"[68] Historic documents demand regards and associations, and not the contrary. And if it's a one and only history, it's the destiny of the painting figures to be crossed by what happened after and before them.

OLYMPIA (1863)

An important thing is that Godard's "darkness answer"[69] is a kind of a judgment, as we saw, made in a time that testimony, history, and documents were being discussed, mos-

tly after *Shoah* (1985) film, and the debates that surrounded it. And then it is important to see how Godard made use of Manet's artworks as documents to extract histories from them. His enframing works have this function, and with them there is a lot to tell, as well to see. In this sense *Olympia*, the "queen of spades after her bath", as Courbet joked,[70] as well as all the other alienating looking females of Manet, are absolutely helpful. Godard's fight is not only against certain interpretations on history. His project, and that's exactly where it is Bergsonist, rearranges the status of thought, through the status of images, and that is exactly what some critics do not seem to comprehend. The meaning of 'destroy' would have this sense, and that's why he not only utilizes Manet's paintings, but utilizes them as cinema, or, as cinema as a form that thinks, not that expresses a determined thought.
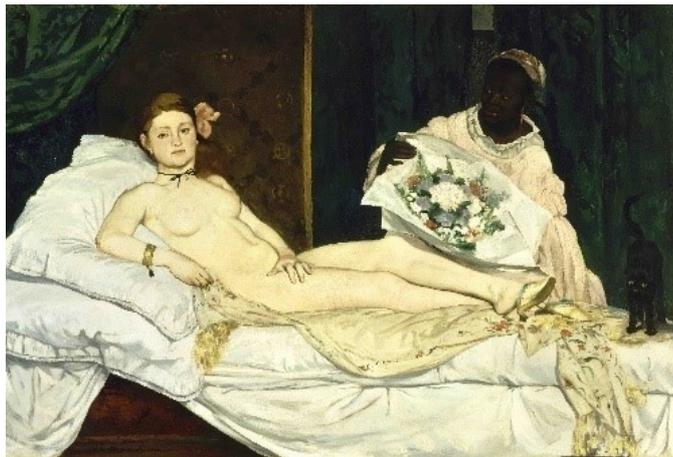
Figure 11: Manet, *Olympia* (Musée d'Orsay, Paris).

It is said that *Olympia*, as well as the other Manet's paintings, is, a great deal, about simplification, and that's what scandalized so much the audience at that time. They were probably too habituated to see nudity through certain schemes, forming concepts about it. Manet "forces the viewer to see Olympia not only as a naked girl, but also as patches of paint laid on the surface of the canvas."[71] This annoyance, as if a magician colleague would show the forbidden tricks, as Schneider puts it, is commonly attributed to Godard. It is usually argued against him that he does not believe in cinema. And that is true if we think that cinema, as a stated form, is something that would stop its creative movement. How many scandals does it take to create a form?
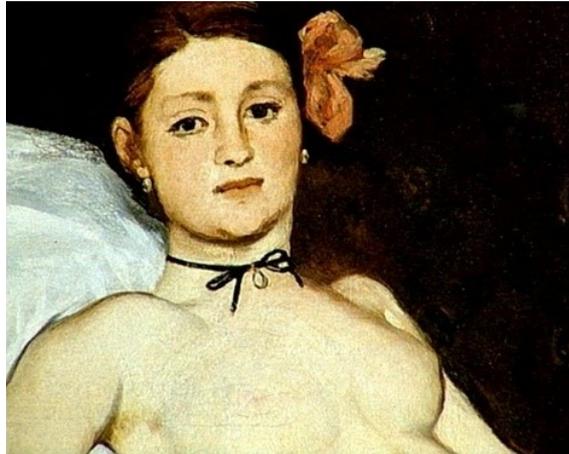
Figure 12: *Olympia* manipulated by Godard.

BERTHE MORISOT WITH A BOUQUET OF VIOLETES (1872)

"By the contradiction between frivolous detail now outmoded and the hint of timeless tragedy in the face, Manet creates a resonance, compounds the solidity of his art with mystery."[72] The *Berthe Morisot with a Bouquet of Violetes* is one of the paintings in which we can see that the face is not expressing a soluble determined thought. It is kind of hollow, and its beauty certainly rests on its capacity to block meaning. It is just a strange paint creature, which reminds us that that's a work of art, and in doing so, it reminds us that we're moved by this exteriority.

Figure 13: Manet, *Berthe Morisot au bouquet de violettes* (Musée d'Orsay, Paris).

Morisot's big eyes are saying "I know what you are thinking of",[73] that is, they are provoking us to think. The difference, Godard says, is that until Manet, and that is important because it is where his historical importance lays, painting female figures seemed to say I. "Even the woman with a pink Shawl from Corot, doesn't think what thinks Olympia, what thinks Berthe Morisot".[74] Godard says, remembering Malraux, that until Manet, that is, until modern painting, inner world seemed to be subtler than the cosmos, and that with Manet and modern painting (and cinema), the inner world got its deserved objectivity and "joined cosmos." It has a great consequence in what refers to alterity, because it is not more nor less big than the cosmos. Morisot's face is as external as the cosmos, and she looks at us with the eyes that can tell its history. But how is it to be observed? If we approach her face, as Godard's enframing helps us to do, it is almost like she becomes alive again, not that the picture lost its liveliness. But with the reframing work, all the virtualities are concentrated and seem to be ready for us to think about, that is, to feel, to see, to create, with our faculties, new forms that respond to this document of history. Because if history can tell something for us today, that is because it is still alive, and it is changing. Changing is its nature, and therefore it shouldn't be translated by determined forms, because they are the forms to be determined, and to continue its creational movement through life, that is, through history. What Godard does is to continue the creational movement that crosses Morisot, Manet, and will continue, through our eyes, becoming forms on every moment, and becoming celebrated forms in the hands of the artists. "With Edouard Manet, begins modern painting, that is, cinematograph, that is, forms that walks to words, very exactly, a form that thinks."[75]

Figure 14: *Berthe Morisot au bouquet de violettes* manipulated by Godard.

This reminds us from what Renoir said in a conversation with one of Godard's masters, Henri Langlois. He said that cinema would change the history of the human thought's transmission. Berthe Morisot eyes here are telling the history of the XIXth and XXth centuries, as it refers to arts. It is difficult to say that without making reference to the functions of montage. In a certain way, we can say that all that impressionist movement that comes from exteriority, and which is implicated on every expression movement, as Godard said, are merely an example, a specimen, so to speak, of what is between document and fiction. And by utilizing the painting condition in these two different ways, as historical documents, and fictional material, we can determine that the female figures are all characters on Godard's *Histoire(s) du cinéma,* we cannot help to add another dimension to it. The third way, as well as the third images—born from the conflict of the two other ones, at montage—is the pure quality that reflects through all that historical information. Berthe Morisot is not a Godard's character, not even a Manet's character, nor is she just a character at all. Because she is, too, pure quality, acquiring different functions depending on the kinds of elements that are put in relation to her. Here, the very history which included her, history itself, the lonely and the only one. If we think on a modern project, it is very important to remember that Morisot was one of the enthusiastic of manners changing, and that is very Godardian in the sense that Godard states that the change in forms are the most difficult to appear, because they appear through the things that are determined to be normal and has patterns. Clothing would be an example, and Godard states himself as a man that doesn't use proper clothes for society.

A BAR AT THE FOLIES BERGÈRE (1882)

Throughout *Histoire(s) du cinéma'*s image manipulation, we can nominate both flicker and the velocity modifications as main features. They both have a function of extracting the images from their original contexts and finding virtualities that are positively utilized on meaning creation (not on meaning determination). It happens as if Godard tried his best to let us see something on images, something that keeps being interpreted by our minds, and then he has to change and manipulate them again, for the new meaning to appear. As painting image are just one, neither flicker nor velocity manipulation are utilized by Godard. As if he respected the nature of paintings, the main features utilized on them are different. Re-

Figure 15: Manet, *Un bar aux Folies Bergères* (Courtauld Gallery, London).

framing, as we say, and repetition, which is largely utilized in *A Bar at the Folies Bergère*. As Godard says in his text about Bataille's *Manet*, and what was born with him, and why parting from that fact he can compare impressionism with the first cinema, we can see the barmaid's face appearing and disappearing. "What thinks Olympia, what thinks Berthe Morisot, what thinks barmaid on the Folies-Bergère".[76] Because the barmaid's face has such a unique expression, each time the image is repeated (three times), it assumes a different quality, we could say. Barmaid's repetition enters in resonance with Godard's voice-over because he repeats the same idea in different ways, or, what would be the same, different faces of the idea that defines Manet's work in comparison to cinema: "modern painting, that is, cinematograph, that is, forms that walk to words, very exactly, a form that thinks (…)."[77] We can say that the barmaid's face, and its possible multiple senses, meets Bresson's demands in what regards to the necessary absence of meaning in itself that a figure must have in order to be applied in cinema. It cannot have, under any circumstances, a meaning on its own. If it did, it wouldn't be transformed when put in contact with others.

Michel Foucault,[78] analyzing *A Bar at the Folies Bergère,* says that it negates depth twice, firstly because one does not see what is behind the barmaid, because she is immediately in front of a mirror, and secondly because what is reflected in the mirror, that should create a depth by showing what is in front of the barmaid, is painted in a way that one cannot see it properly. This trick, and the fact that what the mirror reflects is deformed, makes both the viewer and the painter's place impossible. This fact is not without purpose, and it reinforces the ability of the final image to function as a kind of prism, through
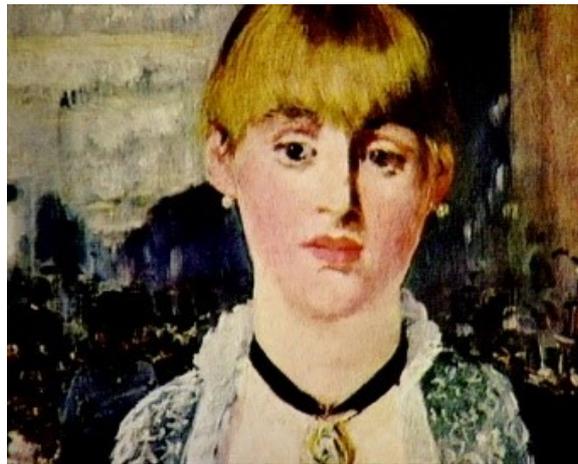
Figure 16: *Un bar aux Folies Bergères* manipulated by Godard.

which multiple meanings would pass through, and never rest. In addition, just like *The Plum,* the barmaid is blocked inside impossibilities, as the bottles are closed and there are no glasses.[79]

THE FIFER (1866)

Daniel Fairfax underlines the kind of veracity brought about by Godard, in the sense that *Histoire(s) du cinéma* is made of sounds and images. In order to define the methodology implied in its montage work, and therefore it's kind of thinking, Fairfax proposes a differentiation in relation to Deleuze's celebrated statements. For Deleuze, Godard proceeds to an interstitial montage, that is, a non-dialectical montage which privileges the relations between images, independently of notions such as equality, similitude, opposition, or contradiction. Fairfax calls attention to the fact that Deleuze's interpretation is strictly addressed to *Sonimage* period, which is earlier than that of *Histoire(s) du cinéma.* His thesis is that *Histoire(s) du cinéma*'s montage isn't non-dialectical because it doesn't exclude continuity. It is not a linear continuity, as we saw. Multiplicity is its prior element. It does not exclude what Eisenstein invented through Griffith, but it opens up (in a great stand through videographic montage) and inserts it into the multiple net of directions. Therefore, Fairfax uses Artavazd Pelechian's contrapuntal montage method to explain what Godard does. "Pelechian offers the following graphs to demonstrate his relationship with his Soviet montage forebears. To the schema [A→←B] of Eisensteinian or Vertovian dialectical mon-

tage, Pelechian counterposes the schema [A →← B] →← [A →← B]. The dialectic is itself dialecticized."[80] That is what Fairfax calls syndialectical montage, a synthesis of dialectical and antidialectical montage. The procedure of reframing on the face of the Fifer responds well to the definition of syndialectics, because of a blocking of meaning, treated as a historical document, it becomes a fictionalization that cuts off its historical domain.

Figure 17: Manet, *Le Joueur de fifre* (Musée d'Orsay, Paris).

The Fifer, the last Manet's to appear in *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, has a little different relation with meaninglessness. It is not as much a prism as the female characters. As noticed by Albert Boime, Manet's paintings of children have a *double entendre* (double sense), as they are "typically placed in adult roles and are forced to behave self-consciously and handle their accessories in as awkward fashion."[81] Its possible meanings are not so apparent. *The Fifer* "set the young person in a potentially risky situation by identifying the child incongruously with the military."[82] Godard doesn't hesitate here to utilize Manet's *The Fifer* along with his historical thesis. "That the cinema had been made to think, we would forget rapidly, but that's another history. The flame would go out in Auschwitz. And this thought it's worth a trifle."[83] There is a wordplay here between the name of the instrument, fife (*fifre* in French), and trifle (*fifrelin* in French). This effect, when enframing the face of the figure, it seems to reflect what the voice over is saying, in this case, the tragic history of the XXth century, considering the way it marked cinema and was marked by cinema, were seen through other Manet's paintings as *A Bar at the Folies Bergère* and *Berthe Morisot with a Bouquet of Violets*.

Therefore, as François Cachin points out, there were rumors saying that the model for *The Fifer* was a boy trooper in the Imperial Guard at the Pépinière barracks who had been introduced to Manet by his friend Commandant Lejosne. But "the identification matters little; the true model for *The Fifer* is to be found in the work of Velázquez."[84] But here it gains a different tension, as the figure is a boy, who belongs to the military. An undoubtful dimension makes it slightly different, with a bit more dramatic tension, and adds to this history a sad and horrible note. In this sense, as Godard states on *Old Place,* art is not about whether human will last, but if it has the right to.

Figure 18: *Le Joueur de fifre* manipulated by Godard.

It doesn't seem to be forced to say that these extreme questions posed by Godard, through sounds and images in *Histoire(s) du cinéma,* responds perfectly to Fairfax claims. As an opened question, history seems to encounter a fair medium in Godardian montage, as it makes possible that the "power of connection" and the "power of disconnection" are both "preserved *and* abolished, rather than the "swallowing" or "overcoming" of one by the other."[85] This complex dynamics between memory and forgetfulness, in which history is shown without being reduced to a linear, unique interpretation (which Benjamin denounced as being necessarily the winners version), encounters new kinds of veracity, rebuilding the barriers between document and fiction. As Malraux would say, "Great expressions of man appear, free from faithful imagination."[86] Ágnes Pethö remembers that "for Freud 'the appearance and disappearance of the writing' on the popular children's toy that can immediately erase the visible traces by lifting the thin sheet of plastic, is similar to 'the flickering-up and passing-away of consciousness in the process of perception."[87]

CONCLUSION

Through enframing work, the works of art, treated as historical documents, help us telling the stories of history. History, then, stops being an addition to historical elements and becomes a process of subtraction and assembly of the elements. A procedure which interrupts progress or generality, with consequences in historiography, that now responds to Benjamin's projects. The technical procedure, through which images are placed in the position of interrupting progress, accords with the Bergsonist agenda which describes the nature of human perception as being below the habit standards fabricated by the social mode of production.

In this sense cinema takes on the task of rediscovering the freedom of perception, which painting has fulfilled in its own time through impressionism. There is always a threat against artistic movements, because the history of the culture is the history of attacks and struggles. Then, it is far from guaranteed that cinema will prolong its creative freedom functions. As far as it concerns *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, modernist procedures, such as repetition are effusively used. To reframe is to repeat differently. In this case, it is a historical procedure which actualizes historical information in a Benjaminian fashion. Godard realizes his own exigency towards cinema. Therefore, Lumière was the last impressionist, but the first bearer of the ethical obligation, of the figurative contact with the historical real.

Paintings, as they appear in cinema, are not on their medium, what indicates a core difference in it. Besides, painting, as it is immersed on cinema medium, is vulnerable to the manipulations as reframing and color modifications. But maybe, this is the less important difference. When painting is brought onto a cinema medium, it becomes an all-new dimension, with which it will be able to exist into the virtual dimension of elements which surround it. Voice over, writings, other paintings. This way, painting is crossed on cinema medium by the film, as a whole. It makes part of it, not like a spy on a strange medium, but as the new form, baptized by the new medium.

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1. Chapitre 1A: *Toutes les histoires* (1989), 51′. Chapitre 1B: *Une histoire seule* (1989), 42′. Chapitre 2A: *Seul le cinéma* (1994), 26′. Chapitre 2B: *Fatale beauté* (1994), 28′. Chapitre 3A: *La monnaie de l'absolu* (1996), 27′. Chapitre 3B: *Une vague nouvelle* (1996), 27′. Chapitre 4A: *Le contrôle de l'univers* (1998), 27′. Chapitre 4B: *Les signes parmi nous* (1998), 38′.

2. This claim appears through Jean Pierre Léaud, in Godard's *La Chinoise* (1967), when his character is giving a lesson about information problems, and he quotes Henri Langlois, who, in Rohmer's film *Louis Lumière* (1968) talks about the interconnections between cinema and impressionism, defining them both because everything that was happening at that time was registered by the cinema, and because Lumière's goal was the same as that of impressionism painters, that is, register the (visually) imponderable in life.

3. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1 : l'image-mouvement* (Paris : Les Editions de Minuit, 1983).

4. Jacques Aumont, *L'oeil interminable* (Paris: Editions de La Différence, 2007).

5. James S. Williams, "European Culture and Artistic Resistance in *Histoire(s) du cinéma* Chapter 3A, La monnaie de l'absolu", in *The Cinema Alone: essays on the work of Jean-Luc Godard 1985-2000*, ed. Michael Temple and Williams (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2000), 121.

6. *Histoire(s) du cinéma,* Chapitre 1B.

7. *Histoire(s) du cinéma,* Chapitre 1B, 29'21''.

8. Williams, "European Culture."

9. André Bazin, *What is Cinema?, Vol. 1* (California: University of California Press, 2005).

10. Ibid., 167.

11. Ibid., *Cinema*, 168.

12. Bazin, "Um Filme Bergsoniano: *Le mystère Picasso.*" in *O Cinema* (Sao Paulo: Brasiliense, 1991), 182.

13. *Histoire(s) du cinéma.* Chapitre 1A, 5'38''.

14. Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 84.

15. Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory* (New York : Zone Books, 1991 [1896]), 64.

16. Marni Reva Kessler, *Sheer Presence: the veil in Manet's Paris* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 74.

17. T.J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and his Followers* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985), 136-137.

18. Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 81-149.

19. Michel Foucault, *Manet and the Object of Painting* (London: Tate Publishing, 2011), 73-80.

20. Crary, *Suspensions of Perception*, 93.

21. André Malraux, *Le Musée Imaginaire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1965), 75.

22. Ibid*.,* 67.

23. Bergson, *Matter and Memory,* 69.

24. Crary, *Suspensions of Perception*, 93.

25. This is the way Benjamin refers to historical elements presented in the complete judgment of the present. Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings vol. 4* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2006), 390.

26. Williams, "European Culture", 125.

27. Ágnes Pethö, *Cinema and Intermediality: The Passion for the In-Between* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011).

28. *Histoire(s) du cinéma,* Chapitre 1A, 0'17''.

29. Robert Bresson, *Notes on the Cinematographer* (Los Angeles: Green Integer, 1997), 31.

30. *Histoire(s) du cinéma,* Chapitre 1B, 0'19''.

31. Alain Bergala, org., *Jean-Luc Godard par Jean-Luc Godard (tome 2)* (Paris: Cahiers du cinéma, 1998), 402.

32. *Histoire(s) du cinéma,* Chapitre 1B, 17'31''.

33. *Histoire(s) du cinéma,* Chapitre 1B, 28'03''.

34. Pierre Schneider, *The World of Manet 1832-1883* (New York: Time-Life, 1968), 141.

35. Françoise Cachin, *Manet* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1983), 407.

36. *Histoire(s) du cinéma,* Chapitre 1B, 08'18''.

37. *Louis Lumière*, 04'08''.

38. *Histoire(s) du cinéma,* Chapitre 1B, 36'27''.

39. *Histoire(s) du cinéma,* Chapitre 1B, 17'31''.

40. Bradford R. Collins, *12 Views of Manet's Bar* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 256.

41. Georges Bataille, *Manet* (Cleveland: Editions d'Art Albert Skira, 1955), 94.

42. Cachin, *Manet*, 359.

43. Ibid.

44. Emile Zola, *Nana* (Paris: Mozambook, 2001).

45. See Godard, "Le bon plaisir de Jean-Luc Godard", in Bergala, *Jean-Luc Godard,* 305-22 (318).

46. Cachin, *Manet*, 195.

47. Bataille, *Manet*, 8.

48. Ibid., 55.

49. Ibid.

50. Bataille, *Manet*, 84.

51. Bresson, *Notes*, 21.

52. Jeremy Spencer, "Making Films Negatively: Godard's Political Aesthetics", *Cinema: Journal of Philosophy and Cinema* 8 (2016): 69-87.

53. Paul Valéry, *Degas, Manet, Morisot* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1960).

54. Williams, "European Culture", 120.

55. Miriam Heywood, "Holocaust and Image: Debates Surrounding Jean-Luc Godard's *Histoire(s) du cinéma* (1988–98)", *Studies in French Cinema* 9, no. 3 (2009): 273-283.

56. *Histoire(s) du cinéma,* Chapitre 3A, 11'15''.

57. Malraux, *Musée Imaginaire,* 42.

58. Ibid., 110.

59. *Histoire(s) du cinéma,* Chapitre 1B, 35'49''.

60. *Histoire(s) du cinéma,* Chapitre 1B, 28'03''.

61. Kessler, *Sheer Presence,* 41.

62. *Histoire(s) du cinéma,* Chapitre 1B, 07'05''.

63. Jean-Luc Godard, *Introduction a une véritable histoire du cinéma* (Paris: Albatros, 1980), 63.

64. *Histoire(s) du cinéma,* Chapitre 3A, 12'52''.

65. Malraux, *Musée Imaginaire,* 82-84.

66. Jean Cocteau, *Thomas l'imposteur* (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), 150.

67. Godard, *Introduction*, 63.

68. *Histoire(s) du cinéma,* Chapitre 3A, 12'52''.

69. *La réponse des ténèbres* (answer of darkness) was a possible name for one of *Histoire(s) du cinéma'*s chapters. It ended up that Godard didn't make the choice. Nevertheless, this title appears through the work as graphic titling.

70. Schneider, *World of Manet,* 58.

71. Ibid., 59.

72. Paul Valéry, quoted in Cachin, *Manet*, 336.

73. *Histoire(s) du cinéma,* Chapitre 3A, 11'22''.

74. *Histoire(s) du cinéma,* Chapitre 3A, 11'59''.

75. *Histoire(s) du cinéma,* Chapitre 3A, 12'20''.

76. *Histoire(s) du cinéma,* Chapitre 3A, 11'59''.

77. *Histoire(s) du cinéma,* Chapitre 3A, 12'20''.

78. Foucault, *Manet*, 73.

79. Bradford, *12 Views*, 110.

80. Daniel Fairfax, *The Dialectics of Montage in the Work of Jean-Luc Godard from 1965 to 1998* (MPhil thesis, University of Sydney, 2010), 44.

81. Cachin, *Manet*, 76.

82. Ibid.

83. *Histoire(s) du cinéma,* Chapitre 3A, 12'39''.

84. Cachin, *Manet*, 243-244.

85. Fairfax, *Dialectics,* 7.

86. Malraux, *Musée Imaginaire,* 70.

87. Pethö, *Cinema and Intermediality,* 322.

A WORK OF CHAOS:

GIANLUIGI TOCCAFONDO'S ANIMATED PAINTINGS

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In the opening scene of *Briganti senza leggenda* (2012), Gianluigi Toccafondo's latest film, which blends live image, drawing and painting, the camera pans left over a vacant lot and in it there is a car, seemingly abandoned. There is a cut and we see a pair of shoes outside, by the car door; the camera makes a vertical upward movement and we find a man lying on the back seat, sleeping; then, a short right pan and another man comes into view walking towards the car. The landscape, in the meantime, is no longer in live image, but painted white around the man who is coming towards the car until he is in the shot, in the same frame as the man lying down. The latter suddenly stretches his arm and puts a knife to the neck of the standing man, who is frightened and becomes distorted (his head becomes a drawing on top of a live image body). Now picture the following edition: there is a cut and in reverse shot two characters from a Francis Bacon painting emerge, for example, the two figures of the left panel of *Three Studies for a Crucifixion* of 1962, who react with surprise at the transformation of the character of Toccafondo's film in the previous shot. The *nonsense* of this imaginary editing exercise evidences how strange metamorphoses in the films of the Italian director can be, in this case the metamorphosis of the film image into animated drawing, not through rotoscoping, but rather through a pictorial process which literally distorts the character's head at the same time that it visually brings him closer to the imaginary world of the figures painted by Bacon, in the same way that he distorts the landscape in live image, painting over it, highlighting the brush stroke, as in Cezanne's paintings. Characters and landscapes which momentarily transform from live image into drawing and painting is the most basic way of explaining Toccafondo's visual universe.

Gianluigi Toccafondo is a painter, an illustrator and a director of animation films, born in San Marino in 1965. His films are a reference in the technique of "animated painting", along with other masters of animation film, such as Georges Schwizgebel. This text is an analysis of his work from a phenomenological point of view in the wake of what Maldiney and Deleuze[1] wrote on Cézanne and Bacon works respectively in regard to the

"reality of painting" and which aims to extend to a "reality of image" which is tied to the end of representation, when the image asserts its identity outside academic models which historically dominated painting until the second half of the 19th century. As an example, if we compare the portraits of the French poet Stéphane Mallarmé in Félix Nadar's photography and in Édouard Manet's painting, it becomes clear that the painting uses the model to construct an image which, unlike photography, merely uses the referent as starting point and not as goal. Manet's Mallarmé is a distortion, a kind of manifesto for the future of image, an image which has relinquished the referent in nature to be able to exist fully independent of its condition of representation or copy of nature. Maldiney, in his interpretation of Cézanne, would emphasize this shift in the history of image by analysing these reasons for the end of pictorial representation vis-à-vis a referent in nature placing the issue in the end of the "neutral or reproducing eye" of the artist. To Maldiney, this change was indissociable from Cézanne's "interpretative gaze" upon nature, identifying it as responsible for the "distortion" of the world (of the figure and of the landscape) on the canvas. This interpretative look is a "new look" which from the end of the 19th century came to inhabit both painting and other forms of visual expression, among which animation cinema. The hand of the artist started to obey that look and no longer was a mere prosthesis of the neutral body of the nature-reproducing artist. The outcome was the shift from representation to a "painting of the sensation" of the world. The new interpretative look gave way to a chaotic wave of sensations, especially visible in Cezanne's pictorial distortions, the result of a flare-up of "forces" (Deleuze), or of "rhythms" (Maldiney), which distorted the referential nature and which, by inhabiting the image, constructed it as an independent reality from the representation system. The pictorial distortion as a result of the painter's interpretative gaze upon nature created a new reality of the painting (and of the image) which was defined by the end of the three-dimensional illusion, increasingly asserting itself by a two-dimensional space by the colour layout, which would end in the geometric abstraction and the monochrome of the early 20th century. An *époché pictural* was born here, according to Escoubas, resulting in the rise of a "pictorial space" unrelated to the representation-reproduction of three-dimensionality, albeit with ties to corporeality,[2] that is to say, to the interpretative look that is simultaneously subjective and physiological. This pictorial space derived from the painter's new observer status, who had become a producer of what he saw, and stopped being a mere neutral spectator in the

face of the spectacle of nature. The pictorial space was a transformation of what was pass-ively seen.[3] From then on, the sensation, the rhythm, the style (Merleau-Ponty), or the diagram (Deleuze) are responsible for the "essence of the form" which is the result of bod-ily interpretation (corporeality). Painting gained a new reality which was no longer re-lated with the sum and transposition to the canvas of the objects that surround us, accord-ing to a cultural convention, and would contaminate visual arts. This does not mean that painting became abstract but merely a turbulence of the figurative, like Cézanne's land-scape and still life which seem to be crossed by temperature waves, or the figure in Bacon who suffers from a hysteria[4] which distorts it (in the same way as the character in the opening scene of *Briganti* described at the beginning of this paper), the outcome of rhythms and forces responsible for the autonomy of the image vis-à-vis the referential nature. Now, in Toccafondo's films these features re-emerge: on the one hand, there is something Baconian in his characters in the sense that, in their movement, they occasion-ally distort, and on the other hand, the "background" of the image is Cézannesque, it is a mutating pictorial mass which never stabilizes in a defined landscape/setting, or in a uni-form colour (which deviates from Bacon, but comes closer to the brush stroke of Céz-anne's paintings). His films add strength to these arguments, fostered by the movement of the images, and in this sense are visually a natural sequence, or an inheritance of Céz-anne's and Bacon's painting. If Cézanne and Bacon had directed films, they would prob-ably have arrived at Toccafondo's result.

1. A SILENT SCREAM
FOR A PHENOMENOLOGY OF THE AESTHETICAL EXPERIENCE

> Hans Hoffman: Do you work from nature?
> Jackson Pollock: I am nature.
> Hans Hoffman: Ah, you work by heart. That's no good. You will repeat yourself.
> Jackson Pollock: ...[5]

The strange dialogue between Hoffman and Pollock witnessed by Lee Krasner, is the ex-ample of the academic reaction to the strangeness of a new pictorial space taken to the limit by Pollock. But it also enables us to see a certain resistance and amazement regard-

ing the new reality of painting and its potential, and reiterates that looking is not merely seeing passively. Although it drifted apart from a mediated look (that of the dark room, for instance), the eye is not set on the thing close-by, it is constantly returning to itself to constantly reopen the reborn space of the event, or in Goethe's words:

> Let the observer look steadfastly on a small coloured object and let it be taken away after a time while his eyes remain unmoved; the spectrum of another colour will then be visible on the white plane... it arises from an image which now belongs to the eye.[6]

Looking is not the exercise of surveillance, eager to catch things in the act, it is the surveillance of an attention connected to its being.[7] Put simply, one might say that the look is delayed and that the image resulting from that optical experience is a memory wrapped in a haze which loses its characteristic outline. That is to say, pictorial images arise from transformations and not repetitions, and therefore what is at stake in Cézanne can also be applied to Toccafondo: to look is to transform, to look is to interpret, and not reproduce similarities, or repeat the model. Whereas the impressionists "reproduced" nature in terms of its lighting—the "vision as a sum of light"—, Cézanne countered that vision on its own is not enough, interpretation is necessary. According to Jonah Lehrer,[8] Cézanne had realized that our impressions demand interpretation: to look is to create what we see. Recent discoveries in neuroscience would prove him right, by claiming that it is the eyeball that transforms light into a continuous electrical code which is sent to the brain and what our eye "picks" are merely smudges of indistinct colour. It is the brain that creates reality by interpreting the lines of light, which have not yet been transformed into tight forms; what starts by being an abstract puzzle of colour becomes a scene or a landscape, from a whirlwind of colour a form begins to emerge. In the words of Maria Filomena Molder:

> (…) with Impressionism everything begins to pulse and to shake, to lose its exact outline, with Cézanne the indifference to correct drawing gives rise to a sudden invasion of forces of chaotic animal spirits which painting had majestically subjugated.[9]

Cézanne gave rise to the Dionysian in painting by reducing the painter's model (nature, for instance) to a simple matter of sensations. Cézanne called his model, "motif" (and

Deleuze, "diagram"). Toccafondo's motif are the film images, photographic images and newspaper sheets. As we have seen, these models are not an object in themselves, ready to be copied. Cézanne did not just reproduce the landscape, or Bacon and Toccafondo the photographs;[10] what is at stake is the relation between the artist's gaze and the model. It is from that meeting between an exercise of looking and a referent that sensation is born.

Sensation is a structuring concept for a phenomenology of the aesthetic experience, because it is born from a meeting with the phenomenon: the world is revealed in a sensation. The phenomenon is what emerges and summons us to its presence, it is the inseparable act of the birth of the world and of birth in it, to which representation always comes late, and thus gives way to something else—sensation—,as in Cézanne, Bacon or Toccafondo. Escoubas speaks of "reduction" as the field of phenomenology because it is pure phenomenon, the reduced phenomenon.[11] It is what is left of the suspension of existence and of the transcendence of the object. If reduction diminishes the transcendent, the immanent is left over: there are no longer copies in Plato's style, merely replicas, images that wander without referent. The essence is the aspect and, therefore, it is an irrationality, because it is orphan of a model. And the distortion which is born of disconnection, or maladjustment, of our meeting with the world is proof that essence is an irrationality. In order words, if images have lost the referent, they do not need a model to resemble, then they are perfect in themselves, creating their own reality. It was in this sense that Deleuze spoke of the need to invert Platonism.[12] In this way, the space and the time of that meeting with the world (the phenomenon) are not a neutral field where the sense is exposed, but a sketch of sense: a silent scream in the shape of sensation which is directly transmitted without going through the ennui of telling a story, or without constructing a narrative, says Deleuze. And it is that direct transmission that produces distortions, due to the action of rhythms and forces that are in the sensation. Nothing is crystalized in that meeting, because it is dynamic, from is arise rhythms and forces which generate transient forms. Sensation is the reduction of what has been lived: "*je commence a me séparer du paysage, à le voir…*" [I'm beginning to detach myself from the landscape, to see it], stated Cézanne in his letters to Gasquet. Painting allows us to see what we usually do not see: it constantly paints the birth of the world under the look, producing an image which now belongs to the eye, as Goethe asserted.

2. A CHAOTIC SOURCE OF SENSATIONS

TOWARDS A DIALECTIC OF TRANSFORMATION

Since 1989, Gianluigi Toccafondo has directed eight short-features[13] besides short corporate and advertising films,[14] film credits and animation sequences for live action films[15] more recently films (and costumes) for operas.[16] Despite the difference in nature between these projects, there is an unmistakable visual mark in the artist's whole work, due to a process of creation which starts in the collection of existing images or which he captured, which are then photocopied and distorted in the act of being digitalized for paper. Finally, these images are painted and animated frame by frame.

Figure 1: Toccafondo's creative process as demonstrated in a class of the
Master programme in Animation Arts, at Lusofona University, in Lisbon.

In his rare interviews, Toccafondo asserts his dread vis-à-vis the white paper, so he needs a set of photographic or cinematographic images, or newspapers sheets as basis for his work.[17] This image collection comes from films by other directors (*Ginger and Fred* by Federico Fellini in *La pista*, or *M* by Fritz Lang in *Le criminel*, for example), or moving images which he himself captured (*La pista del maiale*, *La piccola Russia* and *Briganti senza leggenda*). This era matters then undertakes a progressive transformation which goes from the cinematographic to the pictorial image to then stabilize in animated image. Toccafondo has never hidden that this technique derives from his father's work, who was a ceramist, and from his childhood memories when he saw him mould clay on a throwing

wheel, in a rotating movement, by which matter gradually changes. The circularity of the figures in the image and of the image itself is the type of recurring movement in his first films (*La coda*, *La pista*, *Le criminel*) and it is this movement which composes the pictorial space. This organizing principle which builds the space arises on a destruction of the photographic image as a result of the stain as pictorial matter which transforms it—a characteristic space of the *épochè pictural* equivalent to the Cézannesque motif or the Baconian diagram—and which, in its metamorphoses, gradually releases deformed figures such as those by Francis Bacon—"*bodies without organs*"[18], as in the early example in this text.

In *Logic of Sense*, Deleuze analysed thoroughly the composition model of the Irish painter, and found in it the following scheme: there is a structure of the image (the background or the setting) where a figure stuck to an outline which isolates it from the background and from which it seeks to get free through spasms, through the action of forces or rhythms which distort it in the same way nature does in Cézanne's canvas. With Toccafondo, the structure of the image is constructed by the living pictorial spot which gives it texture. It is an organic spot which, in turn, releases figures as a result of the spasms that distort the bodies. The body is a malleable entity, or, "an experiment in extending the corporeality of the body until it either becomes something completely different".[19] It is a centrifugal circularity which dilates figures—legs and head elongate, arms become wings...—and morphs them into other figures.

> This sense of something "coming-into-being", a process with its own aesthetic vocabulary, is directly related to the animated form, and is readily enacted in Toccafondo's films. Toccafondo especially enjoys the practice of charting the movement from a recognisably figurative approach with identifiable characters which then metamorphose into something different [...].[20]

These are figures that never stabilise in a solid form; indeed, Toccafondo claims that he feels fascination for the intermediate forms[21] and for imperfection.[22]

In the language of animation, and in particular with the technique of animated drawing, animators draw the keyframes of a character's movement which, when they make a certain gesture or action, they have, for example, three keyframes which will give it personality and expressiveness. The connection of these A-B-C keyframes is constituted by

in-betweens, in other words, the shift from de A to B and from B to C are moving forms. Looking at Toccafondo's characters/figures, it is as if they never stabilized in the pose, that is to say, in A, B or C. They are permanent in-betweens, hence the imperfection or the intermediate form. In other words, the in-between is to the keyframe as sensation is to representation, that is, the in-betweens are the essence as irrationality of Toccafondo's forms, they do not aspire to the keyframe, they are maladjusted... Already Tex Avery, sometimes, in the dizzying movement he bestowed upon his characters, the made the in-between visible as painting or pure abstract drawing, but that was part of his visual gag and not recurring style, also because the natural thing to do was to apply the technique of smear animation, meaning, characters jump from pose to pose, supressing the intermediate elements. But with Toccafondo it is as if the keyframe were an impossibility and, for this reason, the action of a filter or of a "diagram" blurred the clear, crisp drawing, or the illustrative three-dimensional painting. The in-between is the experience of sensation, a kind of reunion of the wave with forces that shake the body—the silent scream mencioned above. It is in this sense that Deleuze speaks of the figure in Bacon as a body without organs which allows it to introduce time in the painting by capturing forces and not by reproducing/inventing forms. It is the forces that, exerting themselves on the body, cause the sensation and make it hysterical. To put it differently, one can understand the in-between, from this perspective, as a consequence of the "incorrect drawing" introduced by Cézanne or as the disorder in the model's pose, as in the comparative example mentioned above with respect to Mallamé's portrait. Manet cast aside the outlines which defined and solidified the figure, opting instead for spots which caused a distance from the model.[23] This issue highlights the work of Toccafondo as that of a "pictorial animator" and not as "animator of the line." As Paul Klee would say, the line has gone for a walk.

Another recurring aspect in Toccafondo's image is "smudginess"—usually removed from conventional animation[24] and which in his films are his trademark—by the presence of the numbering of some drawings or his signature. But smudginess is not limited to these inscriptions which supposedly should not be seen, it is the pictorial matter, the texture of the image which in *La Pista del Maiale* extends to the very roughness of the painted wall and to the accelerated camera movements. In this film, with particular clarity, there is a moving texture which is the expression of the pictorial matter.

Smudginess is associated with the role of the spot, with its organic nature, by contrast with the correct, clean drawing, an objectified drawing. In this sense, the spot is developing organic matter, and the present time of the experience of the phenomenon, while the drawing is action deferred in time which clarifies and stabilizes form. The spot "is especially manifest in what is living",[25] which in the context of this paper can be understood as the phenomenon, and "in its manifestation, does not resemble anything else",[26] in other words, it is neither reproductive nor illustrative, it is a dragging of colour, for example, which originates "distorted forms." The pictorial spot "is the revelation of an absolutely inner affliction, similar to growing",[27] or to the birth of the world before the look.

The spots do not overlap, they grow and transform; hence, Toccafondo does not process three-dimensionality, in the same way that Cézanne would not do it either,[28] that is to say, "in painting there is no background and in it there is no drawn line either",[29] so perspective is not processed. Figures increase and decrease, elongate and shrink, stretch and squash by metamorphoses, and not by comings and goings from the close-up to the depth of field and vice-versa. The bodies stretch and retract by distortion, as a result of the action of the same forces or rhythms as in Cezanne's or Bacon's painting. Although the spot never quite solidifies in a form, as organic matter it works as possibility for the emergence of bizarre figures, and it is in this game, we would say of a dialectic of transformation, that the pictorial space is organized as way of arising,[30] that is, which makes visible. Put differently: from the painted distorted photocopied image, we move to a pictorial matter which releases phantasmagorical figures, in a continuous pictorial travelling.

A permanent dialectic of the figure in its continuous labour of metamorphosis, but also of the pictorial matter which is transformed not just because it is freed from the photographic image which pre-exists it, but also because it is spatially renewed. The instability of the spot sometimes originates a second spot with the aspect of screen, of support to the projection of the figures, as if they were being reframed or wrongly projected because the figure is not adjusted to the entirety of the window.

Thus, also a dialectic of the states of the image matter: solid—the photographic image which is going to be distorted; liquid—the pictorial matter which is formed as a result of painting on the photocopy releasing figures; gas—figures and pictorial matter which evaporate; plasma—pictorial matter and figures which model, which take shape as the result of a hysterical action.[31] The dialectic as formless spot prevents the crystallization of

the form and consequently of an optic vision: before the agitation and two-dimensionality vision is haptic and does not conform to the classical regime of centring figures on a three-dimensional background.

Let us consider his film *La Piccola Russia*, the story of which unfolds around the growth of a character who, as an adult, kills his own family for the love of a woman. Whereas the characters and the facts are imaginary, the places are real enough and are part of a region in east-central Italy known as "little Russia" given its affection for Communism during Mussolini's fascist regime, a region Toccafondo knew well and filmed in 16mm and Super 8 using a school friend as main character. This basic raw material was then digitized, painted and again converted to film, now in 35mm. In the film, it is not just due to the growth of the main character from childhood to adulthood that the figures are constantly shaped and transformed, since that is his creative process; they also undergo a process of anamorphosis to the limit of their dissolution or disappearance. In many shots, the forms liquify and evaporate in the fluid movement of animation. There are merely traces which transport the forms to a state of dragging, or of hint (loose clothing, disproportionate limbs, thick hair and shadows that ultimately absorb the setting).[32] Dragging creates a spot which takes its time and lingers in it, constructing its own pictorial and film space. It is a spot which displays the signs of its instability because it drags and reveals traces of its previous form (for instance, in the tension with the numbering of the drawings), hence the smudginess and an aesthetics of the unfinished, or the "culture de milieu" as Patrick Barrès called it, and which has ties with the predominance of in-betweens and their morphing effect which deconstructs and deforms. As if this distortion or dragging of the spot were the best possible characterization to demonstrate the state of alienation of the film's leading figure. As stated by Paul Wells:

> Incorporating the distortions and false perspectives of German Expressionism, the sometime hallucinatory quality of the post-Impressionists, the chiaroscuro shadow and light effects of 1940s film noir, and the dynamic themes and conventions of Fauvist art, Toccafondo´s work uses the very materiality of paint to reveal the expressive yet imprecise nature of movement as it defines personal identity, and the roles and functions associated with that identity.[33]

To sum up, this plasmatic state of the pictorial matter and of the figure is a deliberate distortion of nature, in the same way as Cézanne's painting, which its critics described as "formless." Wells concluded his thinking with this passage on *Le Criminel*.

> Unlike other kinds of animation which conceive 'moving painting' as the imperceptible metamorphosis from one image to another, Toccafondo actually uses his painterly approach to play out tensions between stillness and imprecise movement, blurring the image, constantly changing its pace and perspective in the style of a live-action noir, but purely through animation and not editorial construction. The criminal moves into an underworld and conducts a shooting. Figures remain in the dark. The sense of entrapment and claustrophobia is palpable as the criminal cannot be identified in his constant movement. The final image catches the face of the criminal in a photographic snap only to reveal a blurred physiognomy which refuses stasis and identification on a final image than which comments on the condition of animation, painting and physical movement.[34]

These are not abstract processes (in the sense of the refusal of figuration), but transfiguring actions, such as spontaneously painting matter about to become form, or transmitting directly without undergoing narrative or illustration processes.[35] This is then, about sensation, a "transposition of similarity" which creates a new reality of the image and, consequently style. Cézanne, Bacon and Toccafondo are artists of sensation, the difference between them lies in the medium: painting as art of space which sets images that no longer refer to models outsider the phenomenon which reveals the world in a sensation; vis-à-vis cinema as art of time (of movement) which allows swirling without ever setting on an image defined according to the principles of representation, in a kind of permanent in-between. Just like the role of painting for Cézanne is to construct its own reality, led by laws that are independent of naturalism or emotions—a principle which lies at the root of all the developments of modern painting—so Toccafondo's films also have their own reality based on a transfiguring operation which reveals the rhythm under the form it incarnates. The form becomes formless, it is no longer in its place, it "slips", it became disfigured.[36] The forms are adapted by the purifying action of time. By transposing the film image into the pictorial image and later into the animated image, Toccafondo is seizing

rhythms and forces, and that is the reality of his films. It is a chaotic downpour of sensations. Toccafondo establishes chaos into his films in the process of deforming the raw material, but, at the same time, it is a source of rhythm vis-à-vis a new animated painting. It is his style which is responsible for an optic catastrophe in the sense that his look separates from the object.

By way of conclusion, we might say that images speak even in silence, as in the silent figures and scenes without drama in Manet, who introduced silence in painting and consequently removed grandiloquence from the Romantic discourse to allow images to speak. "Silence", sometimes a deafening silence, is a manifestation of the mismatch of the artist's reunion with the model/motif. In this silence lies the sketch of the meaning without time delay or narrative annex which may explain it or tell it in any way other than direct transmission, unfiltered by discourse. Considering that discourse from this point of view only arises after the fact and in a redundant and illustrating manner in a mere emission of "slogans." The text, the dialogues, the representative images are fossilizations vis-à-vis the freedom of the form and tend to solidify in stereotypes. But if silence is eloquent, smudginess is just as eloquent because both, sometimes jointly, endow the images with a sense of possibility, as Gianluigi Toccafondo does, opening them up to an endless field of interpretations. Smudginess in Toccafondo is his excess, as painter and animator of spots, who has led animation film to a Dionysian dimension.

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1. Henri Maldiney, *Regard Parole Espace* (Lausanne: L'Age de l'Homme, 1973) and Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* (London/New York: Continuum, 2003).

2. Éliane Escoubas, *L'espace pictural* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2011), 22: "Il en résulte qu'une ontologie de l'espace pictural n'a pas pour notion centrale la représentation-reproduction de la voluminosité, mais l'instauration de la corporalité: l'instauration de "corps" comme événements. L'événement est le mode d'être du topos; en peinture, l'événement est ex-ercice et ek-stase du regard; en peinture, le topos est l'apparaître comme tel".

3. Jonathan Crary dedicates the third chapter ("Subjective Vision and the Separation of the Senses") of his book *Techniques of the Observer* to this topic, starting with Goethe's theory of colour. Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer. On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (eighteen edition). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), 69: "The corporeal subjectivity of the observer, which was a priori excluded from the concept of the camera obscura, suddenly becomes the site on which an observer is possible. The human body, in all its contingency and specificity, generates "the spectrum of another colour", and thus becomes the active producer of optical experience".

4. Hysteria is used in the context of this paper as an "excess of presence" of the body, or part of the body which distorts it and simultaneously catches the attention of the eye. Visually, it is a "leaving him/herself" of the figure/character.

5. Lee Krasner Papers (c.1927-1984). Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute/Archives of American Art, accessed 3 December 2018, https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-lee-krasner-12507.

6. Goethe, *Theory of Colours*, in Crary, *Techniques*, 68-69.

7. Jean-Pierre Charcosset and Bernard Rordorf, "Présentation", in Maldiney, *Regard*.

8. Jonah Lehrer, *Proust was a neuroscientist* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2007).

9. Maria Filomena Molder, "Equivalências e Intempestivas", introduction to José Ortega y Gasset, *A Desumanização da Arte* (Lisboa: Vega, 1996), 9 (translation mine).

10. In this context, and without wishing to belittle the quality of Gerhard Richter's work, his photographic atlas reproduced in his photorealistic paintings acts as antithesis of the transformation of landscape in Cézanne's or Bacon's painting. Before one of Richter's paintings, we say it looks like photography, and that is not the case with the other painters mentioned or with Toccafondo's films.

11. Escoubas, *L'espace*, 96-105.

12. Deleuze, *Logique du Sens* (Paris: Minuit, 1969).

13. *La coda* (1989), *La pista* (1991), *La pista del maiale* (1992), *Le criminale* (1993), *Pinocchio* (1999), *Essere morti o essere vivi è la stessa cosa* (2000), *La piccola Russia* (2004), *Briganti senza leggenda* (2013).

14. For instance: ad for Levis, *Woman Finding Love* (1993); spot the 56th Film Art Exhibition of the Biennale of Venice (2000); corporate film for the Tunisia Football Federation (2014).

15. *Robin Hood* (Riddley Scott, 2010), *Le Monde à l'envers* (Rolando Colla, 1998).

16. *Don Giovanni* by W. A. Mozart (2016) and *La Sonnambula* by Giovanni Bellini (2018).

17. Maria Filomena Molder, "Notas de Leitura sobre um Texto de Walter Benjamim", in *Matérias Sensíveis* (Lisboa: Relógio d'Água, 1999), 25: "The painter stains and vibrates the Wall of the cave, the canvas, the body, he dirties his fingers, overreaches. Conversely, the institution of the sign entails a certain degree of contention, experiences the pulse of the void" (translation mine). We will return to his idea below in this text regarding the spot by opposition to the sign (understood here as the correct drawing, linear and clean, and not so much as in the quoted text), as one of Toccafondo's characteristics.

18. The "body without organs" is not defined by the absence of organs, nor merely by the existence of an undetermined organ, but rather by the temporary and provisional presence of specific organs. Deleuze tells us that the diagram is part of a figurative form, but changes it, giving rise to a form of another nature, which is the figure. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*.

19. Paul Welles, "Animation: forms and meanings", in *An Introduction to Film Studies*, ed. Jill Nelmes (2nd edition) (London: Routledge, 1999), 254.

20. Ibid.

21. Accessed 2 June 2018, https://www.accademiavenezia.it/upload/docs/docenti/file/221/Ling_Arte_Cont_1617.pdf.

22. Accessed 2 June 2018, http://fr.zewebanim.com/index.php?post/2007/11/20/416-interview-gianluigi-toccafondo.

23. Manet was expelled from the Academy of Fine Arts of Paris because, in the live model classes, he insisted on drawing the model out of pose. Manet was already implicitly doing animation and, thus, he anticipated what live model classes would become: drawing in a few seconds poses which move and capturing small movements.

24. Starting right in the 1910s, with the construction of the animation film industry in the United States of America through the technique of animated drawing, the role of the *clean-up men* was crucial to clean drawings so that there were no overlapping lines, but also that all the forms were defined despite their movement.

25. Maria Filomena Molder, "Pintura e Desenho. Sobre a Pintura ou Sinal e Mancha: um texto de Walter Benjamim" in *Matérias Sensíveis*, 15 (translation mine).

26. Ibid (my translation).

27. Molder, "Notas de Leitura", 26 (translation mine).

28. In Cézanne, depth is obtained by the dual effect of retreating and advancing the landscape, the intertwined or overlaid planes, of contrasting or modulated colours, the elongation of the bodies, the effects of the curves, of rounding—what Cézanne called treating nature by means of the sphere, cone and cilinder.

29. Molder, "Pintura e Desenho", 16 (translation mine).

30. Escoubas, *L'espace*.

31. It was no coincidence that Eisenstein called plasmaticity to the: "rejection of once-and-forever alloted form, freedom from ossification, the ability to dynamically assume any form. An ability that I'd call 'plasmaticness', for here we have a being represented in drawing, a being of a definite form, a being which has attained a definite appearance, and which behaves like the primal protoplasm, not yet possessing a 'stable' form, but capable of assuming any form and which, skiping along the rungs of the evolutionary ladder, attaches itself to any and all forms of animal existence." Sergei Eisenstein, *Eisenstein on Disney* (Calcutta: Seagull Books, 1986), 21.

32. Patrick Barrès, "Des pratiques du trait dans le cinéma d'animation", in http://debordements.fr/spip.php?article66 (21/10/2016)

33. Welles, "Animation", 254.

34. Ibid., 254-255.

35. Molder, "Notas de Leitura", 24: "The spot comes from inside out, and in it the strength of the linguistic word is impregnated; the sign is marked from outside, like a language that was written, and there is in it neither impregnation nor conception of the word as in the spot. By the spot it is not indicated, it cannot be said: it is this one; but, by this, there is something that is shown, as if the spot searched a living intermediary". (translation mine)

36. On the topic of formless, read: Yves-Alain Bois and Rosalind Krauss, *Formless: A User's Guide* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997).

ILL SEEN, ILL SAID: THE DELEUZIAN STUTTER
MEETS THE STROOP EFFECT IN
DIANA THATER'S *COLORVISION* SERIES (2016)

Colin Gardner (University of California, Santa Barbara)

In his essay "He Stuttered", Gilles Deleuze demonstrates how a dominant language might be contested or "minorized" from within by placing it within a constant state of disequilibrium or bifurcation, by making it vibrate or stutter, creating, as he puts it, "an affective and intensive language, and no longer an affectation of the one who speaks."[1] But what if we were to destabilize this disequilibrium still further by creating a rupture between language and sensation, between color and space, stasis and movement? Los Angeles-based video artist Diana Thater explored this pattern of interference or inhibition—a form of "stutter that stutters" —in her 2016 installation *Colorvision* at Brian Butler's 1301 PE Gallery in Los Angeles. The exhibition consisted of eight individual monitor pieces, each displaying the name of a color along with a bouquet of flowers in a different, complimentary, color. As in her previous works, Thater uses the colors of the video spectrum—red, green, blue (primaries); cyan, magenta, yellow (secondaries); purple and orange (tertiaries) —in order to meta-communicate the system of the apparatus all the better to subvert its innate structure from within. The word "GREEN", for example, appears with magenta flowers, while the word "MAGENTA" appears with green flowers (Figure 1). Similarly, Blue is reverse-matched with Yellow, Red with Cyan, and Purple with Orange.

This slippage between reading and perceiving is based on a series of neurological tests developed by the psychologist John Ridley Stroop (1897-1973), who reported his findings— since known as "The Stroop Effect" —in two papers: "Studies of Interference in Serial Verbal Reactions" (1935) and "Factors Affecting Speed in Serial Verbal Reactions" (1938). His experiments were based on L.W. Kline's law of associative inhibition, which declared, "If *a* is already connected with *b*, then it is difficult to connect it with *k*, *b* gets in the way."[2] In other words, Stroop's experiments are strictly materialist in their

Figure 1: Diana Thater, Green and Magenta from the *Colorvision* Series.

function and for this reason are still highly relevant today, for they explore how concrete social conditions impact and influence our perceptual and affective response to expressive stimuli such as corporate branding, buzzwords in advertising and political campaigns and the internet (which may help to explain why "Brexit" was a far more effective associative catch-phrase than "Remain") as well as our ability to concentrate while chatting on our cell phones while driving. As the Psychologist Gordon D. Logan argues:

> The Stroop paradigm requires a judgment about one dimension of a multidimensional stimulus in which other dimensions may conflict with or agree with the judged dimension. For example, the judged dimension may be color, which the subject must name aloud, and the unjudged dimension may be form, which specifies a word representing a compatible or conflicting color. Again, the response depends primarily on the judged dimension, but performance is influenced subtly by relations between judged and unjudged dimensions. Performance is facilitated when relations are consistent with expectation and inhibited when they are not. The Stroop paradigm represents real-world situations in which one property of an object (or event) cues another property of the same object (or event).[3]

Through a series of experiments involving a broad range of volunteers, Stroop applied this principle to explore the innate time differential for naming colors (in the form of homogeneous squares or as swastikas, where, similar to letter forms, white space "invaded"

the color and made it harder to "read") compared to reading color names as words. Stroop discovered that when the meaning of a word and its color are congruent (e.g. the word BLUE written in blue color), it is easy to recognize and "read" the actual color of the word (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Stroop Test: Naming the Colors of the Print of Words Where the Color of the Print and the Word are the Same (RCNs).

Conversely, when the meaning of the word is incongruent with the color, such as RED written in blue color, it creates a conflict between the color and the word's meaning and takes slightly longer to read (Figure 3). More importantly, it is also difficult to name the color "blue" when it constitutes the word "RED." "In other words", as Stroop himself puts it, "if the word "red" is printed in blue ink how will the interference of the ink-color "blue" upon reading the printed word "red" compare with the interference of the printed word "red" upon calling the name of the ink-color "blue"?"[4] This conflict between word-recognition (which is faster) and color recognition (which is slower) requires extra processing time for the brain to resolve. In short,

> The increase in time for reacting to words caused by the presence of conflicting color stimuli is taken as the measure of the interference of color stimuli upon reading words. The increase in the time for reacting to colors caused by the presence of conflicting word stimuli is taken as the measure of the interference of word stimuli upon naming colors.[5]

Figure 3: Stroop Test: Naming the Colors of the Print of Words Where the Color of the Print
and the Word are Different (NCWd).

Stroop began his experiments with a simple contrast between "Reading color names where the color of the print and the word are different" (RCNd) (for example, reading "RED" printed in the color blue) and "Reading color names printed in black (RCNb)."[6] He noted that "It took an average of 2.3 seconds longer to read 100 color names printed in colors different from that named by the word than to read the same names printed in black."[7] However, there is another language-perception discrepancy here that involves a specific kind of Saussurian universal semiotics which attempts to explain reality in terms of signs, a system that Deleuze and Guattari subvert throughout their writings on language. While the difference between color names and printed color (RCNd) tests tend to internalize their discrepant stammering effect within the arena of color itself (i.e. we remain focused on why the word doesn't match the hue), the black and white test (RCNb) opens itself up to a form of metonymic skidding, giving the signifier full rein to set up connotative chains extending towards an endless outside, reinforcing Saussure's definition of language as a relational system whereby the field of immanence is always constituted by a pre-set value determined by the various orders of sign-signifier-sign etc. Thus Red might suggest communists, rage, fire engines, London mail boxes or, in terms of cinema, Jean-Luc Godard's famous reply, "Not blood, red", to the *Cahiers du Cinéma* editors remark that "There is a good deal of blood in *Pierrot*."[8] Similarly, Yellow might be associated with cowardice; Blue sadness; Green youthful inexperience or ecological awareness, and so on. Saussure thus codes the gaps between signs (in this case colors and their

connotations) and then conveniently provides the signifier that over-codes them in turn (relational language as a whole).

Although the cognitive interference between the two brain processes of word-recognition and color-recognition may be a problem to be solved in psychological terms, from Thater and Deleuze's point of view, this *aporia* between reason and sensation, language and affect is the very definition of a multiplicity:

> Creative stuttering is what makes language grow from the middle, like grass; it is what makes language a rhizome instead of a tree, what puts language in perpetual disequilibrium: *Ill Seen*, *Ill Said* (content and expression). Being well spoken has never been either the distinctive feature or the concern of great writers.[9]

Or, one might add, of great artists who exploit the stutter to create an even greater incidence of cognitive-perceptual skidding. We see this at work in Stroop's second experiment—"The Effect of Interfering Word Stimuli upon Naming Colors Serially"[10] —which is also the basis for Thater's *Colorvision* series as a whole. Where the word "RED" was printed in blue it is now to be called "blue", if "RED" is printed in green it is to be called "green." "Thus", as Stroop explains, "color of the print was to be the controlling stimulus and not the name of the color spelled by the word. This is to be known as the 'Naming color of word test where the color of the print and the word are different'" (NCWd).[11] Following Deleuze's application of C.S. Peirce's semiotics in *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, this would constitute a "LECTOSIGN: a visual image which must be 'read' as much as seen",[12] where the brain is required to inhibit the faster and stronger word-recognition process so that color-recognition might win out in the spectator's final response.

The results showed a marked slowing down of the ability to name colors when they make up the word of a different color compared to perceiving a simple square: "…the interference of conflicting word stimuli upon the time for naming 100 colors (each color being the print of a word which names another color) caused an increase of 47.0 seconds or 74.3 percent of the normal time for naming colors printed in squares."[13] These interference values gave Stroop the basis for comparing the effectiveness of two types of associations:

> Since the presence of the color stimuli caused no reliable increase over the normal time for reading words […] and the presence of word stimuli caused a considerable increase over the normal time for naming colors (4.35 standard deviation units) the associations that have been formed between the word stimuli and the reading response are evidently more effective than those that have been formed between the color stimuli and the naming response.[14]

Although most studies agree that this discrepancy between naming and reading might be overcome through increased familiarity, Stroop cites Warner Brown's conclusions from an earlier study that, "From these data it seems safe to conclude that the difference in speed between color naming and word reading does not depend upon practice."[15] Indeed, Brown further notes that, "It is easier to speak a printed word than to name a color because when you want to name a color you have first to think of the name (the word) and then speak it, whereas the printed word can be uttered without your having to think of anything."[16] Brown also tried printing the individual color's name over the actual block of color but discovered little improvement in response time: "The one association process does not reinforce the other. The introspections of all subjects confirm the figures in declaring that the letters printed on the colors do not serve as helpful cues or prompts, but on the contrary actually interfere with the process of association."[17] In conclusion, he stated categorically that, "From the results of this part of the experiment it may be concluded that the association process in naming simple objects like colors is radically different from the association process in reading printed words."[18]

What is clear is that this is not an "either or" process but rather one of "inclusive disjunction" that generates, as Deleuze and Guattari put it,

> an immanent use that would no longer be exclusive or restrictive, but fully affirmative, nonrestrictive, inclusive. A disjunction that remains disjunctive, and that still affirms the disjoined terms, that affirms them throughout their entire distance, *without restricting one by the other or excluding the other from the one*, is perhaps the greatest paradox. "Either… or… or", instead of "either/or."[19]

Such a multiplicity would necessitate less a linguistics of relational signs (à la Saussure) than one of flows, for "What defines it is the AND, as something which has its place between the elements or between the sets. AND, AND, AND—stammering. And even if there are only two terms, there is an AND between the two, which is neither the one nor the other, nor the one which becomes the other, but which constitutes the multiplicity."[20] It is here that Deleuze and Guattari turn to the Danish linguist, Louis Hjelmslev (1899-1965), whose system abandons all privileged reference. Thus Plateau 3 in *A Thousand Plateaus* —"10,000 BC—The geology of morals (who does the earth think it is?)"—explores the chemical, organic and anthropomorphic strata of reality using Hjelmslev's linguistic categories of content and expression. As Ronald Bogue explains,

> These linguistic terms […] are used in such a broad way that they cease to function linguistically and become physical concepts, categories for understanding the articulation and organization of matter (especially since they are combined with the quasi geological terminology of strata, epistrata, parastrata, and so on…) […] The end result of Deleuze and Guattari's analysis of the content and expression of the strata of reality is not to convert the world into signs, but to situate material signs within a plenum of matter.[21]

Instead of Saussure's signifier and signified, Hjelmslev refers to an *expression plane* (functional structures) and *content plane* (formed matters) respectively, and also creates a distinction between form and substance. Thus every sign is a function of two forms: content form and expression form; but these are in turn manifested by two substances—content substance and expression substance. Whereas the content substance is the psychical and conceptual manifestation of the sign (manifested in Thater's work through the word), the expression substance is the physical matter through which a sign is materialized (usually sound, but in Thater's case, video color). More importantly, Hjelmslev distinguishes between an unformed material or matter—an undivided surface upon which a net or grid is cast, not unlike Deleuze and Guattari's plane of consistency spread over the body without organs—and the forms and substances that are shaped from it (e.g. the colored squares, swastikas and words in Stroop's experiments). "Thus, in the analysis of language", notes Bogue, "Hjelmslev distinguishes between the raw sonic matter of expression, the expres-

sion-form imposed on this matter and the expression-substance created by this form (phonemes therefore having both a form and a substance)."[22] However, Hjelmslev adds an important caveat, arguing that

> The terms expression plane and content plane […] are chosen in conformity with established notions and are quite arbitrary. Their functional definition provides no justification for calling one, and not the other, of these entities *expression*, or one, and not the other, *content*. They are defined only by their mutual solidarity and neither of them can be identified otherwise. They are defined only oppositively and relatively, as mutually opposed functives of one and the same function.[23]

This has an obvious appeal to Deleuze and Guattari for it advocates the existence of a material substrate which precedes the formation of the planes of expression and content (not unlike Bergson's aggregate of matter and Spinoza's immanent substance). In sum, as Bogue puts it, "The plane of consistency is destratified, decoded, absolutely deterritorialized matter, which is not dualistically opposed to organized strata of content and expression but 'everywhere present, everywhere first and primary, always immanent.'"[24] In this way the artist or user of language shapes or sculpts matter not by creating signs but by tracing flows and causing them to circulate through disjunctive or conjunctive syntheses. "That is what style is, or rather the absence of style", argue Deleuze and Guattari, "asyntactic, agrammatical: the moment when language is no longer defined by what it says, even less by what makes it a signifying thing, but by what causes it to move, to flow, and to explode—desire. For literature is like schizophrenia: a process and not a goal, a production and not an expression."[25]

Of course matter expresses and formalizes itself very differently depending on medium and the stutter effect is by no means limited to works of literature (or film). Jasper Johns's 1959 painting *False Start* (Figure 4) is a prime example of "The Stroop Effect" at work, but the brain's inhibiting effect on our ability to name colors is far weaker than in Thater's videos largely due to the material nature of the pigment itself. At first glance, Maurice Merleau-Ponty's discussion of color in painting as a form of latency or possibility, what he calls the *flesh* of things, seems relevant here. However, unlike Hjelmslev, who relates language and color directly to matter, Merleau-Ponty insists that

Figure 4: Jasper Johns, *False Start* (The Museum of Modern Art, New York).

> The flesh is not matter, is not mind, is not substance. To designate it, we should need
> the old term "element", in the sense it was used to speak of water, air, earth, and fire,
> that is, in the sense of a *general thing*, midway between the spatio-temporal individual
> and the idea, a sort of incarnate principle that brings a style of being wherever there is
> a fragment of being. The flesh is in this sense an "element" of Being.[26]

In other words, for Merleau-Ponty, flesh starts from body and spirit, not from substance. Instead it's an element of Being, expressed through the formula: "Flesh of the world—Flesh of the body—Being."[27] This reversibility of feeling and the felt (and by extension, perception and cognition) is not unlike a handshake, an intimate intermingling of clasped hands where the subject is touched as well as touching.

In *What Is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari challenge Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological perspective by arguing that flesh is less an issue of Being than of *becoming*, for "*It is like a passage from the finite to the infinite*, but also from territory to deterritorialization. It is indeed the moment of the infinite: infinitely varied infinites."[28] For Deleuze and Guattari, Merleau-Ponty by-passes the key issue of the flesh's relation to color because he ignores its relationship to sensation: "The question of whether flesh is adequate to art can be put in this way: can it support percept and affect, can it constitute the being of sensation, or

must it not itself be supported and pass into other powers of life?"[29] Painting's objective is to paint forces which have a direct contact with the infinite. Thus, in Stroop's terms, the word RED, painted in blue, would no longer "house" the color as a kind of inhabitant of time and place, but would instead defer to blue's ability to turn percept (and language-as-matter) into a "cosmic sensibility." "In short", argue Deleuze and Guattari, "the area of plain, uniform color vibrates, clenches or cracks open because it is the bearer of glimpsed forces",[30] not unlike the temporal crack opened up by Barnett Newman's trademark zips. The body and the cosmos thus swirl around each other as so many zones of indiscernibility, revealing latent forces lurking in the area of plain, uniform color. Thus forces as percepts and becomings as affects are perfectly complementary, for,

> […] the being of sensation is not the flesh but the compound of nonhuman forces of the cosmos, of man's nonhuman becomings, and of the ambiguous house that exchanges and adjusts them, makes them whirl around like winds. Flesh is only the developer which disappears in what it develops: the compound of sensation. Like all painting, abstract painting is sensation, nothing but sensation.[31]

Let's explore this use of sensation in Jasper Johns' paintings and combines so that we can get a better understanding of how the Stroop effect works differently in relation to pigment compared to the movement inherent to Thater's monitor works. *False Start* consists of a field of rough, abstract gestures in red, yellow, orange, white, blue and gray, with corresponding stencils of the different colors' names placed seemingly at random over selected areas. Johns deliberately sets up a text-color discrepancy whereby in most cases the words don't match their corresponding fields: RED is placed over yellow or blue; ORANGE over red; BLUE over red, etc. However, RED is occasionally stenciled in red, so that there is a direct correspondence between word and color if not word and ground. Conversely, BLUE is appropriately (in spatially descriptive terms) placed over a blue field but stenciled in Yellow. Although this might appear to make Stroop's original assignment even harder for the uninitiated, it is in fact much easier to suppress the linguistic bias in our attempts to name the colors because we can focus our gaze on the unstenciled color fields, absorb the affectively sensate material saturation of say, red, yellow or blue and then seek out the corresponding colors in the stenciled words. In Hjelmslevian terms, the

plane of matter—through expression substance—effectively overrides content/form substance and creates a pure intensity that defies linguistic inhibition, a case of the logic of sensation superseding the logic of sense.

Significantly, *False Start* turned out to be anything but, for Johns incorporated variations on the Stroop Test in a number of subsequent works, including *By the Sea* (1961), *Diver* (1962), *Field Painting*, *Periscope (Hart Crane)* and *Land's End* (all 1963), *According to What* (1964) as well as two versions of *Souvenir* (1964). This is fully in line with Johns' methodological maxim from a 1963-4 sketchbook memo: "Take an object. Do something to it. Do something else to it." The Stroop Test also tallies with Johns's explanation of the source for his signature use of colored clusters of parallel lines or hatch marks, which he had seen on a passing car: "It had all the qualities that interested me—literalness, repetitiveness, an obsessive quality, order with dumbness, and the possibility of a complete lack of meaning."[32] *Diver*, for example, partly duplicates *False Start*'s discrepant use of word and color, thereby following Stroop's NCWd schema discussed earlier. Thus RED is stenciled in blue and YELLOW in red on the same yellow ground. However, *According to What* (Figure 5) radically deconstructs the Test by breaking up the word-color correspondence to the lowest common denominator of individual letters (an unlikely fusion of painting and Lettrism).

Figure 5: Jasper Johns, *According to What* (Philadelphia Museum of Art).

Divided into multiple vertical panels with attached objects such as an inverted chair and a fragment of sculpture, the work is a complex exercise in the relation between materiality and representation, pigment and sensation, color and language. As Patricia Kaplan describes it, "Colors assume many guises. They are named by hinged free-swinging letters,

Figure 6: Jasper Johns, *Periscope I* (Surovek Gallery).

read as impressions, presented as a chart of circles and seen as rectangles of red, yellow, and blue. This intermingling of the concrete with the conceptual parallels Duchamp."[33] Crucially, Johns no longer paints RED, YELLOW or BLUE in uniform colors (whether matching or otherwise) but picks out individual letters in different hues. Thus while the "RE" of RED is painted in red, the D is isolated in white. Similarly, the "LUE" of blue are rendered in blue, but the "B" is also in white. There is also a discrepancy between the free-swinging letters and their stenciled imprints, so that a black "Y" in the sculpted YELLOW is now mirrored by a yellow impression. This experiment shows that Stroop's original conflict between word-recognition and color recognition disappears entirely when the words are reduced to individual letters: the letter "D" is no longer linked to the word "red" but simply acts as a shaped perceptual ground for the logic of sensation to do its work without interference. In this respect, *Periscope (Hart Crane)* is the metacommunica-tive apotheosis of this development, for as William Poundstone points out, it's a Stroop painting but also a grey monochrome, with RED, YELLOW and BLUE rendered in exactly the wrong hues to be a viable Stroop test.[34] A later lithographic version from 1979 goes to the opposite extreme, with the three colors rendered in white outline against their own

corresponding colors (Figure 6), blurring the relationship between map and territory to the point of seeming redundancy.

An excellent example of such perceptual-linguistic overdetermination, and a useful bridge to a discussion of the cinematic aspects of Thater's *Colorvision* series, is Joseph Kosuth's neon works from the mid 1960s. Taking his cue from Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, with their emphasis on language games and the idea that the meaning of a word lies in its concrete use and specific context (thus, for example, "Red" used in a Stroop Test is playing a completely different game than the same word used in a right-wing political tract), Kosuth fashioned a series of neon works consisting of self-evident "truisms", such as *Five Words in Green Neon* (1965), which consists of exactly that, or *Four Colors Four Words (Orange, Violet, Green, Blue)* (1966) (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Joseph Kosuth, *Four Colors (Orange, Violet, Green Blue)*.

As Simon Morley points out, Kosuth "substitutes a discursive definition of the object for its image, arguing that the linguistic nature of his work transforms the seen into the said, turning the viewer into a reader."[35] However, as a reader we are far from being a passive receptacle for ready-made truisms. The whole point is to open language up to critical analysis, for as Kosuth affirms in a famous statement:

> Works of art are analytic propositions. That is, if viewed within their context—as art —they provide no information whatsoever about any matter of fact. A work of art is a tautology in that it is a presentation of the artist's intention, that is, he is saying that that particular work of art *is* art, which means, is a *definition* of art. Thus, that it is art is true a priori (which is what [Donald] Judd means when he states that "if someone calls it art, it's art").[36]

Kosuth's neon text pieces, like Thater's monitor works, are of course moving, vibrating images as well as "static" sculptures, and it is this durational characteristic that makes them affective vehicles of affect and sensation in addition to being reductive tautological "analytic propositions." This places both artists closer to cinema than to painting, to Deleuze's Bergson/Peirce schema outlined in *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* rather than the logic of sensation explored in his study of Francis Bacon. Because of her tendency to foreground the apparatus as a metacommunicative device, Thater is often described as a reductive, structuralist filmmaker, but as Tim Martin rightly argues,

> In Thater's work, these reductions are never permitted to negate the cinematic subject, as is often the case in structural film, nor to subsume it entirely within the discourses of the respective apparatus. But the cinematic subject retained by Thater ceases to conform to a static model based on identities—an apparatus, an eye, a gaze, a self, a character—and is constituted and deconstituted according to a more dynamic model based on *movements*, a model in which the subject may be better characterized as a "subject/predicate" or an "assemblage." That is, a cinematic subject fully entangled with the viewing subject in a constant state of unfolding: becoming other, becoming itself, becoming nothing, becoming "a becoming."[37]

In many of Thater's works this becoming is tied to a specific action-image, such as becoming-wolf in *China* (1995), becoming-dolphin in *Delphine* (2000), and becoming bees in *Knots + Surfaces* (2001), each of which tie the decentered and deterritorialized apparatus to a form of becoming-molecular, for as Deleuze and Guattari remind us,

[…] all becomings are already molecular. That is because becoming is not to imitate or identify with something or someone. Nor is it to proportion formal relations […] … becoming is to extract particles between which one establishes the relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness that are *closest* to what one is becoming, and through which one becomes. This is the sense in which becoming is the process of desire.[38]

In contrast, in the *Colorvision* series, the flowers and words are essentially static, closer to a pure perception-image, a "set [*ensemble*] of elements which act on a centre, and which vary in relation to it."[39] The monochromatic saturation of each work is a perfect example of what Deleuze calls "colorism", whereby, "In opposition to a simply colored image, the color-image does not refer to a particular object, but absorbs all that it can: it is the power which seizes all that happens within its range, or the quality common to completely different objects."[40] In this case, color *is* the affect itself, a virtual conjunction of all the objects it picks up. It absorbs the spectator, the image, the texts *and* the situations the colors create in one concrete movement.

If we return to Hjelmslev we can see that Thater's own form of colorism absorbs everything into pure matter, so that words no longer signify (in Saussure's sense), or conceptualize tautologically (in the case of Kosuth) but rather vibrate along with their ostensible ground as an indistinguishable combination of expression substance and content substance. Although never stated directly, Deleuze's originality in his cinema books is to combine Hjelmslev's model with Bergson's own theory of matter and memory:

The movement-image is matter itself, as Bergson showed. It is a matter that is not linguistically formed, although it is semiotically, and constitutes the first dimension of semiotics. In fact, the different kinds of image which are necessarily deduced from the movement-image, the six kinds, are the elements that make this matter into a signaletic material. And the signs themselves are the features of expression that compose and combine these images, and constantly re-create them, borne or carted along by matter in movement.[41]

Thater's monitor works thus behave (at least superficially) like a conventional cinematic shot, dividing and subdividing duration/matter into specific objects that make up the set —in this case words, colors and flowers—but at the same time reuniting them into a single identical duration which constitutes the real-time unfolding of the piece itself. Of course, as in any discussion of *durée* in Deleuze and Guattari, this discrete duration is also part of an immanent plane that links each work (as segment) to the ever-changing whole of the universe. Moreover, as Deleuze notes, "Given that it is a consciousness which carries out these divisions and reunions, we can say of the shot that it acts like a consciousness."[42]

However, it's important to remember that Thater displays her work in a spatial, gallery context, as well as through the durational properties of film/video. As a result, the spectator has far more agency than the necessarily more passive movie spectator because we are able to choose the order of shots as well as the speed with which we are able to move from one color/word and perception/cognition relation to another. Thus, taking a corner ensemble of four works as an example, we can read the texts quickly as a sequential "list" of colors—red; cyan; green; magenta (Stroop's RCNd test)—or slow down to perceive and name the words as part of their inherent color field—cyan; red; magenta; green (Stroop's RCWd test). More affectively, we can focus exclusively on color perception, soaking up the vibrating green flowers in the screen marked "magenta" before moving onto the red screen designated as "cyan" and attempting to read the color label as "red." It's much more difficult to "pass" the RCWd test when our eyes are *saturated* with a particular hue (as opposed to giving the video a quick glance) because the duration of one color bleeds over into the next, accentuating the stammer between the sets, triggering the endless vector of Deleuze and Guattari's "AND, AND, AND." It is here where the role of the gallery wall becomes increasingly important, because it acts as a necessary neutral ground between the oversaturated effects of Thater's absorptive color-vision, establishing a place where we can pause, re-set our photo-receptive rods and cones, all the better to exploit the stammer as something inherently material and physical, an intrinsic part of Helmslev's content substance and expression substance.

This is where Thater's monitor works part company with the conventional cinematic shot, for rather than acting, as Deleuze suggests, like a "noosign", "an image which goes beyond itself towards something which can only be thought",[43] they instead create, as we

noted earlier, what Tim Martin calls "becomings of becomings." Thater's inherent expression of materiality suggests that for her thought is always part of a far more extensive plane of consistency, a language that not only stammers but a stammer that itself stammers internally, thus pushing her practice far beyond Merleau-Ponty's focus on flesh as Being or Jasper Johns's concern with collapsing the relationship between map / apparatus and territory / representation. Deleuze puts it neatly when he argues that,

> […] just as the new language is not external to the initial language, the asyntactic limit is not external to language as a whole: it is *the outside* of language, but is not outside it. It is a painting or a piece of music, but a music of words, a painting with words, a silence in words, as if the words could now discharge their content: a grandiose vision or a sublime sound.[44]

We might usefully add to this list that it is also a video of words whose innate durational movement confronts the ultimate outside: pure silence or, as Deleuze dramatically (and somewhat discrepantly) puts it, "the *boom* and the *crash*."[45]

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26. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible,* trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 139 (emphasis in the original).

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41. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 33.

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BLUE RESIDUE: PAINTERLY MELANCHOLIA AND
CHROMATIC *DINGNITY* IN THE FILMS OF DAVID LYNCH

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> It may be said that blue still brings a principle of darkness with it […] and in its highest purity is, as it were, a stimulating negation.
>
> — Goethe

> Blue unfolds in its lowest depths the element of tranquility. As it deepens towards black, it assumes overtones of a superhuman sorrow.
>
> — Kandinsky

> At first there is nothing, then there is a profound nothingness, after that a blue profundity.
>
> — Yves Klein

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history of painting, color has taken on an occasionally fetishistic dimension, often regarded as either a decorative illusion, distracting from reality, or as an extravagance that allows a commonplace object to reflect something operating beyond or below the field of representation. According to Robert Finlay, because of color's "mute, unavoidable visibility" that makes it "an unruly, disruptive element", it has been categorized as either a "mere sensation" or a "perverse indulgence."[1] I would like to explore this unruly, perverse potential of color with focus on a different visual representational medium: the painterly films of David Lynch. I particularly want to focus on, what I will somewhat metaphorically refer to as, their anamorphic use of color as a means of narrative disruption and distortion. Focusing on *Blue Velvet* (1986), *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me* (1992), and *Mulholland Drive* (2001), this essay will explore the Lynchian melancholic underworld through a close analysis of his deployment of color, particularly the color blue.

On the surface, his films wear the codified appearance of Hollywood dramatic realism, but they are also covered by a noticeable residual patina of a more archaic-feeling

magical intent that often disrupts this appearance and its very classical symbolic coordinates.[2] Through an extreme close-up focus on Lynch's near fetishistic use of blue and its associated melancholic mood, I will illustrate how these three films indirectly dramatize what Julia Kristeva would call a "semiological representation" of his films' own battle with narrative collapse.[3] Because color can already be disruptive to narrative reality, Lynch's denaturalized and defamiliarized use of the color blue, I argue, visually alludes to a pre-narrative, and even pre-cinematic, object by making visible a distortion caused by the signifier "blue", managing to represent the Thing in its depraved state, and, therefore, paradoxically signifying "that which in the real […] suffers from the signifier."[4] Since Julia Kristeva argues that "any narrative already assumes that there is an identity stabilized by a completed Oedipus",[5] I will interpret Lynch's resistance to narrative closure as his own cinematic method of approximating the melancholic condition of narrative collapse. The filmmaker's eccentric, almost meta-diegetic, use of blue, I argue, highlights a resistant point within the domain of his narrative field of representation that remains detached from participation and, therefore, unsymbolized and interminably mourned.[6] Being an accomplished painter himself, Lynch fetishizes the color blue in these three features in order to demarcate his aesthetic liberation through and against the narrative norms and conventions of commercial cinema.[7] In this manner, Lynch's fetishism takes on the type of subversive role of which Henry Krips speaks by undermining the codified mode of Hollywood narration.[8] Ultimately, Lynch's strategic use of the color blue to represent the lacking lack (the over-presence of the Thing in the melancholic condition) minimizes his film's meaningful reception while simultaneously and paradoxically providing the communicable inscription of the melancholic condition—an unfinished mourning for the original lost potential of cinema that only exists as lost.[9] Before I turn, specifically, to his films, however, I would like to first consider more closely the relation between Lynch's anamorphic use of blue and melancholia.

ANAMORPHOSIS, MELANCHOLIA, AND THE CRYPTONYM

Although the correspondence between Lynch's post-classical cinema and the lingering achievements of high modernist and expressionist painting is fairly self-evident, especi-

ally given his own artistic interest in Francis Bacon, Edward Hopper, and film noir, I would like to supplement this insight by drawing a less obvious and more historically-distant correspondence. Lynch's films share a tendency toward anamorphic disruption with the perspectival experiments of Renaissance and proto-Renaissance painting, principally those revolving around the anamorphic projection that emerged during the early mastering of linear perspective in the 15th and 16th centuries. An obsessive focus on Lynch's own destabilizing and anamorphic use of color in his films can further illustrate the relationship between Lynch the filmmaker and Lynch the painter. I am not interested in the typical cinematic types of visual distortion caused by anamorphic projection or anamorphic lenses. I am also not interested in examining his films for their obvious visual distortions (Frank Booth's distorted growling face in Jeffrey Beaumont's flashback in *Blue Velvet*, Fred Madison's distorted face when morphing into Pete Dayton in *Lost Highway* (1997), simulated projector malfunction when Betty and Rita leave Diane's apartment in *Mulholland Drive*, etc.), obvious sound distortions (backwards dialect of the Red Room in *Fire Walk with Me*, Frank's roar in *Blue Velvet*, Julee Cruise's singing voice, etc.), or the obvious anamorphic Möbius-strip narrative structures of *Lost Highway* and *Inland Empire*. Rather, I want to take anamorphosis in its literal, original meaning of "to shape again", in order to demonstrate how, much like the Renaissance and proto-Renaissance painters who utilized anamorphic disruption to capture the "quintessential magic" of painting[10] and to distort the order of realistic perspective, Lynch fetishizes the color blue to an extent that in his films its presence exceeds compositional and realist motivation. Through eccentric use of the color blue, he perversely disrupts the visual field of the narrative signified, and, thereby, creates a melancholic residue that reshapes the buried exhibitionist magic of cinema that was displaced with cinema's early adoption of a dominant narrative drive.[11] Lynch's films share an affinity with Renaissance experiments in perspectival disruption because, like the Renaissance painters and unlike the Modernists, he does not completely eschew the narrative signified; he just destabilizes its overwhelming hypnotic and ideological power from within. He bends and disrupts the norms of narrative signification rather than destroying them.[12] Like an anamorphic painter, he often uses the color blue to create an excessive image-within-the-image that effectively arrests the metonymic trajectory of his narratives from within their own diegetic space.[13] While I realize that my use of anamorphosis in understanding Lynch's use of blue might strike some as imprecise, the

concept conceptually allows me to show how Lynch's unnatural use of blue draws specta-tor attention away from the film's diegetic narrative by ironically exposing the artificiality of the diegesis, much in the way that Hans Holbein's anamorphic skull exposes the artifi-ciality of the perspectively composed ambassadors in his famous painting.[14]

In his *Lives of the Artists*, Giorgio Vasari mentions the famous fly that the proto-Re-naissance Florentine painter Giotto di Bondone surreptitiously painted on the nose of a human figure depicted on his apprenticing artist's painting while the latter was briefly out of town.[15] This fly effectively altered the focus of attention away from and disrupted the field of representation that the elder painter was at pains to establish in his painting. In his essay "Fly Films", Paul Harrill, indirectly drawing on Giotto's gag, explains that even though we all know that everything in a fictional film is staged, we disabuse oursel-ves of this knowledge in order to indulge in the field of representation created by a nicely-crafted dramatic narrative. Sometimes, however, "when a fly flies in through a window, the fiction flies out the window."[16] When an object in the image asserts itself in this acci-dental manner and attempts to hijack our "treasured narrative", we, as spectators, have two options: either wait for the fiction to return or embrace the chance disruption.[17] Rather than focus on this type of chance encounter in Lynch's films, however, I'd like to look at the color blue in his films as if it is that fly that draws spectator attention away from and disrupts the coherence of the field of narrative representation. I specifically want to focus on blue because Lynch uses this color as a cryptonym for melancholia, a psycho-logical disorder that itself signifies a crisis in signification through an attachment to an unprocessed object along similar lines.

While *Eraserhead* (1976) is arguably the most melancholic film in Lynch's cinematic corpus, it was not until the introduction of color into his films that he was able to combine his enduring fixation (melancholia) with his favorite fetish (the color blue). As a visual motif, the color blue is used by Lynch to draw an affective affinity with melancholia be-cause both hover at the margins of signification. Melancholia is characterized by a with-drawal from the symbolic system that guarantees meaning and that organizes reality, and color defies symbolic significance in visual art, according to Julia Kristeva, through an avoidance of censorship.[18] I utilize the modifier "fetish" here because, as a fetish, blue makes visible, makes brilliant and sublime, that lost object around which melancholia cir-culates.[19] Because the lost object of melancholia never actually existed, or exists only as

lost, blue functions in Lynch's films more like what Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok, in their study of interminable mourning, refer to as a *cryptonym* than it does as a typical symbol or metaphor. Lynch's use of blue both conveys a cryptic meaning and emanates from the crypt that houses the melancholic who is physically still alive but already dead to this world. It, therefore, signifies not as a substitute for another object, as a symbol or metaphor would, but rather functions to demarcate an inhibition to signification itself, an antimetaphor: "the figure of the active destruction of representation."[20] It arises through an interminable mourning, and constitutes a "poetics born of the crypt" because it conveys the weight of the death drive of melancholia. A cryptonym's ultimate purpose, according to Abraham and Torok, is to fetishistically conceal and reveal the unspeakable gaping wound of melancholia.[21] As a fetish, the color blue in Lynch's films alters spectator attention away from the dominant field of representation by disrupting and inhibiting the ends of the narrative signified. Lynch simply makes visually literal the colorful allusion to the "blues" to signify an underlying bad humor in his films. From Dorothy's infamously fetishistic velvet dress in *Blue Velvet* and the enigmatic blue rose in *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* to the mystifying blue box and key in *Mulholland Drive*, he has always cryptically linked the color blue to the melancholic withdrawal from the realm of significance.

In her examination of color in the Padua and Assisi frescoes of the aforementioned 14th-century Florentine painter Giotto, Kristeva argues that color is the primary method whereby instinctual drives get translated into painting and the means whereby imagery decenters narrative convention. Giotto, she argues, utilized color to illustrate that a narrative signified (for him, Christian legend) cannot constrain the signifier. Since color escapes the censorship of signification, color provides a glimpse of "what is both extra- and anti-narrative" and provides a "process of liberation through and against the norm."[22] "It is through color", she claims, "that Western painting began to escape the constraints of narrative and perspective norm (as with Giotto) as well as representation itself (as with Cézanne, Matisse, Rothko, Mondrian)."[23] Color, in other words, "principally designates the pressure of the unconscious drive linked to (if not provoked by) objects."[24] Following the logic of her first book *Revolution in Poetic Language*, Kristeva sees color as indicating the semiotic drive within the visual field: "The chromatic apparatus, like rhythm for language, thus involves a shattering of meaning."[25] Drive, she further argues, emerges most forcefully and disturbingly in the color blue.[26] Following the studies of the Czech anatomist

and physiologist Johannes Purkinje, Kristeva concludes that since blue is perceived –only in the retina's periphery, it operates as a means to decenter the object's form, and since short wavelengths prevail in dim light, blue is the first color seen before sunrise. "Before sunrise" figures as the interval before the advent of castration and the attendant symbolic codification. Blue, as she concludes, returns "the subject to the archaic moment of its dialectic."[27] In these ways, blue indicates that which is in excess of the signified and that which is situated at the heart of melancholia: the Thing (*das Ding*). Elsewhere, Kristeva correlates *das Ding* with melancholia's drive toward symbolic collapse by referring to it as the "messenger of Thanatos."[28] Therefore, by using blue to fetishize certain objects or scenes in his films, Lynch, following Giotto, anamorphically creates a residual distortion in his image that remains excessive of the narrative signified and, thereby, skillfully bestows a certain painterly *dingnity* on his films that poetically evades any respective narrative ambition.[29] In psychoanalytic parlance, the Thing is that enigmatic pre-symbolic leftover to which the melancholic clings and which sustains the depressed state at the edge of significance.[30] Thus, through a psychoanalytic lens, I argue that Lynch's use of blue in his melancholic-toned films demarcates that moment in the field of narrative meaning that remains, much like the melancholic him or herself, detached from the field of the Other and, therefore, the field of significance and narrative meaning. Lynch's painterly use of blue anamorphically highlights that magical and unfathomable cinematic object that was lost with the codification of cinema into narrative.[31] By stripping Lynch's use of blue beyond and below its immediate narrative purpose, I am also hoping my interpretive desire to examine his films poetically—along their vertical axis instead of their narrative horizontal axis—proves fitting especially since the poetic is required to deliver the melancholic from an interminable and incomplete morning.[32]

BLUE VELVET

Lynch's 1986 masterpiece *Blue Velvet* theatrically begins (and ends) with a paratextual framing sequence providing the opening credits imposed over a swaying blue velvet curtain, encompassing the entire width of the screen. Later in the film, part of this proto-theatre curtain will twice emerge as a literal fetish object within the diegesis: first, as Dorothy's

blue robe and second, as the little piece of the robe that Frank carries throughout the film. Frank's little piece functions as a synecdoche for Dorothy's robe, and Dorothy's robe, in turn, functions as a synecdochal reminder of this larger opening paratextual image. As the film's diegetic fetish dominates the screen in this opening shot, it emphasizes the fetishistic nature of the film itself. Encompassing the entire screen furthermore highlights the nature of the fetish as a screen, a screen maintaining the illusion, as in Renaissance *trompe l'oeil*, that there is something real behind the screen. It reinforces the perverse method of disavowal of both the fetish and cinema spectatorship: "I know very well that mother does not have a penis, that the film narrative is fiction, but I will maintain the belief that she does, that the narrative is real." The fetish, the curtain that opens Lynch's film, stands for that which cannot be represented directly; it substitutes, in the words of Krips, "for that which is and must remain repressed."[33] Because this opening credit sequence lies on the paratextual plane, Lynch is able to comment on the entirety of his drama from a position that is paradoxically both from within and from without the film's diegesis, just like "a special instance of the *objet a*" that lies both within and without the desiring subject.[34] Essentially, he is saying that the content of *Blue Velvet* simultaneously disrupts narrative coherence and ironically reveals that the narrative is itself a distraction from this disruption. Like a fetish, the opening sequence functions as simultaneously a concealing and a revealing.

The fetish, as indicated above, also stands in for that which must remain repressed. Krips concludes that fetishism is a form of regression: "not a return to childish innocence, but rather a resurfacing of knowledge repressed in the transition to adulthood."[35] In this manner, the film's primary drama revolves around a return to the necessarily lost object, the object to which the melancholic clings. In the film's narrative, this is figured through a return to the pre-Oedipal scenario. Michel Chion and Slavoj Žižek have both convincingly argued how Dorothy Vallens and Frank Booth function as Jeffrey Beaumont's surrogate parents that mysteriously surface in Lumberton's underbelly once Jeffrey's real father collapses at the opening of the drama, a collapsing that effectively symbolizes the collapsing of the father function in Jeffrey's budding maturation process.[36] Interpreting the film along the avenue of what Jacques Lacan refers to as the other *jouissance*, Žižek also argues that "the enigma of women's depression" lies at the heart of the film.[37] While this argument is thoroughly convincing, Dorothy's obvious

melancholic symptoms could also be understood as a displacement of the melancholic condition that invades Jeffrey's being upon this initial loss of the *Nom-du-Père* (Name-of-the-Father). Mr. Beaumont's weakened physical state likewise weakens the No/Name-of-the-Father whose stability should have prevented Jeffrey from ever encountering the original lost object. Because this lost object is able to return, it emerges in the film's intra-psychic drama through the fantasy of the lonely, desiring mother. Once Jeffrey returns to town and discovers the severed ear, his existence, like the melancholic's, begins to split. For Jeffrey, this split plays out between a growing unreal social existence on the safe side of Lincoln Street and a real darker existence located on the other, seamy side of Lincoln. The first anamorphic element in the film that suggests the invasion of the real surfaces early in the film as Jeffrey walks over to Detective Williams's house to inquire about the investigation of the severed ear he found earlier that day. As Jeffrey is shown walking down the sidewalk, Lynch dissolves to a close-up of the dismembered ear, a shot that itself dramatically disrupts the film's diegetic narrative. The camera then enters the ear, the screen turns dark, and the soundtrack presents a non-diegetic rumbling, echoing sound, a sound Žižek appropriately claims is the echo of the Big Bang, the ultimate origin.[38] The camera remains between Jeffrey's ears until the second-to-last sequence of the film when it emerges from the other side of his head while he is lounging around in his backyard, thereby, signaling that the film's narrative is primarily focalized through Jeffrey's disintegrating psychic apparatus.[39]

Through an obsessed focus on and an interrogative reading of Lynch's use, accidental or not, of various shades of blue, the spectator can see how Lynch's fetish aligns with the perspective of his somewhat polymorphously perverted protagonist. Lynch's play with the color blue in the opening extra-diegetical credit sequence filters its way early into the diegesis. Immediately after the completion of the opening credit sequence, the film opens with a dissolve from the aforementioned blue curtain to the blue sky above the city of Lumberton, followed by a downward tilt to the idyllic flowers in front of the white picket fence. The deep-blue hue of the robe here gives way to the slightly less deep blue of the deep sky above to the lighter blue of the sky on the horizon, all in tune with Bobby Vinton's version of "Blue Velvet." The world of Lumberton, it seems, is one that tries to keep its blues lightened up. Even on the city's welcoming billboard, the painted blue sky in the background is partially covered with the ironic word "happy."

Similarly, the original establishing shot of the Lumberton police station splits the screen in half with the police station building representing the law being pushed to the right half of the screen by a vibrant blue sky, an apt visual metaphor for Jeffrey's internal psychic battle between the law of the father and the forbidden desire of the mother. To extend this metaphor, the city map on the wall inside the police station (an actual map of Wilmington, NC where the film was shot) shows the phallic peninsula of the city pinned in by blue water on both sides (the Atlantic Ocean on one side and the aptly named Cape Fear River on the other).

In these early sequences of the film, however, the use of the color blue could not be said to be yet overdetermined by the film's mood or yet more than just a coincidence. However, once blue enters the more designed aspects of the diegesis—the Pabst Blue Ribbon beer logo and the Benjamin Moore Paint logo at Beaumont's Hardware—the color begins to take on a significance perpendicular to the film's narrative. When Jeffrey takes his evening walk to the Williams's house, he passes one of those uncanny Lynchian characters walking his dog. Not only is the strange figure dressed completely in dark blue clothing, but this is the last scene before the camera enters the diegetically uncanny severed ear that inaugurates the film's intra-psychic drama. From here, blue seems to multiply in significance on the other, seamier side of Lincoln Street and specifically in the environs around Dorothy, the "Blue Lady." When Jeffrey and Sandy plot to gain access to Dorothy's apartment in the Deep River Apartment building, Jeffrey disguises himself as a bug exterminator by dressing in dark-blue coveralls. As Jeffrey and Sandy scout Dorothy's apartment building from across the street, a woman dressed in a blue shirt walks past the building in one direction, and a car with a highly noticeable bright blue license plate passes in the opposing direction. Additionally, a blue light also hangs above the entrance to the seventh floor on the fire escape stairwell, all as if to warn Jeffrey of the collapsing symbolic law within.

Even though Jeffrey's father's collapse signifies the collapsing symbolic realm, the lifting of repression, and the emergence of the film's melancholic mood, melancholia's crypt surfaces most measurably in the heart of the Deep River Apartments. Dorothy's apartment, the setting of the most perverted Oedipal scenes within the film, is suitably the only set used that was constructed expressly for the film. Every other set used in the film is a found location. The interior of Dorothy's apartment, however, was constructed off site at the DEG studios in Wilmington (now EUE Screen Gems). Everything about

this set is, therefore, staged, including the voyeuristic primal scene when Jeffrey hides in the closet. Recognition of Dorothy's apartment as the heart of Lumberton's hidden melancholic underbelly explains the choice of the organ-colored faux finish on the walls and the darkened wood furniture and doors scattered throughout the apartment. Humeral theory allegorically suggests that the scenes in Dorothy's apartment take place inside a spleen, the physiological organ that houses the black bile whose excess results in a melancholic condition in the first place. But Dorothy's apartment also functions as the navel of Jeffrey's intrapsychic narration, amounting to what Abraham and Torok refer to as "a sealed-off psychic place, a crypt in the ego […], a mechanism whereby the assimilation of both the illegitimate idyll and its loss are precluded."[40] Following the logic of the endocryptic identification that befalls a melancholic, Jeffrey incorporates the lost object and indulges in what Abraham and Torok call a crypto-fantasy: "The mechanism consists of exchanging one's own identity for a fantasmic identification with the 'life'—beyond the grave—of an object of love, lost as a result of some metapsychological traumatism."[41] This is the impossible place where Jeffrey encounters and indulges his surrogate mother's excessive incestuous desire (his idyll) and stumbles upon his weakened, impotent father, a surrogate father whose weakness is betrayed by his sheer outlandish, hyperbolic, and comically-excessive show of full potency (which should instill loss). When the bile of Dorothy's habitat is initially unleashed by the paternal collapse, a melancholic hue exceeds this highly artificial crypt and paints a noticeable patina onto the rest of the diegesis. The film's concluding image provides one last glimpse at the film's narrative excess. Sitting on a park bench and hugging her rescued child, Dorothy's reasonable grin slowly and incongruously transforms into an ambivalent melancholic frown as the camera tilts back up to the opening blue sky and reverses its original dissolve onto the bookending blue velvet curtain, all the while accompanied by Isabella Rossellini's much more melancholic rendering of "Blue Velvet." The lost object even invades and disrupts the narrative's conventional happy ending. In *Blue Velvet*, Lynch's use of blue often still functions rather diegetically and, therefore, does not throw the film's narrative too far off track. However, Lynch's similar use of blue as a cryptonym possesses an even stronger anti-narrative dimension in his 1992 prequel *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me*.

FIRE WALK WITH ME

With his *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me*, Lynch creates a cinematic prequel, similarly loosening the normal constraints against the expelled and repressed melancholic excesses. This time the repressed aspects of Laura Palmer's narrative that were censored and excluded from network television are directly staged. Ask every fan of the original ABC television program *Twin Peaks* (1990-1991), and they will tell you how nonsensical Lynch's 1992 cinematic prequel is. Its senselessness stems from the film's withdrawal of the television serial's object investments. Since the film's storyline takes place chronologically prior to the television show's mystery, and since the spectator of the film already knows about the inevitable loss of Laura Palmer, the film melancholically anticipates the loss around which the entire television show revolves. It actually presents the very object on which the television show relied on as lost in order to maintain the show's semblance of a dramatic narrative. *Fire Walk with Me*, therefore, stems from an unfinished mourning process. The entirety of the *Twin Peaks* universe could be understood through the guise of melancholia, a condition where the absent object is rendered obliquely present as the Thing. The fiasco of a funeral that is held for Laura Palmer in Episode 3 "Rest in Pain" from the original *Twin Peaks* testifies to the failure of the mourning ritual and the town's concomitant inability to re-suture the gap in the socio-symbolic, diegetic space originally opened by the violation of the incest prohibition. Laura's death is never adequately signified since her murder is too prematurely solved and, consequently, never adequately mourned by the original television show. Likewise, *Fire Walk*'s narrative distortion and dismantling of *Twin Peaks* could be understood as stemming from the premature solving of Laura's murder in the original television program since the original show abandoned her memory too quickly in the second half of the second season. Since melancholia is premised "on the absence of an object that is symptomatically felt as present",[42] *Fire Walk* lifts the lid on repression by returning to the lost object on which the melancholic circulates: Laura Palmer.

The distortion of the *Twin Peaks* narrative diegesis begins with the first shot of *Fire Walk with Me*. The film's opening paratextual credit sequence, just like in *Blue Velvet*, is displayed over a completely blue screen accompanied by a bluesy melancholic score. As the camera imperceptibly tracks back, the blue movie screen is eventually revealed to be anamorphotic static emanating from a television screen. The transfer of the Twin Peaks

universe from the small screen of television to the big screen is completed as the television gets violently demolished by a sledge hammer in this opening scene. Lynch indicates immediately that *Fire Walk* destroys the telenovela police procedural format of *Twin Peaks* with this close-up image of a television set being violently destroyed. This opening image blends the diegetic crime scene where Leland Palmer kills his first victim Teresa Banks and Lynch's own metaphorical extra-diegetic critique of the limitations of *Twin Peaks* the television show. Because the television show is figuratively put to rest by this opening shot, the prequel film refuses to commit the television show's crime of repression, namely, the burial of Laura Palmer. The initial distortion of the extreme close-up shot of the blue television static in this opening scene also indicates that in the battle between coherent narrative and the narrative disruption caused by a melancholic mood, the film will side with the latter's attempt to lift the screen of repression. This initial distorted image is produced by a too proximate relation to the object, just as getting too close to the lost object of *Twin Peaks*—Laura Palmer—understandably provides viewers of *Fire Walk* with a distorted narrative, often too dissonant to cognitively digest. Since the film actually begins with an anamorphic image, it signals that the film's narrative runs secondary to its melancholic mood. Most of the elements in Lynch's prequel, therefore, would seem to be propelled by mood, instead of by the usual motivating factors like compositional unity, realism, artistry, or transtextual reference. David Bordwell calls film narratives governed by this rare type of motivation "parametric" narratives. In a parametric narrative, "the film's stylistic system creates patterns distinct from the demands of the syuzhet system."[43] In these films, stylistics, including mood and sound, usually plays a stronger role in the film than narration, thereby, partially liberating the film from codified narrative form. Everyone knows that a static-filled television screen does not really appear blue. However, this opening shot from *Fire Walk* appears blue only because of the anamorphic distortion caused by the camera's over-proximate position to its object. The blue signifies the residual, incomplete mourning emanating from the television show, an incomplete mourning that haunts and disturbs the prequel's narration. Here, Lynch makes the decision to introduce thematically the equivalence between the color blue and object anamorphosis. This opening image, therefore, demarcates the fetish in the sense that the film will refuse to follow up on the spectator's desire for more *Twin Peaks* and, instead, will take a dive into the murky waters

of melancholia where desire ceases to function. In *Fire Walk*, the impediment to narrative desire is thus dramatized.

In a certain sense, the entirety of *Fire Walk*'s diegesis takes place between two deaths, in the Lacanian sense of the phrase.[44] Just like the melancholic who is biologically alive but dead to this world, Laura Palmer is alive in the diegesis of the film, but, because of the film's unique position as a prequel, she is already dead. Every spectator watching the film knows this, and this fact lends to the film's melancholic and enigmatic tone. This fact also prevents Lynch from including any of the up-lifting whimsy that was so prevalent and widely appealing in the television serial. The only scene in the film that shows a modicum of levity is also one of the more enigmatic scenes: Lil's senseless pantomime sequence in front of Agents Cole, Desmond, and Stanley on the airport tarmac. Lil delivers a coded message through her actions, dress, and positioning. All of her seemingly enigmatic codes are subsequently decoded by Agents Desmond and Stanley in the following scene except the meaning behind the unnatural blue rose Lil wears on her lapel. During their interpretative discussion in the car, Lynch cuts to a slow-motion close up of the blue rose. Here, as with the edit to the disembodied ear in *Blue Velvet*, a marginal piece of the previous scene's imagery centrally dominates the complete field of vision, eventually spreading its contagion across the entire enigmatic diegesis itself. Without meaning, the blue rose functions as a cryptonym. Rather than whimsically embodying some substitute or displaced meaning, as the rest of Lil's bizarre gestures and clothing do, it entombs meaning as it de-signifies through its refusal to participate in the signifying system as such. The normal routes and cues of cinematic narrative communication are, at least, partially suspended throughout the film. This is prefigured in Lil's own inability to communicate directly and in the reversed linguistic utterances used by the Man from Another Place in the Red Room. Much like the melancholic who spurns the Other—the symbolic realm where meaning is conveyed and received—the blue rose emanates from a wound or a loss that cannot be signified. Lynch, therefore, leaves the blue rose enigmatic and as a signifier of the enigmatic itself, as he does most of the film's use of blue.[45]

The use of blue throughout the film seems less accidental and, ironically, more significant under these circumstances. The blue background of Laura Palmer's Homecoming photo and the blue ink she uses in her diary seem less realistically motivated than stylistically illustrating what is behind her often nonsensical behavior. The inexplicable "T"

Agent Stanley finds under the fingernail of Teresa Banks's corpse is also in blue font type face. The blinking on-and-off blue light at Hap's Diner in the Deer Meadow portion of the narrative replicates the type of electronic short-circuiting the filmmaker often uses stylistically to indicate a breakdown in communicative meaning, which, in this case, results from the lifting of repression that itself is a consequence of the violation of the incest prohibition positioned at the center of the drama. This is not to suggest that the blinking on and off blue light symbolizes incest, but, rather, to suggest that it results from the breakdown in significance inaugurated by the violation of the incest taboo. If it symbolizes anything, then it symbolizes the failure of symbolization itself. Further, Laura's father, the cause of her melancholic condition, drives a blue car and BOB, the personified violation of the incest prohibition, creeps into Laura's artificially blue-light-drenched bedroom at night completely decked in a blue denim outfit. At the Roadhouse, Julee Cruise performs one of her melancholic songs, "Questions in a World of Blue", echoing the lines, "How can a heart so filled with love start to cry […] how can love die." Later in the club in Canada, Lynch's own song "Blue Frank" reverberates to a blue strobe light so loud in the foreground that it anamorphically distorts natural communication to the point that character dialog in the scene must be subtitled. Often, an otherworldly, extra-diegetic blue spot light randomly rains on top of Laura, painting her existence in a melancholic crypt. By the very end of the film, in the Red Room after Laura's murder, Laura is shown seated next to a table with a small blue-lit lamp in the shape of the planet Saturn. Because Saturn has long been recognized for its metonymic affiliation with melancholia, the Red Room's little Saturn lamp is overdetermined by the film's melancholic use of blue throughout the film.[46] Taken together, these blue elements disrupt the film's narrative coherence and emphasize a non-signified excess haunting the film from within, an excess that approximates the proximity of the Thing for the melancholic.

MULHOLLAND DRIVE

Like *Blue Velvet*, *Mulholland Drive* is also primarily driven by an intrapsychic mode of narration; only, in this film, the diegesis is clearly oneiric in nature. The first roughly three-quarters of the film dramatizes Diane Selwyn's wish-fulfilling escape from the brutal and

melancholic world that emerges in the latter part of the film after she wakes from her made-for-Hollywood dream state. The majority of the dream portion of the film's narration stages enough of the condensations and displacements that characterize the dream-work's distortion of Diane's waking residue to please even the most dogmatic Freudian. For instance, Diane's desire for a successful Hollywood acting career gets condensed in the dream portion of the film's narrative into Betty's remarkable studio audition, her unrequited lover's identity conveniently gets displaced onto a two-bit mob-backed actress, and even Diane's dreaming self gets displaced onto a customer at Winkie's who recalls a horrible nightmare to his dining companion. Characters like Coco (the manager of the Havenhurst Apartments), Joe (the inept criminal), and the Cowboy are all disguised enough in the dream sequence of the film by Diane's internal censor to avoid revealing the role they play in her waking life.[47]

Since Freud thought that one purpose of dreaming was to fulfill a wish (the other, of course, was to continue sleep), he thought of it as a childish act that temporally satisfies the pleasure principle. Lacan, on the other hand, according to Ellie Ragland, saw a dream wish as indicating an elemental absence. As Ragland puts it: "Lacan hypothesized that sleep was a way to prolong a dream, not in order to maintain a state of pleasure, but to hold on to a state between consciousness and unconsciousness where one can defer a displeasure to be encountered in waking life."[48] As with Diane's dream in *Mulholland Drive*, the dreamer "denies the reality of a future displeasure by disguising the something lacking."[49] Diane's wish-fulfilling dream functions in Lynch's film as a form of repression, a means of representation that strives for unity. Lynch, therefore, uses this first part of the film, the dream-work, as itself a metonymy for the typical productions of the Hollywood dream factory. His film's title, *Mulholland Drive*, not only references Lynch's own favorite classical film *Sunset Boulevard*, but the latter Los Angeles street figures as the dividing line between those whose Hollywood dreams come true and those whose do not. The Hollywood in-crowd lives north of Sunset, up on prestigious Mulholland Drive, while those who come to Los Angeles seeking their dream, only to fail, end up waiting tables at Winkie's south of Sunset. Diane's dream as the more Hollywood part of the film, therefore, strives for a unity and narrative coherence that is itself based on a repressed melancholic object, one that emerges from rejection and failure.

However, even though much of the film's latent meaning can be made manifest by unraveling the distortions of the dream-work through interpretation, Lynch still manages to use the color blue to highlight those portions of the narrative that, like the naval of the dream that Freud encountered in the dream of Irma's injection, remain not just resistant to interpretation but actively draw attention away from any narrative signified and unity that the dream-work seems at such pains to establish and maintain.[50] He uses blue to indicate those portions of the film and the dream narrative that emerge at the limits of narrative signification. As Ragland claims, when something cannot be fully represented, "repression momentarily lapses."[51] Blue highlights that part of the image, that moment of the narrative "that stands in for the lack in the image and breaks up all illusions of unity, a linearity of narrative, or a well-made up subjectivity of perception."[52] It is the means by which Lynch inscribes into the narrative those instinctual drive residues that have not been symbolized. These are the elements that prevent his film from succumbing fully to the Hollywood narrative norm.

Although there exist many mysteries in the first section of the film (Who is Rita? Where did she get all of the money in her handbag? Why was she targeted on Mulholland Drive? Who is Diane Selwyn? etc.), the mystery surrounding the enigmatic blue key discovered in Rita's handbag remains the film's naval, an unplumbable mystery. It is not the key to the mystery except in the sense that it is the film's cryptonym, a signifier that points to the film's inability to fully communicate and to be fully interpreted. Even though Betty finds the blue box (the lost object) in her purse to which the key fits, the content of the box, upon Rita's opening of it, appears empty. The blue key (and its blue box) signify the emptiness around which Betty/Diane's entire puzzling narrative revolves. Narratives in general attempt to cover the fundamental loss that lies at the heart of the signifying system, but Lynch's melancholic narrative highlights this loss by leaving a blue patina on numerous sequences and scenes throughout the film. The Mulholland Drive and Sunset Boulevard street signs are not only shown in the customary blue color of Los Angeles street signs, but Lynch always shows them shining through an added blue spot light, painting them with added *dingnity*. Even the utopic palm trees of Los Angeles are bathed in blue light as Rita runs down the street at night early in the film, highlighting the troubled side of the Hollywood dream. Betty's aunt's apartment is conspicuously bereft of

blue, except for the appropriate blue suitcases Betty brings from Deep River, Ontario, a city name that is itself a residue from *Blue Velvet*.

Lynch's use of blue to signify melancholia's extra-narrative presence and to lend a sense of *dingnity* to a scene is nowhere more evident than in the late night visit Betty and Rita make to Club *Silencio*. Lynch reserves his signature in-an-out-of-focus handheld camera for shooting the taxi trek to the downtown back-alley club. Along with the rain-soaked windshield of the taxi, the anamorphic distortion of the image indicates a trek to the outskirts of the realm of the Other. The club scene represents the section of the dream sequence that is most incoherent with regards to the rest of the narrative leading up to this point. It is the place where the dream comes closest to the lost object. From the outside, the club name appears above the front door in a neon blue light as full blue light emanates from within the club itself. Figuratively, the lost object of melancholia, personified through the fast-tracking forward camera dolly, quickly follows Betty and Rita into the club. The club itself is set up as the crypt of melancholia. Not only does Rebekah Del Rio perform a very melancholic Spanish version of "Crying" on the club's stage, but the club is overcome by stormy blue lightening as Betty is overcome with convulsions. All the while a mystifying *Ancien Régime* character billed as the "Blue-Haired Lady" observes from the balcony. Because this mystifying character does not fit comfortably into the narrative signified, she personifies the color blue's narrative excess. Also, the Magician's opening performance meta-textually indicates how the entire film's narrative is all an illusion, an illusion that is failing at repressing melancholic loss, a failure that derails and disrupts the desired narrative. The "*Silencio*" that the Blue-Haired Lady whispers at the conclusion of the film obliquely references that Thing in the film that exceeds the narrative signified and can only be *dingnified* by the color blue.

CONCLUSION

Focusing obsessively on David Lynch's strategic deployment of blue in his films illustrates his instinctual painterly technique while simultaneously showcasing the anti-narrative pulse flowing under in his otherwise conventional-looking films. Ultimately, Lynch's use of blue in his films less signifies any specific or general meaning than it lends significance to non-meaning by visually rendering a caesura in narrative coherence. It is the most noticea-

ble way his films cathect their narrative with drive, with that which usually remains de-cathected in a film with a unified narrative structure. As with Roland Barthes's third or ob-tuse meaning, blue, for Lynch, serves no purely narrative function. It "cannot be conflated with the simple existence of the scene, it exceeds the copy of the referential motif."[53] It also compels, Barthes would conclude, the type of interrogative reading outlined here. Once Lynch entitles his first truly Lynchian color film *Blue Velvet*, every blue element in his films (costume, décor, lighting, soundtrack lyrics, dialog, etc.) is colored with a brilliant residue and made to stand out in excess of the film's unified narrative structure, lending these ele-ments a certain *dingnity*. Blue functions as a partially extra-diegetic element that, like the shot of the disembodied ear, the cut away to the blue rose, or the Blue-Haired Lady's "*Silen-cio*", disturbs the film's unifying structure from within. Although Kristin Thompson argues that "no one ever watches *only* these nondiegetic aspects of the image", paying obsessive attention to them bestows on them the same effect as Giotto's fly: disruption of the narrative structure through the introduction of sensory excess.[54] In this way, Lynch manages to inject his repressed painterly spirit into narrative cinema and provide an anamprohic glimpse of what was visually lost to cinema by the narrative take-over of the Hollywood dream factory.

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1. Robert Finlay, "Weaving the Rainbow: Visions of Color in World History", *Journal of World History* 18, no. 4 (2007): 401, 403.

2. While many viewers might see Lynch's cinematic narratives as the opposite of Hollywood cinema, his films are, according to Miklós Kiss and Steven Willensen, actually quite indebted to the "cognitive and habitual-ized dispositions" created by classical film narration. *Impossible Puzzle Films: A Cognitive Approach to Contemporary Complex Cinema* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 181. Lynch's narratives are definitely complex and even curve the classical narrative space, but they never truly break it. To use a Freudian term, Lynch's films display an ambivalence toward the classical Hollywood narrative style. Even the complex and confusing narra-tives of *Lost Highway* and *Mulholland Drive* can be naturalized through an interpretive awareness of distorted subjective focalization. (*Inland Empire* might be an exception.) This is not to conclude that his films cannot be understood as a critique of the Hollywood norms. They just make their critique from within and at the margins, often directly pitting the norm against its own limitations in each film. This is also not to reduce a film as com-plex and as artistic as *Mulholland Drive* to the same base level as Ron Howard's highly commercial 2001 film *A Beautiful Mind*, but it is to point out that both films garnered a "Best Direction" nomination by the 2002 Academy. See also Matthew Campora, *Subjective Realist Cinema: From Expressionism to* Inception (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014), 62, 75. I also realize that my claim about Lynch's film's apparent debt to classical narration is, at least, partially the product of an interpretive maneuver that, borrowing the words of Warren Buckland, reduces "dissonance by trying to fit" Lynch's films "into a classical narrative schema in order to render them more intel-ligible." "Ambiguity, Ontological Pluralism, and Cognitive Dissonance in the Hollywood Puzzle Film", in *Hol-lywood Puzzle Films*, ed. Warren Buckland (New York: Routledge, 2014), 13. I would also like to add that, within William Earle's typology, Lynch's films utilize the ingredients of all three types of films that revolt against the dominant dramatic realism of commercial cinema: the sensory, the ironic, and the surrealist, borrowing mostly from the latter since Lynch in most interested in exposing the uncanny latency within the recognizable. "Revolt Against Realism in the Films", in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, 3rd Ed, ed. Gerald Mast and Marshall Cohen (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 31-41.

3. Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, trans. Leon Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 24.

4. Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959-1960*, trans. Dennis Porter (New York: Norton, 1992), 118.

5. Kristeva, *Black Sun*, 161.

6. For more on melancholia's relation to the "unprocessed" and the "unsymbolized", see Charles Shepardson, *Lacan and the Limits of Language* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 81-100.

7. Just as Sigmund Freud claimed that the fetish "made its appearance in analysis as a subsidiary finding", Lynch's use of blue in his films is subsidiary to the dominance of the narratives. He only obliquely calls attention to its significance. "Fetishism", in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. XXI, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1964), 152, 153.

8. Henry Krips, *Fetish: An Erotics of Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 4. Constance Penley similarly argues, "The fetishist attempts to substitute the rules of his own desire for the culturally predominant ones." "The Avant-Garde and Its Imaginary", in *Movies and Methods: An Anthology*, Vol. II, ed. Bill Nichols (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 596.

9. While most films canonized under the rubric of Hollywood's new complex cinema promote narrative structures that have adapted to the progressive possibilities of the new media and its digital technology as well as to the newer discourses ranging from chaos / complex theory, game theory, and systems theory to fractal geometry and, even, nonequilibrium thermodynamics, Lynch's dissonant narratives seem to originate from a regressive, rather than progressive, pulsion. The dissonant nature of the narrative structures of many of Lynch's films stems more from their fixation on a lost pre-narrativized object and less from a post-modern or post-classical experimentation with the out-dated structure of classical narration. For a sample understanding of contemporary complex cinema's relation to the technologies of the new media (CGI, digitization), their concomitant thematic (virtual reality, parallel universes, interactivity) and the discourses of cybernetics and mathematics, see Marsha Kinder, "Hot Spots, Avatars, and Narrative Fields Forever: Bunuel's Legacy for New Digital Media and Interactive Database Narrative", *Film Quarterly* 55, no. 4 (2002): 2-15, Wendy Everett, "Fractal Films and the Architecture of Complexity", *Studies in European Cinema* 2, no. 3 (2005): 159-171, Garrett Stewart, *Framed Time: Toward a Postfilmic Cinema* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), Allan Cameron, *Modular Narratives in Contemporary Cinema* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), and Maria Poulaki, "Puzzled Hollywood and the Return of Complex Films", in *Hollywood Puzzle Films*, ed. Warren Buckland (New York: Routledge , 2014), 35-53.

10. Jurgis Baltrušaitis, *Anamorphic Art* (Cambridge, MA: Chadwych Healey, 1977) quoted in Sheldon Richmond, "*Anamorphic Art* [Review]", *Leonardo* 13, no. 1 (1980): 75.

11. According to Tom Gunning, the exhibitionist and presentational tendency of early cinema was largely eliminated in the early years of the industry through its adoption of the voyeuristic and representational nature of transparent narrative. "The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator, and the Avant-Garde", in *Critical Visions in Film Theory: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, ed. Timothy Corrigan and Patricia White (Boston: Bedford / St. Martin's, 2011), 70-76. Since melancholia is characterized by a return to an unfinished mourning and to an inability to makes sense within given symbolic coordinates, Lynch creates a painterly and poetic vision of melancholia in order to highlight his films' desire to return to something that has been lost to cinema, figured in his film's inability to make coherent sense within the given coordinates of narrative comprehension. To paraphrase Freud, Lynch's films display a certain amount of regression through identification with this abandoned object; thus, the shadow of the object falls upon his films' visual field. "Mourning and Melancholia", *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. XIV, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1957), 249.

12. For a distinction between the more modernist distancing effects of Jean-Luc Godard's films and Lynch's unique brand of excessive normality, see Todd McGowan, *The Impossible David Lynch* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 5-20.

13. Drawing attention to certain diegetic objects through an emphasis on their unnatural blueness, Lynch anamorphically draws attention away from his films' central narratives. My use of anamorphosis here is anamorphically derived from Jacques Lacan's examination of anamorphosis and its distortion of the given visual field in Hans Holbein's 1533 painting *The Ambassadors*. In his analysis, Holbein's anamorphic skull skulking at the bottom of the painting cannot be recognized without a temporary eliding of the ambassadors' narrative, which constitutes the ostensible signified of the painting. *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1977), 85-89. Holbein's specific use of anamorphosis is rooted in anamorphing only a part of the overall image much like contemporary complex puzzle films' use of camouflaged elements that, once exposed, flip their narratives by revealing, what Edward Branigan claims, is hidden or latent within "conventional configurations." "Butterfly Effects Upon a Spectator", in *Hollywood Puzzle Films*, ed. Warren Buckland (New York: Routledge, 2014), 234.

14. Jay David Grusin and Richard Bolter have equated Renaissance linear perspective to Hollywood dramatic realism as both are devoted to immediacy and transparency in their representation of reality. *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), 24. In this manner, Lynch's use of blue aligns itself with Holbein's skull: both tend to disrupt, distort, and send the death knell to any lasting designs of immediacy and transparency in their ostensible narratives. Blue functions as Lynch's morphed artistic signature, his trademark, just as Holbein's signature is captured in the anamorhed skull: Holbein literally means "hollow bone."

15. Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, trans. Julia Conaway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1991), 35.

16. Paul Harrill, "Fly Films", *Blimp* 38 (1998), 20-2, quoted in Krips, *Fetish*, 97.

17. Ibid.

18. In her study of Giotto's frescoes, Julia Kristeva aligns color with the primary processes as a mode of thing-presentation that only enters the realm of meaningful representation when hypercathected to the secondary process of word-presentation. This Freudian split between perception and thought process illustrates how color "escapes censorship" and how "the unconscious irrupts" into "culturally coded pictorial distribution." She adds, "contrary to delineated form and space, as well as to drawing and composition subjected to the strict codes of representation and verisimilitude, color enjoys considerable freedom." *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, trans. Leon Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 220.

19. Freud maintains that the fetish substitutes for that which does not or no longer exists. It replaces lack with some idiosyncratically associated object. It simultaneously disavowals and affirms castration. "Fetishism", 156. In this way, when the color blue is attached to a diegetic object in Lynch's melancholic films, it simultaneously disavowals and affirms a lack of coherence in the diegetic narrative of which it is a part.

20. Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel*, trans. Nicholas T. Rand (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 132.

21. Abraham and Torok, *Shell and Kernel*, 142.

22. Kristeva, *Desire in Language*, 214, 215.

23. Ibid., 221. The distinction that Kristeva makes here between Giotto's break with narrative norms and Matisse and Rothko's more drastic modernist break with representation itself illustrates well why Lynch's cinema shares a stronger affinity with the former painter.

24. Ibid., 217.

25. Ibid., 221.

26. Allister Mactaggart also references Kristeva's essay on Giotto in his enlightening study of Lynch, only he doesn't pursue or even mention the importance of the color blue in Lynch's films. *The Film Paintings of David Lynch: Challenging Film Theory* (Bristol: Intellect, 2010), 28, 38.

27. Kristeva, *Desire in Language*, 225.

28. Kristeva, *Black Sun*, 20.

29. The neologism *dingnity* comes from Paul-Laurent Assoun through Viviana M. Saint-Cyr, "Creating a Void or Sublimation in Lacan", *Research in Psychoanalysis* 13 (June 2012): 14-21.

30. According to Lacan, the Thing demarcates the primordial lost object, only existing as lost: "It is in its nature that the object as such is lost." He also claims, "*Das Ding* is that which I will call the beyond-of-the-signified." *Seminar VII*, 52, 54.

31. The numerous relatively subtle references to *The Wizard of Oz* that are littered throughout *Blue Velvet*, for instance, allude to some lost magical cinematic object. I am not trying to argue that as a filmmaker Lynch is attempting to return to some type of early film technology or the look of silent cinema or something similar. His ambivalent praise of the modern digitization of filmmaking is well documented. I am suggesting that his narrative films are peppered with elements that arrest their narrative coherence in such a way that a poetic alternative to narrative can be glimpsed. In this manner, his films leave a trace of what could have been, what was lost when cinema was co-opted by storytelling. Lynch's "shaping again" of the magical potential of cinema is something closer to what Dietrich Scheunemann sees as early Expressionist cinema's "presentation of the invisible, the uncanny and the eerie." "Activating the Differences: Expressionist Film and Early Weimar Cinema", in *Expressionist Film: New Perspectives*, ed. Dietrich Scheunemann (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2003), 13. For Lynch's use of early film technology, see his 1995 short *Premonition Following an Evil Deed* in the anthology film *Lumière and Company*.

32. Elizabeth Wright, *Speaking Desires Can Be Dangerous: The Poetics of the Unconscious* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1999), 40.

33. Krips, *Fetish*, 7.

34. Ibid., 9.

35. Ibid., 23.

36. Michel Chion, *David Lynch*, trans. Robert Julian (London: British Film Institute, 1995), 91-93 and Slavoj Žižek, *The Metastasis of Enjoyment: Six Essays on Woman and Causality* (London: Verso, 1994), 113-136.

37. Žižek, *Metastasis*, 119.

38. Ibid., 115.

39. For the connection between a waning Oedipus and the waning of narrative, see Juliet Flower Mac-Cannell, "Oedipus Wrecks: Lacan, Stendhal and the Narrative Form of the Real", *MLN* 98, no. 5 (1983): 910-940.

40. Abraham and Torok, *Shell and Kernel*, 141. Even though Dorothy's apartment is on the seventh floor of the Deep River Apartment building, the building actually only has six floors, essentially indicating that her apartment is not really located within normal symbolic parameters.

41. Ibid., 142.

42. Sanjan Bahun, *Modernism and Melancholia: Writing as Countermourning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 55.

43. David Bordwell, *Narration in Fiction Film* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 275. "Syuzhet" is the Russian Formalist term for narrative plot.

44. Lacan, *Seminar VII*, 319-324.

45. In Lynch's 2017 *Twin Peaks: The Return*, the Blue Rose is revealed as designating a special FBI investigative unit tasked with interrogating special enigmatic cases. This revelation metatextually demarcates Lynch's films themselves as Blue Rose cases.

46. For Saturn's symbolic association with melancholia, see Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky, and Fritz Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy: Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion, and Art* (London: Nelson & Sons, 1964).

47. For a more detailed account of condensation and displacement in *Mulholland Drive*, see Jay R. Lentzner and Donald R. Ross, "The Dream That Blisters Sleep: Latent Content and Cinematic Form in *Mulholland Drive*", *American Imago* 62, no. 1 (2005): 101-123.

48. Ellie Ragland, "Lacan, the Death Drive, and the Dream of the Burning Child", in *Death and Representation*, ed. Sarah Webster Goodwin and Elizabeth Bronfen (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 91.

49. Ibid.

50. Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Avon Books, 1965), 143, 564.

51. Ragland, "Lacan", 93.

52. Ibid.

53. Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), 53.

54. Kristin Thompson, "The Concept of Cinematic Excess", in *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader*, ed. Philip Rosen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 33.

INTERVIEWS | ENTREVISTAS

INTERVIEW WITH JONATHAN BELLER

THE DERIVATIVE IMAGE: HISTORICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE COMPUTATIONAL MODE OF PRODUCTION

by Susana Nascimento Duarte (School of Arts and Design, Caldas da Rainha/IFILNOVA)

In your book Acquiring Eyes, *you connect a new era of abstraction—the becoming abstract of the world, when the visual has become the new arena of operations for media capital—to visual modernism/visual art in Philippines, in the assumption that the latter can help to reveal the former; and the same would work for cinema, both in Philippines and globally, in that it could be understood as a medium of abstraction—"indexing the becoming-abstract of the world as the becoming-abstract of the visual." Can you elaborate on this? Why turn to Filipino artists in particular "for guidance and inspiration in the contestation of global capital"? Why are they more apt to constitute ruptures in what you consider to be the plenitude of the visual achieved by the cultural program of the world-media system?*

Colonialism, Racism, Imperialism. The twentieth century did not just mean a new order of geographical and economic colonization that was called Imperialism, it also meant the colonization of the visible world and more broadly of the senses and the mind. That much is already contained in the notion of *Weltanschauung* ("ideology" or "worldview"). Without imperialism, the world financial system necessary to 20th century capital accumulation would have collapsed, and without the cultivation of racism and white supremacy, an emerging geopolitical communications system might have created forms of solidarity and community that would render the violence at once necessary to capital accumulation and to the reduction of "the other" inadmissible. It is clear from the work of Simmel and Bloch, that the beginnings of a colonization of the visual and sensual world was well underway early in the century. This colonization was spear-headed by the appearance of industrial objects and a built environment reformatted by the exigencies of capital expansion that included—along with the requiring a global labor force capable of working for monopoly capitalism and of servicing sovereign debt—both a rising consumerism and a remaking of colonial lives and landscapes. All the new commodities and spaces were at once available to those enfranchised by capital but their appeal and indeed

their utility depended upon the disappearance of the worker and the other. But even beyond that we must recognize that colonialism, racism and imperialism were and are already forms of abstraction—a transformation of the perception of, in the first instance, the colonizer, the racist and the imperialist, such that they perceive the external world and therefore "the other" through a framework of abstraction. The reduction of colonial laborer to a garment is a practice of abstraction. With cinema we get the full-scale industrialization of the visual that develops this framework of abstraction and makes it ever more expressive. This development of visual technologies capable of inscribing convenient fantasies on the body of the other also leads to advertising and to a new order of psycho-dynamics in both marketing and the market. These new dynamics exceeded and continue to exceed the capacity of ordinary linguistic analysis. It is problems resulting from this short-circuiting of linguistic capacity, this direct encroachment on language, on critique and on the discursive ability to produce freedom that really interested me. The Philippines is at once a case in point and a space of insurrectionary becoming. The failure of a nationalist discourse following World War II, and a renewed U.S. presence after nearly 50 years of decolonial struggle in the Philippines coincided with the rise of abstract art. The easy interpretation was that Filipinos were just following an emergent international style. I think that assertion is fundamentally as patronizing as incorrect, but even if it were correct, we should ask, why the proliferation of abstract art around the world? To what experiences was it addressed? In reality, there were at least two directions, one formalist and invested in both the history of Art and the cultural legitimacy that Art History purchased, and another direction that addressed the historical foreclosure of nationalist struggle and the actual curtailment of an ability to constitute a liberated subject in and through language. The first strain was expressed and consolidated in the Marcos driven Cultural Center of the Philippines, along with its effort to create international legitimacy for the Marcos crackdown by culture-washing—this strain later gave rise to a formalist art-for-art's-sake trend in the late 80s (Chabet). The other chord was a revolutionary one, albeit unrealized. But as I wrote in *Acquiring Eyes*, what could not be granted discursively found a visual analogue—the radical pleasure and invention of co-creation unfettered by the ideological constraints of colonialism, imperialism, white supremacy and dictatorship. The visual was becoming abstract, but the logistics of abstraction were not immediately ceded to capital. This anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist chord later found its resonance in social(ist) realism in both painting and cinema.

You claim, again in Acquiring Eyes, *that "the twentieth-century emergence of the visual can be grasped in two moments that are dialectically separable—first as a realm of freedom and, second, subsequently as an arena of expropriation." According to you, this movement in the visual is one of the most significant areas of the unthought of political economy and geopolitics. It is this shift that you try to make sensible, and this unconscious that you try to make perceptible, in the abstract work of the Filipino painter H. R. Ocampo, and also in the Philippine cinema. How and why are they paradigmatic of this shift?*

H.R. wrote a serial novel called *Scenes and Spaces*, that told of a Filipino student who fell in love with his American English teacher but could not persuasively court her because he was consigned to the status of a racialized, colonial subject— not a man. This character's only solace was a series of abstract visual hallucinations that at times rose right up out of the street and interrupted the realism of the narrative. Later, when H.R. shifted from writing to painting after the War, those same descriptive passages became a series of canvases that together constituted exhibit A of Philippine modernism. One characteristic of these extraordinary works of visual abstraction is a spatial dislocation for the spectator produced by biomorphic forms that did not clearly indicate figure and ground and thus introduced a kind of intense play where viewing meant figuring the combinations to try and compose spatial conformations that made sense, or, an image. Multiple forces playing over the visual field opened it up as a space of participation and play—seeing was not a simple matter and visual object were not givens. This practice, where painter and viewer worked together to co-configure possible worlds I understood as a practice of freedom (that's what I felt at an inchoate, aesthetic level when I first looked at the canvases) — not a revolution, but some form of compensation that pursued what was in fact possible, real possibilities of aesthesis and agency within the forces of abstraction. But there too, in the visual overwritten by the forces of abstraction, there also opened a space of further colonization by imperial forces that included CIA propaganda, and that other quasi-official and far more powerful U.S. propaganda agency known as Hollywood. There was also spectacle, the spectacle of the commodity, and later the spectacle-glamor of Marcos dictatorship. These visual forces, it must be emphasized functioned at a level that exceeded the prior resolution and saturation of the psyche by the police and even by state controlled discourse. Radical cinema in the Soviet Union and visual practices in many places including the Philippines ramified the visual as a way of stimulating the imagination beyond the locked boxes of capitalist futures. In general, the visual was implicitly or explicitly

grasped as a space for the production of freedom. But this space of possibility was almost simultaneously shut down through its increasingly total saturation by commercial media, that is, by the fixed capital of communications infrastructure that colonized the visual and turned its productive potential into a factory for the production of capital itself.

In The Cinematic Mode of Production, *one can say that, in a way, you analyze precisely the retrospective overlapping of those two separate moments, as if even when cinema seemed to be working for a politics of human emancipation it was already preparing/anticipating its own capture by the capital. Your reading of the work of Dziga Vertov and Sergei Eisenstein goes in this direction: in their film practice they propose a cinematic critique and the overcoming of capital and capitalistic society, but in the end, they weren't able to fulfil their revolutionary expectations, and ended up becoming productive for, and absorbed by, the capitalistic logic they intended to subvert. What part did they play in your understanding of the cinematic mode of production as the matrix of what you call the "attention economy"—"to look is to labor", as you say—, which allows the connection between production of capital and production/consumption of images, that you are trying to address?*

Yes, the intimate relationship between the pursuit of freedom/liberation and the capture of this life-creative energy by capital is the fundamental dynamic I perceive in the industrialization of the visual. Just as Marx saw that workers built the world, and just as Negri later emphasized, innovation came from the workers and was, like labor itself, expropriated from workers as surplus value and thus as capital, and again, just as Marxist Feminists such as Federici and Fortunata demonstrated, that in the struggle to survive women gave their life energy to capitalist patriarchy in ways both unrecognized and unremunerated, spectators, in seeking their own fulfillments and satisfactions, drove an industry that would feed off of—meaning profit from—their dreams. Cut off from other avenues of freedom and in a relentless pursuit of satisfaction, they deterritorialized the factory and made the paradigmatic interface between bios and fixed capital the screen-image. Looking for fulfillment and forms of freedom became looking as labor. Remember the production of new needs is part of industrial advancement and the history of commodification. At first, with Vertov and Eisenstein (and in a kind of second moment with Pasolini, Godard, Varda, Mambéty, Brocka), the visual grasped as an open domain—only posited but not yet presupposed as space of production—offered unscripted forays into radical non- and anti-capitalist organization. The power of the imagination and of the spectator

was linked to the power of the people. But, as mentioned above, such an interface offered many productive efficiencies for capital and for its capitalists, and again, control of the means of production was decisive—not only did cinema and new visual technologies turn worker-spectators sensual labor/attention/subjectivity/desire into the universal value-form of capital though what were at first rather crude processes of value abstraction including ticket sales, Nielson ratings and advertising, they also reformatted and radically delimited linguistic capacity and opened the imagination to capitalist programs and indeed to capitalist programming. It is because of this overturning of the power of vision, that I gave my essay on Eisenstein the (tragically) ironic title "The Spectatorship of the Proletariat."

In your text "The Cinematic Program", you analyze three films, Through a Lens Darkly: Black Photographers and the Emergence of a People *(Thomas Allen Harris, 2014),* Citizenfour *(Laura Poitras, 2014),* Norte: The End of History *(Lav Diaz, 2013), and, regardless of their temporal, aesthetic and experiential differences, you tend to approach them as programs; in fact, according to you, their relevance depends on the possibility of reading them as "platforms for the instrumental organization of information, platforms that are also algorithms with regard to information processing." What do you mean by program in this context and how do you distinguish it from the programs run by what you call the capitalistic world-media system?*

Those films bind elements indexed to the life-world in new arrays—despite their differences as you note. This of course, could be said about most films, though the newness of any particular array and/or archive and/or grammar of indices is often more limited. Some films are highly formulaic, some films are just white films. My point of speaking in this way was to recognize the changed context of the media environment, to announce, in short that what we thought were films were really far more than we had previously understood and have indeed become something else in their very development and saturation of the representational, political and financial worlds.

While I stand by what I wrote in that piece, the one word I might change is my saying that the films are "platforms"—this designation makes sense from the point of view of provisioning a place to speak from or an arena of socio-semiotic exchange. However, now I might refer to films as social derivatives: films are wagers on a particular semiotic structure and create a heuristic device for perceiving the world, which today also means acting in the world. The category of social derivative asserts that they are also bets on productive

power—forms of wagering that have both capitalist and non-capitalist dimensions. Furthermore, this component, the financial component of representation, has been developed naturalistically by the reactionary forces of capital but can and I think must be developed by those invested in or simply desperate for liberation.

When you ask me to distinguish among programs, we could roughly say that currently all programs are more or less reproductive of white-supremacist capitalist heteropatriarchy—therein lies the distinction, that is, in the "more or less." Certain programs are scripts for the next generation of extractive violent relationships while others script for counter-narrative, solidarity, communitarian affect and sense, and revolutionary structures of feeling and acting. They are made by and for people who in bell hooks' terms want their looks to change reality. Radical looking and what can be built with the consolidation of radical looks takes place within the basic media-environment which has become programmatic (or, in Ken Warks terms, game space), bound, as it is, by rule-sets and codes, most of which we only glean. These algorithmic processes of what I call computational racial capitalism have their own cultural logic, one that is ultimately inseparable from the financial logic built into the fixed capital that is media architectures.

You state: "If representation persists in its first function of sense-making while also being sublated as a means of cybernetic incorporation, if, in short, we have traversed a divide between image and interface (page and screen, photograph and cellphone), such that all that was mobilized by and as cinema has melted into computation and the distinction between humanism and informatics has collapsed, then the role of the film user, whether director, actor, spectator or critic, has become one of two things: functionary or programmer (and not photographer as in Vilém Flusser)." Can you detail your appropriation and dislocation of these Flusserian categories? Do programmers, as in the case of the directors of the above-mentioned films, automatically become encoders of anti-totalitarian agencies?

I'm not sure where that line appeared (perhaps also "The Cinematic Program?"), but the answer to your last question is no. There is nothing automatic about inscribing revolutionary social codes, organizing radical practices of seeing and acting, or writing radical social derivatives. Like interventions in the past, creating political change requires canniness and planning, as well as the ability to strike hard and spontaneously. Advertising, fashion, mass media and what we call social media are superb at appropriating even the most radical gestures and desires. Radical programming in the sense that I mean here, re-

quires a revolutionary praxis that is neither reproductive of capitalism nor nullified. For Flusser this would be new information, since the camera is for him a computer and the technical image a form of information. However, Flusser's sense was that technicity, namely the technical image, had overwhelmed or exceeded capitalism, making both labor and ownership as well as Marxism and its (discursive) concerns irrelevant—and even bringing about something like an end of linear time, an end of history. There is much to explore in these ideas, particularly about the transformation of linear time by computation and the transformation of the properties of objects, labor and ownership by informatics, but one of the missing pieces in Flusser's analysis was that this process of photographic incorporation was an extension of capital logic to such an extent that capital's computational logic had fully infiltrated computation—had indeed expressed itself as what was developed and became known as computation.

In your text, "Cinema, Capital of the Twentieth Century", you establish a parallel between what is cinema for Deleuze and what capital was for Marx. Why choose the lens of the Marxist concepts, namely those of extraction of value and wage labor, in order to approach and criticize the Deleuzian categories of the movement-image and the time-image? At the same time, inspired by Flusser, you propose "a third regime of the image", where we are no longer in front of an image, but inside a program. How does it connect to the Deleuzian previous categories of images and to your own conception of the possibility of a cinematographic resistance to the capitalistic perceptual order?

Why choose the lens of Marxist concepts? Because they have greater explanatory power than all other epistemological frameworks? [Laughs] What else can I say? Of course, such an assertion of the superiority of the Marxist dialectic remains only an assertion if it cannot be demonstrated. A praxis of conceptualization attentive to the historical origins of not only the objects of analysis but of the categories of analysis—the ultimate socio-historical inseparability of object and category—is also, presumably at least, attentive to the historical implication for a set of consequences following upon the constitutive act of conceptualization. Even "history" is historical. Marxism, I have always thought did not, in the field of culture, require a distinction between the aesthetic and the pragmatic, and was no less discerning for all that. In the best cases, it was and is (or at least should be) more discerning than competing modes of interpretation because it attended to material conditions of possibility for even the most elaborate forms of fantasy and fabulation. As far as critique goes, Said's *Orientalism* comes to mind as does all the work of Gramsci

and Fredric Jameson, and indeed much of the Marxist critical tradition—particularly if one includes Marxist feminists and black Marxism (Cedric Robinson). But beyond that and returning to your earlier questions with respect to the visual, for me, Deleuze's recognition that "Cinema" had consequences for philosophy and that it pushed philosophy to develop new concepts was symptomatic of a material transformation in the conditions under which conceptualization and indeed social organization took place. Clearly technically mediated material organization at an industrial scale was and remains a social phenomenon that cannot be separated from economy. "Cinema, Capital of the Twentieth Century" asserted that Deleuzian philosophy was symptomatic of a mutation in capital, and that cinematic relations became the new paradigm for the formatting of production and distribution. Most obviously today the reformatting of capitalist production and distribution involves the screen, but also attention economy and the generalized industrialization of the visual. In "The Programmable Image", I have gone so far as say that the visual is a medium of information processing and of informatic labor. So, returning to the historical record, my reading Deleuze from a Marxist perspective in 1993-4 actually meant that the very first conceptualization of attention economy as a development of capitalism—a notion that for all its seeming impossibility at the time became a reigning paradigm after the rise of the internet, came about from the application of a Marxist lens.

Flusser, who we know was not a Marxist, wrote at the end of *Towards a Philosophy of Photography* in 1983, that a philosophy of photography was the only revolution left open to us. One gets a sense here that he would have been satisfied with a world where everyone sat around reading (and understanding) his books. I do not think he was as passive as all that, and he was right to perceive that so much of political thinking was outmoded or rapidly becoming so because of deep transformations in media infrastructure. He was right also, I think, to see that what he called "playing against the camera" was a kind of prerequisite for liberation. But though he may not have missed the fact that one may play against the camera with or without a camera, he seems to have missed the fact that there were strategies of conceptualization and acting (in short resources in and of the people) beyond the horizon of his own discourse that could be admitted such that all who played against the apparatus did not have to identify either as philosopher or photographer. These may have been his ultimate categories but they were not the ultimate categories.

How did your research evolve from a systemic view of cinema as a technology for the extraction of value from human bodies, and therefore, "for the capture and redirection of global labor's revolutionary agency and potentiality", into the idea/thesis of computational capital, as elaborated in The Message is Murder, *where you present information as the general form of commodity, encoded in the logistics that organize the world we live in?*

Flusser was key here. His understanding of the camera as a computer, as, in short, an apparatus that functioned as a result of programmed materials—what he called thinking extended into matter (the sciences of optics, chemistry, but also the distribution channels of images that drove the development of the camera)—helped me make the connection between cinematic images and data visualization. It was algorithms all the way down. Or rather, the algorithm, because of its capacity to automate thinking, became a kind of culmination of the ramification of nearly every human activity by the linear thinking that was writing and reason—a culmination that also opened a new world. Deleuze himself was aware that there was a "third" type of image, beyond the movement and time images that was the video image, and we might surmise, the coming wave of digitization/computation-images. My contribution beyond making this connection that photography, cinema and computation were all related forms of capitalist production, was also in recognizing that these relations were not isolated or autonomous emergences, but deeply imbricated in the historical emergence and expansion of capital—to the extent that one could not think about the emergence of technology as an autonomous terrain.

Ultimately this sense that desire to think about cinema, photography or computation as stand alone media was a desire to engage in platform fetishism—and thus an active disavowal of their fundamental roles in the developmental history of both capitalism and globality—led me, in an essay called "The Programmable Image", as well as in *Message* and in my forthcoming book to rewrite the general formula for capital. From Marx's M-C-M' we get M-I-M', where M' is more money than M, and C is what we recognized as the commodity while I is what we call information. This is not to say that the commodity no longer exists or that information is not, generally speaking a commodity, but rather that the form of the commodity and of its production have radically changed since the industrial period and even since the period I characterized as the cinematic mode of production. In "the computational mode of production", our life energy is given over to shifting the state of discrete state machines regardless of activity or remuneration. Value is extracted through our dissymmetrical relation to computation: as we contribute more to the ar-

chive of fixed capital than we receive in terms of social utility. There is far more to say about these relationships of course, and I will try to deepen this analysis in my forthcoming book to be called either "Computational Racial Capital", "The Computational Mode of Production", or "The Derivative Condition".

According to you, we see through capital, we talk the language of capital and our political agency doesn't really exist because it is limited to what one can see and say inside this "computational system", this meta-data society. Our performances, are commanded and scripted in advance, even if everyone is now able to program images and the authorship seems to have been democratized. We reencode images, we modify their code, but it still is a pre-designed praxis. We don't do it voluntarily, but because we have to, to exist socially, economically, etc., and, in the end, the circulation between the sensible and information (=commodity) works as screen labor, as you put it. Are the Foucauldian notions of archive *and* episteme *of any use to you, when dealing with this new order of intelligibility of our contemporary experience?*

It is not that we have no agency, it is that our agency is under siege by regimes of extraction built into the very fabric of thought, sensation and semiosis. I have said before something to the effect that it is a great failing of human history to not see Marx's decodification of the commodity form as on par with Newton's decodification of gravity. So, we get this automatic, if systemically convenient refusal to understand that historical action is at the basis of all semiotic categories. We see through capital and yet we do not see that we see through it. Just as we see through exploitation and slavery—these are the conditions of our seeing and of the seen. Foucault's analysis, brilliant and informed as it was, was antipathetic to Marxism—for some good reasons particularly if we keep in mind the orthodoxies of the time and also what were considered the significant domains of inquiry (not the psyche and even less, sexuality and gender, and although it was not his interest, race), but the Marxist baby was, in the case of Foucault, thrown out with the proverbial Marxist bathwater. Today it feels almost obvious that the Foucauldian analysis of archive, episteme and biopower is being subsumed by the history and continuing emergence of capitalism, of the forms of capital. Archive, episteme, bio-power? Why not database, program, and cybernetics, provided of course that we do not forget that each of these replacement terms are also financial propositions or exploits, meaning to say means for the extraction of value and also, sites of struggle. Here we will find that productive embattlement that Foucault was so exemplary in both recognizing and deciphering, but we will

also see that these dynamics of biotic interface with discourses, images, architectures and machines were on a convergence course not only with cybernetics but with social-media (written with the hyphen), meaning, full financialization and what I have recently been calling "the derivative condition."

The Message is Murder *also addresses the connection of computational capitalism and racial capitalism: "With intensified violence, the lived categories of race, gender, sexuality, nation, religion, disability, and others are all mobilized, calibrated, and recalibrated across micro and macro domains, as logistics of extraction and control." This constant reading of people as data and meta data, this quantification of qualities and attributes of life, show that our lives, thoughts, body practices and gestures are captured by computational devices as a means of social control. Would you agree that this matrix of control can be seen as a biopolitical machine, in the sense of Agamben, a way of separating life from its puissance? That the digital recording of historical, social and political identities, that you refer to, pushes further his vision that the dominant political life of our time is the bare life, meaning a life that everywhere separates the forms of life from their unity in a form-of-life?*

Except that biopolitical really means cybernetic and "bare life" is only conceptual—only a concept—and must, as I argued (or at least insisted) somewhere, be written with quotation marks. That is, one must apprehend "bare life" with the quotation marks if one does not want to perpetuate exactly the same violence of inscribing ideas upon bodies that nearly every other representational and informatic practice functioning today partakes of. The quotation marks acknowledge at least that "bare life" is not an ontological reality, but an idea that results from the operation of concepts—a condition that results from the operation of concepts, including the operation of the analysis that produces its object. In brief, "bare life" is an instrumental category designed to do work in a conceptual system. More granularly it is a heuristic device and more technically, it is an algorithm. It is a poetic gesture (of dubious merit, I might add), not an ontology. We need to get beyond the notion that we scrape away the techne and/or the history and reveal the organism in its truth. All self-consciously post-structuralist thought was aware of this recession of the real, but while the politicians have taken some (American?) version of deconstruction to heart and turned the deconstructive state into a fascist war machine, the philosophers have been inclined to forget its lessons regarding the violence of the letter and of abstraction. The "truth" is that the theorist digs through the simulations of life until they exhaust

the resolution of their analysis in an object that gives the analysis closure. In your example, the bio-political separation of forms of life from "their unity in a form-of-life" wants to displace the historico-technical result with the ontological reality—one concept with another, at least I think that's how it works. It wants to do so for legitimate reasons, I recognize, but such a move is dangerous because it is itself a constitutional act for the founding of a would-be political agent, and it also implies the possibility of transcendence at the level of analysis, when the only overcoming of a patho-logistical, technological armature that is indicated by its omnipresence in processes of representation that themselves include the seeming fact of omnipresent information, will be through history and praxis. This riff may sound overly complicated, but it boils down to questioning the poesis of seeming ontologies. This poesis can be an act of violence, as in racialization and the constitution of race and ethnicity as ontological categories, or of liberatory transformation, as in the current recuperation and expansion of the category of blackness. The "truth" is, sometimes it is impossible to know all the consequences of any foray into meaning and thinking—therein lies the risk, for one person's poetry may be someone else's camp—but it is key to know that identification of any sort is an act, an action, really a series of actions that in one way or another (re)make the world.

Can you tell us a bit about your recent research and activism concerning the possibility of "a non-capitalist computational communization" as a way of finding alternatives to the financialization of everyday life that defines our contemporary experience?

A recognition of the derivative condition of informatic life is also a recognition of a capitalist logic working in every partitioning we describe by the term information. Information is not only, as I wrote in *Message*, a difference that makes a social difference, it is a difference that makes a financial difference. What this means is that in every discernible act of information transfer, in every computable semiotic gesture, the seeds (the logistics) of an extractive logic are at work. "Information" implies the violence of abstraction, and that abstraction is violent because it is inseparable from capitalization—from, as Bob Meister might say, collateralization.

Knowing that the informatic world is on a continuum with financial derivatives, that is, with techniques of wagering on the future value of an underlying asset, exhorts us to seek ways of collating information and collateralizing networks that will not reproduce extractive and exploitative ways of life. Arguably today, no acts of representation can es-

cape this encroachment and penetration of information and computation. Even our thoughts are processing signs and images that have been preprocessed a thousand times in the dialectic between machine and bios. What this intercalation means to me is that what has become the universal medium of sociality needs to be rethought and redesigned. I am talking, of course, about its ur-medium, the thing that like it or not puts all life into new orders of relation, namely money. It is to be remembered that Communist revolutions and anticolonial independence movements, and even social movements and migratory movements seeking reparations for colonial and imperialist legacies, were also focused on retaking the means of production, and often times on questions of sustainability which meant economy. Much of today's politically driven culture-making has forgotten the question of economy because of the seemingly untranscendable permanence of capitalism.

This account of the historical result that is the inseparability of the bio, the semiotic, the techno and the financial is an elaborate but perhaps still necessary way of underscoring the potentials in what Akseli Virtanen has long called designable economy, or "economic space", and in what is more generally described as "blockchain technology" or "crypto-currency". Of course, I recognize that it may be disappointing that such a grand and perhaps grandiose account of historical process would seem to have its next key play in a domain that already overwrought by greed and trend. However, the key insight here is that it has become possible to break the monopoly, or at least the oligopoly on the issuance of derivatives. "Blockchain" (and I use this word here to indicate an emerging set of secure, verifiable, decentralized computational strategies of archivization and not the environmental destruction currently necessary to Bitcoin's "proof of work"), allows for anyone to issue a derivative contract, that is, to issue a money-form related to the specific qualities of any project or venture. While we are a long way from full implementation of such potentials where a new currency for a new project might be issued with the same ease and canniness resultant in an Instagram post, this emergent tech, itself a response to totalitarian state forms and unilateral control of the money supply, promises to accomplish three things. First, like the internet's opening of publishing and other forms of transmissible expressivity to the multitudes, "crypto" may break the stranglehold of centralized national economies. Imagine millions of currencies—at least. Where today everyone is a worker, tomorrow, everyone may be an issuer. Second, and in my view, even more importantly, designable economy allows for and indeed demands, that new social projects have built in equity structures: why work for a wage when you can have an

equity stake in the projects and activities that you devote your life to? Third, financial imagination will develop as a component of formerly extra-economic endeavors, such that these endeavors (often thought of as the most valuable activities of human beings including art and care are supported for their own sake, that is for their qualities). Such changes, the demand for recognition and remuneration of stolen or "free" labor, are the result of long term struggles against the totalitarian protocol of the capitalist state, and are at present only nascent. They are even now in danger of state-cooptation and what may be worse because less visible to innovators themselves, technocratic ambitions, along with the rampant if garden variety get rich quick schemes. Emphatically, these technologies, which in my view are new media, are in actuality emergent social relations; they will not realize their potentials to democratize both economy and representation, and to protect the liquidation of qualities of life by exploitative financial abstraction, without the design capacities and historical knowledge of social movements, antiracist activists, LGBTQ orgs, anti-imperialists, social justice groups, and all those fugitives from capitalism and slavery who are seeking liberation from oppression and who do not want to become oppressors themselves. The decentralization and democratization of finance and thus of economy could mean a communization of the social product. It is an outcome, fraught with peril and in no way guaranteed. In fact, given what the U.S. did in Iraq after 2001 to protect the dollar, we can observe that some of the dangers are radically external, that is, from states along with their police and their banks, and some are radically internal, since thinking and co-creating financially may also enable the encroachment of an uncontrolled and uncontrollable financial logic on the precious little that currently escapes it and can be valued for its own sake. But given the scale and complexity of our computationally sustained, financially interdependent globe, democratically programmable economies and communist derivatives seem necessary if political aspiration for radical social change is not to remain in its current state of capture by capital—slated to become value-productive "content" for a world-media system that feeds off the volatility of hierarchically imposed precarity. Currently blockchain and crypto is where cinema was in 1900. To succeed the techno-social relations these new forms express need to emerge dialectically, that is, subject to critique at every moment by the revolutionary becoming of a global, anti-racist, anti-imperialist, anti-hetero-patriarchal communism, a communism increasingly free of prejudice and freeing itself from injustice. A long road indeed, but one I am trying to walk down with open eyes.

BOOK REVIEWS | RECENSÕES DE LIVROS

ACINEMAS: LYOTARD'S PHILOSOPHY OF FILM

Brian Thomas Walker (The State University of New York at Buffalo)

Ed. Graham Jones and Ashley Woodward. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017. 224 pp. ISBN: 9781474418942.

Throughout its short history, much of film theory has been concerned with the *interpretation* of films, whether through its ideological subtexts or as a model of the psychoanalytic subject, to the point that a great deal of what makes film such an immersive, sensorial experience has been overlooked. In four short essays written throughout the course of his career, Jean-Francois Lyotard, perhaps best known for his works on the postmodern and on art and aesthetics, managed to lay the groundwork (intentional or not) for a new sort of film theory to combat this stranglehold of interpretation. Until recently, only two of those essays have been available in English. *Acinemas: Lyotard's Philosophy of Film*, presents them in their entirety for the first time.

In this collection, editors Graham Jones and Ashley Woodward set out to provide the reader with "a collection of resources for working on Lyotard and film" (p. 3), and to that end, the book is largely successful. Along with Lyotard's four essays on film, the book includes a brief section containing two introductory essays (along with the editor's own introduction), a section entitled, "Applications and Interpretations", which contain three essays that serve to orient the reader on Lyotard's film essays in relation to his other works, a section named "Applications and Extensions", which aim to show some of the ways Lyotard's theories might be practically applied, and a final section of appendices that includes short descriptions of his existing experiments with the medium itself as well as a transcript of a proposal for a film that was never produced. Exhaustive to say the least.

Following the editor's introduction, a chapter on "Why Lyotard and Film?" starts off the collection. As authors Susana Viegas and James Williams themselves admit, Lyotard's writing on cinema is scant, as only four short essays were written over the course of his career, essays that, "show neither particularly acute interpretations of film, nor great conceptual invention" (p. 10). Still, they claim that his ideas have reverberated throughout film study, perhaps due to their tendency to go against the more prevalent ideological and

psychoanalytic theories of Lacan and Zizek. Lyotard, the authors write, "always resisted investment in a combination of interpretation and judgement", calling his notion of *acinema* "the last ethical call to resist capitalist exchange and surplus value" (p. 13) in its focus on the sensorial affects of experimental cinema over the representationalism inherent in commercial, narrative film.

In the second introductory essay, "Cinema Lyotard: An Introduction", Jean-Michel Durafour identifies some key themes of Lyotard's that appear in his writings on film, most notably "how we can express that which, in art and in particular in visual art (painting, literature) escapes the readable and the sayable" (p. 19). Durafour focuses mainly on Lyotard's first essay on cinema, *Acinemas* and his interest in experimental film as a way to eschew the "deterministic and reductive constructions of the well-formed" (p. 21). As well, Durafour addresses and defends Lyotard's sporadic output when it comes to his writings on film, rejecting the notion that "they lack cohesion or unity, or that they remain minor or imperfect thoughts." According to Durafour, "Lyotard simply never felt the necessity or desire to collect them or develop them into a book…. We just have to live with it" (p. 22).

The core of the book is, of course, the four essays that Lyotard wrote specifically on the medium of film itself. The first, and perhaps the one most widely cited throughout the collection is *Acinema.* In it, Lyotard describes cinema as an "inscription of movements" (p. 33) wherein individual movements are only valued as they pertain to the whole, or *totality*, of the narrative itself. To achieve this unity, there must necessarily be movements that are cast aside, edited out, so that this whole is not detracted from. For Lyotard, this constitutes an oppression of mise-en-scene rooted in a capitalist form of production. Thus, to the viewer, this sacrifice to the narrative is merely the reinforcement of cultural norms through a negative form of representation, sublimating libidinal energy for the sake of a systematic whole. What is lost is the possibility of any true sensorial experience, independent of the system. He posits a different kind of a cinema, an "acinema", in which the subjective is decentered and movements exist purely for their affective qualities. He relates this to the image of a child striking a match and watching it burn, simply to enjoy its burning. Any productive value the match once held is destroyed and the child's pleasure is a "sterile difference leading nowhere" (p. 35), a perversion in libidinal terms perhaps, but a truly artistic one that might have the power to break the chain of narrative oppression that exists not only in the cinema, but in social and political life as well.

In *Acinema*, Lyotard's view of mise-en-scene is primarily attached to his ideas of libidinal economy, its function being the addition or subtraction of movements to the unity of the whole, a "political activity *par excellence*" (p. 39). However, in the collection's second essay, *"The Unconscious as Mise-en-scene"*, the concept of mise-en-scene is used differently, this time in order to illustrate Lyotard's critique of Freud's psychoanalytic theories of desire as something that can be represented and interpreted as a sort of language. For Lyotard, it is an action closer to transcription; as a play that is transcribed through the process of mise-en-scene; first as a text, then by the director to the actors, and finally as a production to the audience, a kind of "somotography" or body-writing capable of affect and intensities that belie mere representation. In this way, both theater and cinema may be more than just "machines of illusion and memory, but apparati for experimentation which permit us to quarter sensibility and draw it out beyond this old body" (p. 54).

This goal of displacing representation and disrupting narrative is again the focus of the third essay, the brief "Two Metamorphoses of the Seductive". Here, Lyotard describes representational narrative in linguistic terms, as "the pragmatic efficacy of the seductive discourse" (p. 56), wherein the spectator receives "implicitly given prescriptions to act: *Do this, think that*" (p. 59). This seduction demands a sort of *obligation* of the viewer, that again, is essentially one of oppression. The question of the essay is whether it is possible to escape this seduction. To this end, he offers hyperrealism as a possible technique and cites Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* famous helicopter attack scene as an example. It is Lyotard's contention that this scene is so "saturated by sonorous and visual elements" (p. 59) that the viewer has no choice but to be aware of the seduction, which effectively cancels it out. Most notably, this essay is one of the few times Lyotard directly addresses mainstream cinema, although little else is said about the film outside of this one scene. This curious omission is perhaps the most striking things about Lyotard's early essays, as is the way both mainstream and narrative cinema slowly find their way into them.

This slow acceptance of narrative film comes to fruition in the section's final essay, *"The Idea of a Sovereign Film"*, where Lyotard's focus turns to neo-realist cinema. While he still remains averse to cinema in which movement is subordinate to realism's narrative order, here he allows for films which communicate "intense instants" and "temporal spasms" that are capable of remaining outside of the film's narrative order; "sovereign" moments that exist beyond structure. For Lyotard, these moments are not *transcendent*, but *immanent*, coming not from a rejection of the film's reality, but from inside reality itself. As

with all of the previous essays, it is the sensorial affects of pure experience that is at stake, although in the end, Lyotard concludes an entire film made up of such sovereign moments would be impossible, as it would become a totality within itself and therefore have nothing to be sovereign *to.*

Herein lies the difficulty with the book's basic premise. Throughout his essays, Lyotard comes to essentially disprove the working possibility of any kind of real application of the acinematic ideal. Lyotard's film essays tend to feel like footnotes to his larger works which contain many of the same ideas applied to painting and aesthetics, but are fleshed out to a far greater degree. This seems evident in the book's final section, "Applications and Extensions"; out of five essays intended to show how Lyotard's concepts may be applied to film, only the last two *"How Desire Works, the Lyotardian Lynch"*, and *"Aberrant Movement and Somotography in the Hysterical Comedies of Romeo Bosetti"*, significantly reference Lyotard's essays on film.

Most reference Lyotard's work on figure and aesthetics, which have been applied to cinema as well as other forms of visual art numerous times, which tends to put into question whether Lyotard may be the basis for a "more radical direction for film theory and practice" (p. 14), as Viegas and Williams suggest, or even if there exists a Lyotardian *"Philosophy of Film"* at all. This kind of assertion only serves to highlight the weaknesses inherent in trying to force Lyotard into the role of film philosopher, a role he himself didn't seem particularly interested in playing.

Which isn't to say that Lyotard brings nothing new or interesting to film theory, on the contrary, many of his ideas are unique for their focus on the sensorial and film as an art to be *experienced* rather than *interpreted*, and it will be exciting to see how these ideas are fleshed out in the future by others. To that end, *Acinemas: Lyotard's Philosophy of Film* does indeed represent a valuable resource, and one which anyone serious about the philosophy of film aesthetics will be interested in reading.

PEDRO COSTA

Susana Viegas (IFILNOVA/Deakin University)

Desengane-se o leitor mais distraído que julga um livro pela capa: *Pedro Costa*, escrito por Carlos Melo Ferreira e publicado pelas Edições Afrontamento, não é um *coffee table book*. Longe disso. Ainda que de capa dura e com copiosas imagens a cores,[1] ainda que belo de ver, este não é um livro para se exibir às visitas ou para decorar a sala.

Carlos Melo Ferreira, doutorado em Ciências da Comunicação (Cinema) pela Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa (2002), foi professor auxiliar na Escola Superior Artística do Porto e professor convidado na Escola Superior de Música e das Artes do Espetáculo do Instituto Politécnico do Porto, é investigador em estudos artísticos, *blogger* (até 2016, *Some like it cool*, e, em 2017, *Some like it hot*) e autor de vários livros: *O Cinema de Alfred Hitchcock* (Edições Afrontamento, 1985), *Truffaut e o Cinema* (Edições Afrontamento, 1991), *As Poéticas do Cinema: A Poética da Terra e os Rumos do Humano na Ordem do Fílmico* (Edições Afrontamento, 2004) e *Cinema: Uma Arte Impura* (Edições Afrontamento, 2011), *Cinema Clássico Americano: Géneros e Génio em Howard Hawks* (Edições 70, 2018).

 Até aqui, os amantes da obra de Pedro Costa contentavam-se com o razoavelmente soberano e incontestado *Cem Mil Cigarros*,[2] livro de crítica e análise dos seus filmes, segundo Iván Villarmea Álvarez, "uma publicação que já é uma leitura obrigatória (e muito prazenteira) para os estudiosos da obra de Costa",[3] por vezes de uma forma exegética, por vezes de uma forma repetitiva e circular.

Neste aspeto, o livro de Carlos Melo Ferreira é um contributo substancial e necessário para o estudo da obra de Pedro Costa, obra, sem dúvida, muito analisada e comentada, com artigos dispersos a serem publicados regularmente (ainda assim, o autor opta por não apresentar uma bibliografia final), mas pouco estudada e analisada no seu todo.

Ou seja, *Pedro Costa* dá uma visão crítica panorâmica sobre uma obra extensa, inovadora e complexa que, muitas vezes, resta analisada segundo uma perspetiva parcial. Esta atitude mais convergente de Carlos Melo Ferreira é particularmente eficaz num cineasta

como Pedro Costa, autor de uma obra consistente, sem aquilo que poderíamos chamar de obras menores ou de filmes falhados—ou seja, um verdadeiro clássico moderno. É, justamente, como um clássico moderno que Carlos Melo Ferreira o interpreta.

As vantagens de uma visão panorâmica e convergente tornam-se mais evidentes com a ligação das três partes que constituem o livro: "Cartografia", "Os filmes" e "As imagens".

Traçando crítica, formal e estilisticamente uma panorâmica por um percurso notável que começou em 1990 com *O Sangue*, precedido pela aclamada curta-metragem *Cartas a Júlia* (1987), e que desde a viragem do século com *No Quarto da Vanda* (2000) é reconhecido internacionalmente como um dos cineastas obrigatórios da contemporaneidade, Carlos Melo Ferreira centra-se na obra de Pedro Costa como ninguém fizera até aqui.

Do campo-contracampo inicial de *O Sangue*, quando o filho (Pedro Hestnes Ferreira) responde à bofetada que o pai (Henrique Canto e Castro) lhe dá com "Faça de mim o que quiser", Carlos Melo Ferreira lê um manifesto de continuação, de renovação, mas também de rutura, com o cinema novo português. Este manifesto explicita-se na filiação inata com Paulo Rocha e António Reis e na filiação óbvia com Straub e Huillet, Charles Chaplin, Robert Bresson e Jean-Luc Godard. Poderemos evocar ainda as afinidades artísticas e a proximidade cinematográfica de Pedro Costa com outros cineastas contemporâneos: Wang Bing, Jia-Zhang-ke, Apichatpong Weerasethakul e Hong Sang-soo (capítulo 11, "Excurso poético", p. 65-68).

Carlos Melo Ferreira destaca ainda a importância de *Casa de Lava* (1994), "como se fosse um segundo 'primeiro filme'" (p. 9) ou "a segunda primeira e definitiva matriz do cinema de Pedro Costa", (p. 12) para o que viria a ser a grande marca da fisionomia da ética e da estética de filmagem em Pedro Costa na sua trilogia das Fontainhas.

Se o reconhecimento da filiação cinematográfica é importante, Carlos Melo Ferreira, ao longo do livro, clarifica a grande originalidade estética e ética de Pedro Costa, nomeadamente nas análises fílmicas que faz do uso do grande-plano (os rostos e os olhos dos personagens), do plano-sequência e do plano fixo, mas também da proximidade afetiva criada pelo uso da dinâmica entre primeiro-plano, grande-plano e plano de pormenor. Mas também o fora de campo, em particular num apelo dirigido ao espectador, obrigado a ver o que é mostrado (segundo a tese do autor, trata-se de um distanciamento que é também um convite à participação atenta), expressão da ansiedade artística de aliar política e poética: "O que é artístico nesses filmes não o é apenas por causa da beleza envolvida,

mas também pela verdade que encerra" (p. 48). Ainda formalmente, são interessantes e reveladoras as análises realizadas à questão da iluminação e do som e música (é bastante esclarecedor o capítulo 2, "A época, a cultura e o cinema", no qual o autor situa a proximidade entre Costa e o punk, p. 25-27), bem como a criação de movimentos territoriais (pertencer a um lugar, mas também o sair e entrar na cidade, sair e entrar no bairro, sair e entrar em casa, no quarto).

Quanto à sua organização, o livro divide-se em três partes que se revelam dependentes entre si. A primeira parte, "Cartografia", é composta por onze capítulos temáticos sobre a obra integral de Pedro Costa e conjuga a análise fílmica de um determinado ponto de vista temático, com temas extradiegéticos bastante populares (como as histórias por detrás das filmagens) e análises semióticas (em particular, a análise de planos paradigmáticos, ou as famosas "imagens-fetiche",⁴ com Vanda ou com Ventura). Estas análises apoiam-se numa bastante pertinente terminologia filosófica e sociológica, de Karl Marx, Gilles Deleuze, Giorgio Agamben e Jean-Luc Nancy, que o autor cita indireta e livremente.

Na segunda parte, "Os filmes", o autor apresenta-nos leituras orientadas das oito longas-metragens, das sete curtas-metragens e das exposições, sempre tendo em conta a ténue fronteira entre a ficção e o documentário. Ao contrário das análises levadas a cabo na primeira parte, aqui o autor não procura interligar os filmes, explorando a circularidade entre personagens e narrativas e os evidentes vínculos familiares, mas individualizá-los. Na conclusão desta segunda parte, Carlos Melo Ferreira sintetiza quatro razões para a importância de Pedro Costa: os seres marginalizados que são a alma dos seus filmes, a exigência de o espectador ver o que é mostrado, as relações familiares entre personagens e a ambiguidade entre documentário e ficção. No fundo, um já conhecido conjunto de atitudes intransigentes que tornam o cineasta num "primitivo do cinema."

> Num jogo inteligente e sensível, o cineasta oferece e sugere uma vivência, uma experiência da vida a que não somos imunes e a que devemos permanecer atentos. E a experiência da vida, de uma vida à margem, é aquilo que os personagens dos seus filmes têm a oferecer de pessoal e de maior. (p. 116)

Seguem-se quatro páginas dedicadas a dados biográficos, filmografia, principais prémios obtidos e principais retrospetivas e exposições. Finalmente, uma surpresa maior espera-

nos na terceira parte, "As imagens", com imagens (de cartazes internacionais a algumas fotografias de rodagem, passando por duas fotografias de Pedro Costa) escolhidas, cedidas e montadas pelo próprio cineasta.

Fugindo aos cânones rígidos da academia, esquivando-se ao carácter autoritário das citações, este é um livro de uma cinefilia que nos cativa pela clareza e espontaneidade do discurso, marcadamente pessoal e apaixonado, e que, na bela tradição literária legada por João Bénard da Costa, fará as delícias dos cinéfilos.

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1. Todas as imagens do livro foram escolhidas e cedidas por Pedro Costa, montadas pelo autor e pela editora nas partes 1 e 2 e montadas pelo próprio cineasta na parte 3.

2. Ricardo Matos Cabo, ed., *Cem Mil Cigarros: Os Filmes de Pedro Costa* (Lisboa: Orfeu Negro, 2010).

3. Iván Villarmea Álvarez, "Recensão de 'Cem Mil Cigarros: Os Filmes de Pedro Costa' de Ricardo Matos Cabo (ed.)", *Cinema: Journal of Philosophy and the Moving Image* 2 (2011): 235, http://cjpmi.ifilnova.pt/2-contents.

4. Ibid., 233.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL HITCHCOCK:
VERTIGO AND THE ANXIETIES OF UNKNOWINGNESS

Paolo Stellino (IFILNOVA)

Well known, among other reasons, for his work on Hegel and Nietzsche, Robert Pippin has written extensively on art, literature and cinema. *The Philosophical Hitchcock* is his third book on cinema, the previous two being *Hollywood Westerns and American Myth: The Importance of Howard Hawks and John Ford for Political Philosophy* (Yale University Press, 2010) and *Fatalism in American Film Noir: Some Cinematic Philosophy* (University of Virginia Press, 2012). In this book, Pippin proposes a fine-grained philosophical reading of one of Hitchcock's most important works (if not his masterpiece): *Vertigo* (1958).

As Noël Carroll points out, on a second viewing of *Vertigo*, "most viewers should be emotionally sober enough to find almost laughable the frictionless clicking into place of the various parts of this Rube Goldberg plot. And yet we don't."[1] By bringing to light the many complexities, nuances, allusions, and cross-references in the film, Pippin's book precisely explains why we do not.

Pippin's main goal is to show how *Vertigo* can be said to bear on a specific philosophical problem: the state of profound unknowingness that we all experience in interpersonal relations, an unknowingness caused by the difficulty of understanding and interpreting ourselves and each other. Pippin is well aware that his proposal involves two enormous questions, namely (i) what philosophy is and (ii) how a film can be said to bear on philosophical problems (or, put differently, the extent to which (and why) film can be understood as a form of philosophical thought). The *Prologue* is dedicated to these two vexing issues.

Although Pippin acknowledges that he makes no pretension to address such questions in an introductory section, he briefly offers a statement of principles. Besides pointing out that the use of art to shed light on philosophical subjects is not a novelty in the history of philosophy (Hegel, Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Heidegger are considered paradigmatic examples), Pippin focuses in particular on the question of how a

specific film (with *particular* fictional persons and events) can have any *general* significance. Here, we are reminded of Aristotle's famous claim in the *Poetics* (51b) that "poetry is more philosophical and more serious than history. Poetry tends to express universals, and history particulars."[2] Still, Pippin asks, what could be more idiosyncratically unique than *Vertigo*'s plot?

According to Pippin, the universality of *Vertigo* (to use Aristotle's terminology) lies in its attempt to show the viewers the nature of what he defines as the "general, common struggle for *mutual interpretability*" (10), made difficult by mutual misunderstanding, self-opacity and the dynamics of self-deceit. Among others, these aspects cause a state of profound unknowingness (considered, in its various forms, as "something like a necessary condition of possibility of Hitchcock's cinematic world" (p. 14)), which in turn provokes anxiety. In other words, Hitchcock's *Vertigo* calls into question "settled, commonsense views about what it is to understand another person or be understood by him or her, or about how we present ourselves to others in our public personae" (p. 6). By so doing, it renders a specific feature of human life more intelligible to viewers than it otherwise would have been.

Having thus explained how a film like *Vertigo* has general significance for the issue of unknowingness, and having clarified the issue itself (see the *Introduction*), Pippin analyses the film in detail, starting with the opening credits (the first part of which appears on an unknown woman's face, which is not shown in its entirety). Each sequence or narrative unit—from the opening chase to the final scene, Judy's death—is carefully scrutinized. Pippin's close reading is so attentive and scrupulous that one is reminded of Nietzsche's praise of slow reading ("to read *well*, that is to say, to read slowly, deeply", as he writes in the *Preface* to *Daybreak*[3]). Particular attention is given to the cinematic aspects: Pippin often closely examines the shots (as well as the way in which Hitchcock uses light), and thirty-six black and white figures and twenty-four colour plates accompany the text.

As already mentioned, Pippin's interpretative reading mainly focuses on what he considers one of the key themes, if not the key theme, of Hitchcock's film: the common struggle for mutual intelligibility and its failure. The main characters in the film fail to understand each other and themselves. We are given several hints of this failure at the beginning of the film, in the sequence in which Midge (Barbara Bel Geddes), a long-time friend of Scottie's (James Stewart), is introduced. Both Midge and Scottie fail to under-

stand each other: Scottie is insensitive about Midge's feelings towards him (for instance, he pretends to have trouble remembering whether they were ever engaged), whereas Midge is unable to recognize that her motherly attitude may be infantilizing, even emasculating for Scottie, who, having resigned from his job as detective because of his vertigo, feels particularly vulnerable and powerless. Furthermore, as the stepladder scene clearly shows, Scottie also fails to understand himself: he is unable to acknowledge the extent of his vertigo and deludes himself about the possibility of curing himself by simply getting used to heights step by step ("a pathetic, deluded assertion of control over elements Hitchcock regularly treats as not controllable" (p. 40-1), Pippin argues).

Mutual misunderstanding and the dynamics of (self-)deceit concern not only the private, intimate sphere, but also the public, social sphere. Among other aspects, distortions of perception are caused by the desire to appear and to be seen in a certain way. This theatricality, characteristic of modern social life (a typically Rousseauian theme, as Pippin points out), is symbolized in *Vertigo* by the duality Judy/Madeleine, the two women played by Kim Novak. Judy, a working-class girl, garishly dressed and somewhat vulgar, transforms herself into Madeleine, the wife of a rich man (Gavin Elster, played by Tom Helmore), who is spectacularly well dressed and elegant. In other words, she stages herself as the woman she knows she is not and cannot be. According to Pippin, this situation is paradigmatically representative of the duality in everyone: "everyone has a to-be-repressed 'Judy' and a crafted, public 'Madeleine'" (p. 99).[4]

Misrepresentations occur often in the film: Judy misrepresents herself to Scottie as Madeleine; Scottie misrepresents himself to Madeleine as a wanderer who just happened to come across her; Elster misrepresents himself to Scottie as a husband who is worried about his wife. Distortions of perception, however, are caused not only by the desire to be seen in a certain way, but also by the desire to see the other in a certain way. Here, Scottie's desire to re-create Madeleine in Judy obviously comes to mind. Despite Judy's entreaty to be loved for who she really is, and notwithstanding Scottie's awareness that Judy's metamorphosis will do no good for either of them, Scottie turns Judy into a simulacrum (as Pippin points out, "the whole sequence is as brutal and unadorned a view of the projection of the fantasies of male desire onto a woman treated as mere object, screen, occasion for his projection, as there exists in cinema", p. 110). In this re-enacting of the Pygmalion myth, Scottie reveals the ambiguity of his position; if on the one hand he is the

victim of the staged suicide, on the other hand he—like Elster—is imposing a fake identity on Judy and staging an illusory Madeleine.

Although the common struggle for mutual intelligibility and its failure is Pippin's main focus, his analysis of *Vertigo* is not restricted to this subject. Several themes are explored, from vertigo itself and its many symbolic meanings (among others, the desire to fall in love and the fear of falling in love) to the critique of romantic conventions and the role of fantasy, deceit, irrationality and even obsession in romantic relationships. Particularly interesting is Pippin's reading of the general theme of heights and depths as touching on class and gender hierarchies—a theme that is directly connected to the colonization of the West and imperial power (the source of the Carlotta Valdez story, Madeleine's great-grandmother), as well as to the power that men have on women (precisely that which is exercised by Scottie on Judy). Special attention is also given to the role played by truth (particularly in the last part of the film) and the relation between what we need to believe and what we actually believe, especially when it comes to romantic love.

Pippin concludes his analysis of *Vertigo* by pointing out a peculiarity of the film: the suspension of moral judgment. According to Pippin, many elements in the film clearly indicate that moral judgement is suspended: Scottie seems not to be overly concerned with betraying his acquaintance, Elster, by seducing and sleeping with his wife Madelaine (who is supposed to have been entrusted to his professional care); the coroner, who is characterized as having a moralistic and self-satisfied attitude, misses everything about the Elster plot and is depicted by Hitchcock in a somewhat ironic and mocking way; Scottie seems more concerned with having been betrayed by a lover than with the murder of Elster's wife; Elster, the chief villain, is not caught (a rarity among Hitchcock's films).[5] According to Pippin, this suspension of moral judgment has to do with the main topic of the book: opacity in self- and other-knowledge. Indeed, it is the "awareness of the fragile and uncertain self- and other-knowledge" (p. 125)—knowledge that is precisely the necessary precondition of moral judgment—that leads us to reduce our confidence in the appropriateness of moral judgment.

In conclusion, Pippin's reading of *Vertigo* shows that Hitchcock's film is more than an entertaining story of fantasy and betrayal: it is a profound examination of the mutual struggle to understand ourselves and each other in a condition of general unknowingness, unique to modern societies. It is surely legitimate to ask whether Pippin accords too much

importance to the theme of self- and other-knowledge and its failure in his reading of *Vertigo*. Nonetheless, Pippin's reading is convincing, and in addition to helping the reader understand the many complexities and meanings of Hitchcock's film, his book is a perfect demonstration of how a film can enhance our understanding of a specific philosophical problem.

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1. Noël Carroll, "*Vertigo* and the Pathologies of Romantic Love", in *Hitchcock and Philosophy. Dial M for Metaphysics*, ed. David Baggett and William A. Drumin (Chicago and La Salle, IL: Open Court, 2007), 102.

2. Aristotle, *Poetics* (London: Penguin, 1996), 16.

3. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 5.

4. As Pippin points out in a typically Pirandellian way, however, our self is not only dual (the "genuine" *vs* the public one), but also multiple. In romantic relationships, for instance, several persons are involved: the two persons as they actually are, the two as they see themselves, the two as they are each seen by the other, the two as they aspire to be seen by the other, the two as they take themselves to be seen by the other, etc. (see p. 12). The theme of the multiplicity of the self appears often in the book.

5. As Pippin mentions, "Hitchcock resisted pressure to change the ending and did not use the alternate ending he in fact filmed, in which Midge hears on the radio that Elster has been apprehended by the authorities and is being extradited back to the States" (p. 124).

PHILIPPE GRANDRIEUX: SONIC CINEMA

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Greg Hainge. New York: Bloomsbury, 2017. 299 pages. ISBN: 9781628923155.

Philippe Grandrieux: Sonic Cinema is a study of the auteur stripped off from auteurist concerns and problems thereof. Scanning the entire career of Grandrieux, Greg Hainge writes *Philippe Grandrieux: Sonic Cinema* as a conceptual accompaniment to Grandrieux's work resonating with its formal audacity. In the introduction to the book, Hainge clarifies how his methodology differs from other scholars', like Brophy, Chion, or Birtwistle's engagement with sound and cinema. *Philippe Grandrieux: Sonic Cinema*, in Hainge's words, "approaches the cinema through concepts and vocabularies that originate in the realm of the sonic ... such as 'accompaniment', 'harmony', 'resonance'", and rhythm (p. 13). Although the title of this book is "*Philippe Grandrieux: Sonic Cinema*", it should not mislead one to think that this book is a study of sound in Grandrieux's cinema. Indeed, Grandrieux considers sound as the most important element in a film; however, Hainge's utilization of the sonic operates beyond the auditory phenomenon. Rather than being aimed to analyze sound in Grandrieux's films, the sonic is deployed to engage with his works in video, TV, and cinema and specifically images as "defined primarily by movement in time" (p. 13). Sound or, to put it in better terms, the sonic is used in this book in an expanded acoustic sense by Hainge to describe Grandrieux's cinema as well as earlier video installations in the 1970s and TV productions in the 1980s that provide the director with the conceptual breakthrough happening in 1990 and defining his approach to filmmaking in the rest of his career. The conceptual breakthrough, defined as "a principle or diagram for a new mode of image production that can be put into operation by any film-maker", is about relating to a work on its own terms by resonating with the internal forces that are constitutive of the work itself (p. 44). Hainge shows how, rather than imposing a narrative or authorial intentionality, Grandrieux displays in his own later cinematic works the principle of a relation to alterity outside fixed precepts of representational modes, narrativization, ideology, historicism, morality or psychology that predetermine and hence limit the possibilities of the world the artwork relates to. This principle of relation is further discus-

sed in the section titled "Relation" ending the chapter on *Sombre* (1998). As Hainge discusses in the first two chapters of the book, this principle is already found in Grandrieux's earlier works such as *Via Video,* the 1975 video work on Claude Viallat and how an image comes into being, or his collaboration with Thierry Kuntzel in the audiovisual translation of Jean Paulhan's text, *La Peinture Cubiste* (1990).

One of the greatest strengths of Hainge in this book is his incorporation of all kinds of academic and critical receptions of Grandrieux's works not shying away from tackling the ones that are overtly and harshly disparaging or the ones that criticize his own previous published work on the director. The greatness lies not only in his ease with having a dialog with others who are openly acerbic in their criticisms but also in the way he skillfully points to the deficiencies in their approaches and reasoning that are limited by an expectancy of cognitive processing, foregrounding of cerebrality, narrativization, or auteurist agential control. Hainge shows his principle of relating to a work on its own terms in harmony with and accompanying the forces internal to it and its formal elements is necessary not only in the relation the filmmaker establishes between the body of the cinema and one's own body but also in the relation between those films and their audiences who encounter them during their transmission, propagation, and emission. In "Intermezzo", the fourth chapter following the author's engagement with Grandrieux's video works, TV productions, and long-form documentaries and before the analyses of his films, Hainge best clarifies these new figural processes during the making, transmission, and reception of Grandrieux's works and what it means "to figure the body in terms of a sonic body", i.e. "a wave form" in constant relation to other bodies and its environment (p. 80).

Intermezzo is also the chapter in which Hainge warns against reducing the sonic to other senses, specifically tactility that has become the popular to-go sense in the scholarship of contemporary affect theory. Despite tactility's utilization against distancing, totalizing, and perspectival emphasis of vision, Hainge points to its failures in the way the scholarship ties it to efforts of making meaning. Similarly, in this chapter and earlier in the introduction, Hainge warns against a generalization of affect, a tendency found in Deleuzians and especially Deleuzian theories of affect that tend to overlook form, as noted by Brinkema. Following Grandrieux and taking Deleuze's book on Bacon as more relevant to cinema and Grandrieux's relation to cinema than Deleuze's *Cinema* books, Hainge weaves a thread of affect, figure, the figural, pre-identitarian states, the Real, vibrations, and for-

ces to complete an embroidery of "the sonic" in Grandrieux in this book. This act of weaving the thread of Deleuze on Bacon into an embroidery of the sonic is unpacked most explicitly in the intermezzo and the afterword and is found in dialog with Artaud on cruelty in the "Openings" section ending the chapter on *La Vie nouvelle* (2002). Ordering his chapters according to a not very strict chronology in the filmmaker's career, Hainge discusses the video works Grandrieux produces before turning to his next feature-length film, *Un lac* (2008). In the chapter titled "The Turn to Nature", Hainge foregrounds the aesthetic similarities between these video works and Grandrieux's feature films that he also phrases as a "desire to reconfigure the scopic" borrowing Metz's term, which translates to a "nouvelle vision" in Brenez's terms that Hainge also borrows to explain Grandrieux's attempt to trouble Cartesian perspectivalism stripping the image from obeying a social overcoding of reality in three-dimensionality.

Listening to *Un lac*, paying attention to the film's attention to the act of listening, Hainge turns to Nancy's "l'écoute (listening)". By the help of this attentive mode of listening in Nancy, Hainge is able to utilize the sonic to relate to the images and sounds in Grandrieux's film, whose interest in desubjectification surfaces in these relations as well as resonant or harmonic relations occurring among all the bodies, i.e. the filmmaker's, the actors', the cinema's, the audiences'. I would offer that Hainge, similarly, resonates with Grandrieux and sonic cinema attentively, in the way he relates to Grandrieux's works not discriminating against his lesser known ones like his video installations or film essays. The chapter that follows the one on *Un Lac* is about the filmmaker's recent works from the last decade including a film essay on Masao Adachi and a triptych titled *Unrest*, more directly reminiscent of Deleuze on Bacon's triptychs. The triptych format of display as split into three with *Unrest*, also naming the triptych, as the centerpiece and *White Epilepsy* and *Meurtière* on each side resonates with these works' transformations from text to moving images as art installations, to semi-choreographed dance performances to films. Finalizing his close analyses, which could be better termed as "acts of attentively relating to", of Grandrieux's works with his last film from 2015, *Malgré la nuit*, Hainge returns to his and Grandrieux's starting point about Deleuze's book on Bacon being a book about the cinema in the concluding chapter. Operating outside representation, individuating forms of being, or fixed and predetermined psychological, moral, socio-political, historical contextualization, the cinema, for Grandrieux and Hainge, is a sonic one in its most basic form of an "interplay of light and sound in time and space" (p. 261) that propagate and relate at a

pre-conceptual and pre-identitarian level with a new vision of bodies traversing us in their rendering thinkable unthinkable forces.

THE CINEMA OF POETRY

Maria Irene Aparício (NOVA-FCSH / IFILNOVA)

Em *The Cinema of Poetry* (2015), P. Adams Sitney—autor de obras como *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde*, 1943-2000 (2002); *Eyes Upside Down: Visionary Filmmakers and the Heritage of Emerson* (2008) ou *Vital Crises in Italian Cinema: iconography, stylistics, politics* (2013)—, começa por assumir, no prefácio, que a obra configura uma "revisitação de temas relacionados com a montagem na modernidade" (ix). Quer isto dizer: estão em foco teorias, cineastas e práticas do cinema que marcaram o século XX, nomeadamente, e em primeira linha, Piero Paolo Pasolini (1922-1975) e a sua visão poética do cinema; Ingmar Bergman (1918-2007); Andrei Tarkovsky (1932-1986) e Stan Brakhage (1933-2003) para citar, desde já, apenas alguns.

Neste contexto, *The Cinema of Poetry* é uma obra organizada em duas partes dedicadas, respectivamente, às temáticas "Poetry and the Narrative Cinema in Europe" e "Poetry and the American Avant-Garde Cinema", num total de nove capítulos através dos quais o autor reflecte sobre as relações Cinema-Poesia e, em particular, sobre a dimensão poética dos filmes dos cineastas supracitados, entre outros.

Na Introdução, subtitulada "An Autobography of Enthusiasms", Sitney sublinha o seu fascínio constante, desde a adolescência nos anos 60, pelas formas poéticas do cinema, em paralelo com o seu interesse pela piscanálise, recordando a emergência de obras cinemáticas de vanguarda, em particular o filme experimental, e o debate em torno das designações "cine-poem" ou "film-poem". Recorda, ainda, a sociedade *Cinema 16*, fundada em Nova York pelo historiador e cineasta de ascendência austríaca Amos Vogel[1] nos anos 40, percursora de um movimento artístico associado a críticos e criadores como Maya Deren (1917-1961), Parker Tyler (1904-1974), Willard Maas (1906-1971) ou Dylan Thomas (19145-1953). É a partir desta contextualização que Sitney procura resgatar a noção de "cinema poético" enquanto fenómeno histórico com dimensão política, uma forma retórica que observa, também, em filmes contemporâneos de Antonioni, Olmi, Bertolucci e Godard, entre outros.

Mapeando um certo "cinema da poesia" na Europa, Sitney refere Pasolini, logo no início da primeira parte, destacando o controverso ensaio do cineasta "Il cinema di poesia" (1965)[2] e outros que se seguem, enquanto posicionamento teórico e político face à questão do cinema como arte. Recorde-se que Pasolini afirma então que "o cinema comunica",[3] configurando um sistema de signos visuais, e associa essa forma de comunicar ao gesto que acompanha a fala ou a palavra; "uma palavra seguida de um gesto tem um sentido, seguida de um gesto diferente tem outro sentido".[4] De resto, Pasolini reconhece a complexidade e a liberdade do acto cinematográfico ao afirmar: "Não existe um dicionário das imagens. Não há imagens classificadas e prontas a ser usadas. Ainda assim, se quiséssemos imaginar tal coisa, deveríamos imaginar um *diccionário infinito*, tal como permanece infinito o diccionário das *palavras possíveis*.§ O autor de cinema não tem um dicionário, mas infinitas possibilidades".[5] Este nosso breve desvio pela escrita de Pasolini permite-nos compreender, se não toda a controvérsia do seu texto[6] analisado por Sitney—o autor fala também de contradição—, pelo menos o modo como o cineasta inscreve o cinema na esfera da poesia que, por sua vez, prima pelo imbricamento das múltiplas dimensões da imaginação, da memória, do sonho e da realidade. A outro nível, é este "tecer" do cinema que Pasolini pratica e assinala como "discurso indirecto livre—uma forma de "consciência sociológica" (p. 17) que permite ao cineasta "expressar uma interpretação particular do mundo" (p. 22). Esta é a questão que terá levado Sitney a convocar a estética, na afirmação do filósofo idealista italiano, Benedetto Croce (1866-1952) segundo a qual "toda a arte [...] é *essencialmente poesia*" (Croce apud Sitney, p. 17), trazendo também à sua análise do problema pasoliniano, a herança de outros autores como Friedrich Schlegel (1772-1829), György Lukács (1885-1971) ou Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) que, de algum modo, reflectiram sobre as questões da poesia e da expressão, nomeadamente enquanto categorias ontológicas. Sitney sublinha, ainda, o modo como a dimensão onírica do cinema postulada por Pasolini se reflecte nas obras emergentes do surrealismo (e.g. Buñuel/Dali, etc.), essencialmente através de uma prática da montagem, e assinala o culminar da controversa teoria de Pasolini—a ideia do cinema como "la lingua scritta dell'azione"—uma "língua escrita da realidade" (p. 20)—, paradoxalmente ligada a uma formulação poética que é, num certo sentido, também abstracção.

Em suma, Sitney introduz com maestria a sua temática do "cinema de poesia" através de um primoroso comentário crítico ao ensaio seminal de Pasolini, o qual se revela abso-

lutamente essencial à compreensão, quer da própria obra cinematográfica do cineasta, quer de outras obras que partilham elementos de carácter poético e filosófico, e que permitem ao(s) filme(s) assumir(em) ou não, estilisticamente (e não linguisticamente), o POV equivalente ao monólogo interior, um "olho/eu" poético, como é o caso de *Il deserto rosso* (*O Deserto Vermelho*, 1964), e outras obras do cinema italiano igualmente aqui citadas (e.g. Bertolucci, Rossellini, Olmi, etc.). Ou ainda Godard, Bergman, Chaplin e Mizoguchi, que Pasolini identifica como autores-chave de filmes-poema. É importante referir que, neste capítulo, Sitney imbrica o seu próprio discurso no discurso de Pasolini, aprofundando as questões propostas através de um exercício de *découpage* de algumas sequências dos filmes, justamente para levar o leitor a compreender a relação entre a montagem e uma "tradição técnica/estílistica do 'cinema de poesia'" (p. 32). No seguimento desta reflexão, o filme *Ménilmontant* (1926) é ponto de partida para uma outra aproximação à temática do livro, sob a égide do "ponto de vista indirecto livre", assim designado por analogia com a expressão literária de "discurso indirecto livre". Sitney afirma ser este um dos exemplos primos da era do cinema mudo, para o designado "cinema de poesia", embora assinale as reticências de Richard Abel que considera evidente a influência dos filmes *La Roue* (1923), *Le Brasier ardent* (1923) e *Coeur fidèle* (1923) que precedem o filme de Kirsanoff. Na verdade, estamos aqui perante filmes que se enquadram nas designadas primeiras vanguardas, nomeadamente a Escola Francesa, sob o signo do impressionismo, movimento ao qual Kirsanoff é frequentemente associado, e que tem vastas afinidades com o surrealismo e o experimentalismo, justificando, portanto, um enquadramento mais vasto do filme numa eventual "linha genealógica" do "cinema de poesia", com ligações implícitas e possíveis também com outras vanguardas. Este é, de resto, um exercício que Sitney desenvolve, convocando outras obras, entre as quais *Chelovek's Kinoapparotom* (*O Homem da Câmara de Filmar*, 1929) e *Der Letze Man* (*O Último dos Homens*, 1924), por exemplo. Na análise é, mais uma vez, destacada a prática da montagem pela qual Dimitri Kirsanoff (1899-1957) estrutura o seu filme, articulando perspectivas psicológicas com estratégias narrativas ambivalentes.

Mas é com os capítulos sobre a "cena primordial" de Ingmar Bergman (1918-2007) e o "conceito de poesia" em Andrei Tarkovsky (1932-1986) que Sitney procura estabelecer a ligação entre a proposta teórica de Pasolini e a prática efectiva de um cinema com uma dupla dimensão: a) o filme visível, que é facilmente percepcionado pelo espectador comum; e b) o outro, que se oculta na dobra, e que obedece à pura expressão do seu autor,

um *"duplo"*, filme não realizado, "subterrâneo" (p. 42). *Persona* (Ingmar Bergman, Suécia, 1966) é um dos filmes que—à revelia da Psicanálise—instaura níveis de (in)consciência que projectam imagens que são, por sua vez, projectados por elas. Porque as imagens deste filme não são todas visíveis, embora muitas delas—irrupções do inconsciente—sejam desencadeadas justamente pelos dispositivos cinematográfico ou fotográfico; veja-se o enigmático efeito da fotografia do holocausto que só alguns espectadores conseguem percepcionar e descodificar... Sitney sublinha que o esquema da cena primordial de *Persona* repete-se noutros filmes de Bergman - desde logo em *Fängelse* (*Prisão*, 1949) ou *Tystnaden* (*O Silêncio*, 1963). E num périplo por outras obras do cineasta, incluindo a sua primeira autobiografia escrita, *Lanterna Mágica* (Stockholm: Norstedts Förlag, 1987), o autor procura desvelar os meandros dessa "cena primordial" que conjuga "teatro, cinema e contos de fadas" (p. 46) num evidente processo de revelação das fontes edipianas que subjazem à criação dos seus filmes. Neste ponto, *Marnie* (1964) e *Il deserto rosso* são filmes que surgem como exemplos similares, mas agora associados ao processo criativo da cor, também ele iluminado pela teoria da psicanálise dos contos de fadas de Bruno Bettelheim (1903-1990) que, obviamente, sugere "formas de encantamento" e de "educação das emoções", a que o cinema destes autores não é totalmente alheio. De salientar, ainda, a afirmação de Sitney sobre o semi-autobiográfico *Fanny och Alexander* (*Fanny e Alexandre*, 1982), e o modo como, através dele, Bergman realiza um primoroso exercício de "transformação da cena primordial dos seus primeiros dramas numa [magistral] tragicomédia" (p. 52), com destaque para a questão do adultério como matéria comédica. Da fantasia à realidade, do cinema à vida, são movimentos desvelados pelas análises de Sitney que conclui o capítulo com a seguinte afirmação: "Deste modo, a fase crucial da educação deste rapaz [Alexander] assombrado [pelo passado] termina com um artefacto estético que corresponde à intensa experiência da magia da sua mente. E a frase que Helena não lê, prefigura a formulação de Pasolini de 'pontos de vista indirectos'" (p. 65).

Quanto a Andrei Tarkovsky e o seu conceito de poesia, o autor percorre filmes como *Zerkalo* (O *Espelho*, 1974) *Stalker* (1979), *Nostalghia* (*Nostalgia*, 1983) mas também *Ivanovo detstvo* (*A Infância de Ivan*, 1962), etc., contextualizados pela obra escrita do cineasta—*Esculpir o Tempo* (1986)—, onde proliferam as referências à poesia, quer de seu pai, Arseny Tarkovsky (1907-1989), quer de outros poetas de renome (e.g. Valéry, Pasternak, Shakespeare, etc.) entre diversos autores tributários de uma escrita poética. Relembramos a afirmação de Tarkovsky: "quando falo de poesia não penso nela como um género. A poesia é

uma consciência do mundo, um modo particular de nos relacionarmos com a realidade. Neste sentido, a poesia é uma filosofia que guia o homem ao longo da sua vida".[7] Também neste capítulo, Sitney desenvolve uma análise dos filmes de Tarkovsky, procurando encontrar essa temática universal, a representação de um "Eu" poético que, segundo o autor, "permanece um delicado problema estético" (p. 75) para Tarkovsky, na medida em que essa primeira pessoa dos seus filmes não coincide nunca com uma qualquer história individual. Ousamos nós propor que é, justamente, no tratamento do tempo como memória—tratamento esse devedor do processo de montagem—, que Tarkovsky alcança uma entre-imagem, poética e filosófica, que cruza a teoria de Pasolini, e que permite justificar os seus filmes não como referentes estritamente autobiográficos—isto é, de algum modo, "históricos"—, mas como cine-poemas.

Na segunda parte do livro, Adams Sitney desenvolve uma análise do cinema americano de vanguarda posicionando-o no contexto da teoria de Pasolini, como forma específica de uma temporalidade, em referência directa a outro dos textos seminais de Pasolini, "Observações sobre o Plano Sequência" (1967). E, neste ponto, é preciso esclarecer que "Observações…" estabelece uma teoria da montagem pasoliniana alicerçada numa ideia de narrativa que permite instaurar, justamente, um ponto de vista poético, mas em última instância também político.[8] Nesta segunda parte, Sitney socorre-se do texto de Gilles Deleuze, *L'Image-Temps. Cinéma 2* (1985) explicitando que são os textos de Pasolini, entre eles os supramencionados, que suportam a teoria deleuziana de uma viragem do cinema, da imagem-movimento para a imagem-tempo (p. 103). De resto, o capítulo—tal como todo o livro—é de tal forma denso que se torna difícil mapear aqui todas as questões suscitadas pelas práticas da montagem das vanguardas europeias ou americanas, quando olhadas à luz de uma relação entre cinema e poesia[9]. Sitney destaca a questão da "dialéctica da experiência" nos trabalhos do artista e cineasta americano Joseph Cornell (1903-1972). Segundo o autor, todas as obras de Cornell "falam de uma mediação estética da experiência" (p. 113). Por exemplo, em *Monsieur Phot* (Mixed Media, 1933), "Cornell dramatiza as diferenças entre a ilusão de um movimento natural num filme convencional e a estilização da dança" (p. 115) apresentada no epílogo do seu próprio trabalho, enfatizando, deste modo, quer a relação entre filme e dança, quer as ligações poéticas da arte—e em particular da sua dimensão cinemática—, ao gesto, e a uma "poética e evocativa linguagem" (p. 118) que releva do fragmento, e, depois, da montagem enquanto processo original de reorgani-

zação que contrasta com a fluidez mandatória da montagem Hollywoodeana. Quase a terminar este capítulo, Sitney sublinha a influência do trabalho artístico de Cornell nas práticas de Stan Brakhage (1933-2003), Jonas Mekas (1922-2019), e Ken Jobs (1933-), entre outros, cujas obras vão sendo referenciadas ou analisadas ao longo do livro.

Lawrence Jordan (1934-) no campo do cinema de animação; Nathaniel Dorsky (1943-)[10] e Jerome Hiler (1943-); e, finalmente, Gregory Markopoulos (1928-1992) são artistas em cujas obras cinemáticas, Adams Sitney encontra esse "revelador conceito de poesia e puro cinema" (p. 215) que o autor desvela na teoria de Pasolini. Esta é, portanto, uma leitura obrigatória para todos os que pretendam defender, refutar ou simplesmente compreender a complexidade da dimensão poética do cinema das vanguardas, ontem, como hoje.

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1. Amos Vogel (1921-2012) é, de resto, autor de uma obra, também ela considerada paradigmática, sob o título *Film as Subversive Art* (1974), texto no qual reflecte de forma controversa sobre algumas das temáticas essenciais do cinema (e.g. a montagem, a narrativa, o tempo e o espaço, mas também o terceiro cinema ou o cinema nazi, etc.) a partir de um *corpus* de várias centenas de filmes.

2. O texto que, tal como Sitney indica, foi lido pela primeira vez no âmbito de uma mesa redonda sobre o tema "Crítica e Cinema Novo", em 31 de Maio de 1965, durante a 1ª Mostra Internazionale di Nuovo Cinema, em Pesaro (Itália), viria a ser publicado pela revista *Cahiers du Cinéma*, nº 171, em Outubro desse mesmo ano.

3. Pier Paolo Pasolini, "Le cinéma de poésie", *Cahiers du cinéma* 171 (1965): 55-66, 55 (tradução minha).

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6 Assinala-se, sobretudo, a diferença entre uma ideia de "cinema como impressão da realidade" postulada por Christian Metz (1931-1993) e a proposta pasoliniana de cinema como "língua escrita da realidade.".

7. Andrey Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time: The Great Russian Filmmaker Discusses His Art*, trad. Kitty Hunter-Blair (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989), 2. (tradução nossa).

8. Sobre esta questão, veja-se o artigo do crítico de cinema Christopher Orr, "The Politics of Film Form: Observations on Pasolini's Theory and Practice", *Film Criticism* 15, no. 2 (1991): 38-46.

9. Recorde-se, aliás, que esta temática estava já inscrita na génese deste cinema, tal como Sitney sublinha ao referir o Symposium organizado pela *Cinema 16*, sob o tema "Poetry and Film", em 28 de Outubro de 1953. (cf. p. 107).

10. P. Adams Sitney assinou, de resto, um artigo a propósito do trabalho de Dorsky sob o título "Tone Poems. On the Films of Nathaniel Dorsky", publicado em Novembro de 2007 na *Artforum.*

ANIMATION CINEMA WORKSHOP:
FROM MOTION TO EMOTION

Catarina Calvinho Gil (NOVA-FCSH)

Robi Engler. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015. 300 pp. ISBN: 9780861967209.

O livro em apreciação na presente recensão, *Animation Cinema Workshop: From Motion to Emotion*, da autoria de Robi Engler, foi publicado em 2015 com o principal intuito de guiar aspirantes a animadores no processo de concretização de um filme de animação. Desde a compreensão dos diferentes formatos utilizados—película, vídeo e digital—à animação propriamente dita, o autor, equipado com mais de quarenta décadas de experiência e contacto com esta arte, partilha uma série de conhecimentos técnicos, teóricos e práticos que no seu conjunto, como defende o próprio, integram um processo de constante aprendizagem (p. 9).

Robi Engler, licenciado pela Escola de Belas Artes na Suíça e estudante de animação na École Nationale Supérieur des Arts Decoratifs em Paris, fundou em 1975 o estúdio *Animagination* e estabeleceu-se como animador e realizador independente na Suíça. No longo percurso de proximidade com o cinema de animação poderá destacar-se a nomeação para o Festival de Annecy com o filme *Zoo-Zoom* (1994), no qual participou na qualidade de produtor, e o seu envolvimento no ensino da animação em várias escolas e universidades distribuídas pelo globo. A publicação do livro *Animation Cinema Workshop: From Motion to Emotion* veio consubstanciar os longos anos de experiência de Engler neste âmbito na forma de um manual técnico detalhado através do qual um vasto leque de regras, procedimentos e conceitos são explorados.

O manual, designemo-lo assim, é composto por doze capítulos e múltiplos subcapítulos dentro dos quais são abordadas as diversas etapas que compõem o processo de realização de um filme de animação. O autor procura ainda aprofundar cerca de vinte técnicas de animação, propondo para cada uma delas uma lista de ferramentas, material, equipamentos e o seu *modus operandi*. Sustentado por um discurso claro, objetivo e organização de tópicos irrepreensível, o manual oferece uma leitura clara e acessível, inclusive ao leitor que não tenha conhecimento na área. A forte componente pedagógica, direcionada essen-

cialmente aos mais jovens, poderá contribuir em grande medida nesse sentido. Com efeito, a excelente sistematização de tópicos e dissecação objetiva de metodologias constitui não só um sólido apoio a animadores como satisfaz propósitos quer de ensino quer de aprendizagem. Engler dinamiza ainda os conteúdos por si abordados através de propostas e desafios promotores de uma postura ativa com vista ao domínio da prática. Atente-se, a título de exemplo, às múltiplas páginas em branco distribuídas pelos doze capítulos destinadas a desenhos e rabiscos ou às instruções para construção de aparelhos tão antigos quanto um taumatrópio (p. 45). "Diz-me e eu esquecerei, mostra-me e eu lembrar-me-ei, deixa-me fazer e eu compreenderei" (trad. p. 10) é a filosofia que permanece transversal a todo o livro.

Na sua dimensão pedagógica não se englobam, porém, perspectivas históricas ou olhares críticos sobre o cinema de animação. Nesse sentido, o discurso permanentemente técnico e orientado para a aplicação prática distingue-o de outras obras cuja preocupação em descortinar as diferentes fases do processo de criação, planeamento e realização de um filme de animação também marcam presença. A este respeito, considere-se, apenas a título de exemplo, a extensa obra de Richard Williams, *The Animator's Survival Kit* (2001), um compêndio de recomendações, regras, truques, magnificamente ilustrados e acompanhados por referências históricas, ou *The Fundamentals of Animation* (2006) da autoria de Paul Wells, um guia técnico apoiado por contextualizações, histórias e exemplos clássicos e contemporâneos do cinema de animação. Com base nos exemplos supramencionados, reconhece-se no manual de Engler um escasso sustento de enquadramentos históricos, o que, em contrapartida, não revela uma lacuna mas, pelo contrário, através das breves menções a animadores, filmes, livros, teorias e por aí adiante, abre portas à curiosidade e consequente procura de conhecimento. Tal particularidade é desde logo evidente na viagem de descoberta, que o leitor é convidado a efectuar, através da descrição dos princípios do movimento até à criação de emoção, a começar pelo título do livro, *From Motion to Emotion*.

A este propósito, será interessante recuar na cronologia da imagem animada a fim de melhor compreender o vínculo entre o movimento e a emoção, sobre o qual Robi Engler tece observações quando envereda pela caracterização e animação de personagens, reforçando acerca desta última que nela não estão somente envolvidas forças físicas justificativas do movimento dos corpos, mas estados psicológicos (p. 180). Existe, neste contexto, uma associação implícita entre a animação do final do século XIX, que se baseava, de

modo sucinto, na ilusão de movimento, e a animação realizada na primeira metade do século XX, que expande as suas potencialidades criativas e delas desabrocha a ilusão da vida. Animadores como Émile Cohl ou Winsor McCay estão na base de um processo técnico e criativo aperfeiçoado durante décadas que culminou na longa-metragem de animação *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (*A Branca de Neve e os Sete Anões*, 1937) de Walt Disney e inaugurou assim a ilusão da vida. A ilusão da vida vive, salvo o pleonasmo, nas personagens, nos seus pensamentos e nas suas emoções, como postulado por Frank Thomas e Ollie Johnston.[1] Nessa acepção, as anotações de Robi Engler sobre o movimento com significado, aquele que encontra motivação nos pensamentos, sentimentos ou emoções das personagens (p. 152), assim como, e desde logo, na consciência do título do seu livro, tornam presente a herança histórica do cinema de animação. Reforce-se uma vez mais que o autor mantém um discurso direcionado maioritariamente para metodologias de planeamento, criação e realização, mas nas pequenas referências reconhece-se uma atenta consciência histórica, cultural, política e social.

Em tom de conclusão, regressando à dimensão pedagógica do livro e entrelaçando-a a esta consciência sociopolítica subentendida, no capítulo final, mais especificamente num subcapítulo escrito por Nicole Salomon, co-fundadora do Festival de Annecy, pode ler-se:

> Os filmes de animação são também um meio maravilhoso de expressão, usando formas, ritmo, tempo e movimento todos ao mesmo tempo. [...] Os filmes de animação, basicamente os não-verbais, são uma forma privilegiada de comunicação. Em períodos em que todos falam sobre aproximar as pessoas e em que as fronteiras nacionais estão a desaparecer, é importante comunicar diretamente sem a desvantagem de uma barreira linguística. (trad. p. 286)

Nas palavras de Salomon ecoa uma consciencialização acerca do potencial do cinema de animação no que respeita à demolição de barreiras comunicacionais mas sobretudo sociais. Desde a época da Segunda Grande Guerra (1939-1945), como refere o historiador Giannalberto Bendazzi,[2] que a animação teve a capacidade de influenciar sentimentos, gostos e se tornou um poderoso meio de resistência, assim como de propaganda política. Num momento em que o mundo se vê refém de discursos de violência e incentivo ao ódio, é urgente ensinar a empatia e o respeito pelo próximo. A animação poderá ser, de

facto, um dos possíveis caminhos. O manual de Robi Engler não pretende enveredar por tais temáticas, porém, ao promover a procura do conhecimento através de uma série de referências camufladas pelo discurso técnico, e ao encorajar à discussão crítica através das breves mas incisivas notas nos capítulos introdutório e final, o autor foi além dos objetivos a que se propôs.

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1. Frank Thomas e Ollie Johnston, *The Illusion of Life: Disney Animation* (Nova Iorque: Abbeville Press, 1981).

2. Giannalberto Bendazzi, *Animation: A World History. Volume I: Foundations - The Golden Age* (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2016).

ART HISTORY FOR FILMMAKERS:
THE ART OF VISUAL STORYTELLING

Maria Irene Aparício (NOVA-FCSH/IFILNOVA)

Gillian McIver. Londres e Nova Iorque: Bloomsbury, 2016. 256 pp. ISBN: 9781472580658.

Gillian McIver, autora do livro *Art History for Filmmakers: The Art of Visual Storytelling*, é artista experimental e realizadora canadiana, com formação superior em História e Artes Visuais, sendo a sua formação estruturante da respectiva prática artística e cinemática. É neste contexto que o livro traduz um primoroso conhecimento teórico de um conjunto de obras chave, quer da pintura quer do cinema, a par de uma clara compreensão do modo como o cinema e as outras artes se imbricam, pela genealogia das respectivas imagens e numa ulterior teorização e/ou prática das mesmas. Além do mais, e parafraseando a autora, o livro que agora se comenta é único no género, constituindo-se como um guia prático cujo objectivo é estimular o uso das artes visuais do passado, no âmbito das práticas do cinema do presente.

A obra é introduzida a partir de três questões, a saber: "Como é que a História da Arte se conecta com a História do Cinema?", "Porque é que a Arte é importante?" e "Qual a utilidade da História da Arte para os Cineastas?" (p. 6). Embora as questões possam indiciar uma relação de carácter meramente utilitário entre duas práticas—a História da Arte e o Cinema—, o livro vai, no entanto, para além dessa dimensão ao mapear de forma imaginativa e produtiva pinturas e filmes que se intersectam, desde as grutas de Lascaux (p. 10) às obras de Edward Hopper (p. 233), passando por filmes como *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (*O Gabinete do Dr. Caligari*, 1920) (p. 202) ou *Inception* (*A Origem*, 2010) (p. 236), entre muitas outras referências das artes: pictórica e cinemática.

Dividida em oito capítulos temáticos, uma introdução e uma conclusão, a obra propõe então algumas reflexões específicas sobre temáticas relevantes no panorama da arte em geral, e do cinema em particular, nomeadamente a prevalência e permanente convocação de uma cultura visual que influencia decisivamente as narrativas cinemáticas e respectivas formas. A autora descreve a persistência e/ou retorno de questões como o realismo e a representação, aquém e para além das respectivas delimitações etimológicas e

contextuais; sexo e violência; horror; paisagem, heróis e heroísmo(s) e movimentos modernos, esta última culminando num estudo de caso sobre a influência mútua entre a arte japonesa e o cinema de animação (p. 222). Paralelamente às referências sistemáticas e estudos de caso, a autora propõe ainda, no final de cada capítulo, alguns exercícios práticos e questões directivas para uma discusssão e debate em torno das temáticas expostas.

Efectivamente, o livro *Art History for Filmmakers: The Art of Visual Storytelling,* reflecte de forma inequívoca as influências que as artes (e.g. em particular a pintura) e as humanidades, com destaque para a Mitologia e a História, se têm manifestado na prática do cinema que, desde sempre, tem procurado recriar as respectivas imagens e narrativas. Vejam-se, por exemplo, as referências ao filme *Queen Christina* (*Rainha Cristina*, 1933) de Mamoulian (p. 35), a propósito do encontro entre história, arte e ciência, através da perspectiva, ou a rima que se estabelece entre a pintura de Rembrandt van Rijn, *Bathsheba Bathing* (1654) e os filmes de Hollywood que retratam épicos biblicos, como é o caso de *Esther and the King* (*Ester e o Rei*, 1960) de Raoul Walsh (pp. 119-120). É de relembrar que, a par dos temas bíblicos e/ou mitológicos, as técnicas pictóricas (e.g. a perspectiva, o *chiaro obscuro*, etc.) foram exaustivamente exploradas pela pintura, mas foi o cinema, tributário de um *apparatus*[1] tecnológico fortemente ideologizante, que as "democratizou" e "vulgarizou" culturalmente, ao replicá-las de forma criativa, através da multiplicidade dos pontos de vista ou da expressão, nos limites da imaginação. Um dos exemplos de McIver para a condição perspéctica, no caso do cinema contemporâneo, é o emblemático filme de Alexander Sokurov, *Russkiy kovcheg* (*A Arca Russa*, 2002), mas outros filmes menos mediáticos são—ou poderiam ter sido—, ali referidos.

Nem sempre assumindo a reflexão explícita sobre a dimensão estética e filosófica que une umas e outras obras, é evidente que a autora pressupõe que as questões supracitadas são subjacentes e comuns aos gestos de pintar ou cinematografar, gestos esses determinados pelas formas—humanas ou mais que humanas—da percepção, e subsequente representação do mundo. De referir ainda que entre a descrição das formas (e.g. a composição, a luz, etc.) e a apresentação dos temas, já anteriormente mencionados (e.g. o horror, a violência, o sexo, etc.), desenha-se, também, uma matriz possível de entendimento do mundo e respectivas ideologias, através dos tempos. E é justamente esse horizonte comum das artes da pintura, do cinema e das humanidades que legitima esta proposta algo didática e,

também, o nosso interesse pela obra. Vejamos, então, um pouco mais detalhadamente, o traçado deste horizonte, em cada um dos capítulos do livro.

No primeiro capítulo, a autora relaciona sumariamente a questão fundamental da cultura visual com a dimensão comunicacional das imagens, e estas com as transformações tecnológicas e as opções técnicas, nomeadamente os usos da cor. As narrativas e as suas formas ou "tonalidades" possíveis são aqui invocadas num contexto de configuração das culturas humanas; o fresco, o retrato ou a arte sacra são, assim, reveladores de diferentes valores sócio-culturais e políticos da arte, que o cinema soube seguramente amplificar ao explorar a dimensão estética da luz (e da cor), e respectivos significados, desde *Intolerance* (*Intolerância*, 1916) até *Il deserto rosso* (*O Deserto Vermelho*, 1964), passando por *The Wizard of Oz* (*O Feiticeiro de Oz*, 1939), para citar apenas alguns dos exemplos dados.

No capítulo dois, ao convocar implicitamente alguns dos tópicos essenciais da área de estudos do cinema na sua relação com a filosofia, nomeadamente as questões do realismo, do naturalismo e da representação, McIver referencia, também, necessariamente a filosofia grega, pela via da mimesis. De resto, a citação da *Poética* de Aristóteles faz justiça às influências desta obra nos processos narrativos das artes e nas práticas da imagem ao longo de séculos, desde a tragédia clássica ao impressionismo, passando pelo drama e o melodrama contemporâneos, estes últimos amplamente explorados pelo cinema[2]. É ainda neste capítulo que a autora reflecte, sumariamente é certo, sobre a temática do espelho, cujo fascínio está bem patente no modo como artistas, cientistas, filósofos e cineastas souberam elevá-lo à condição de objecto teórico-prático que, ora cauciona dimensões epistemológicas da realidade—os espaços heterotópicos de Foucault ou *Las Meninas* (1656) de Velásquez (p. 61)—, ora se dissimula nas abstracções do realismo social que encontra na pintura de Pieter Bruegel (c. 1525-1569) ou no cinema dos irmãos Dardenne (uma das referências de McIver é, na verdade, Ken Loach, outro dos cineastas representativos desta tendência), os respectivos reflexos. "Realismo e Percepção" e "Realismo e Educação Moral" são dois outros tópicos aflorados neste capítulo, sempre numa lógica de relação entre pintura e cinema.

No capítulo três, McIver procura ir um pouco mais longe—para além do realismo—na compreensão das motivações que subjazem à representação dos "mundos fantásticos" frequentemente identificados na pintura com cenas mitológicas ou imagens oníricas, e

que o cinema explorou, também de forma exímia, através do surrealismo, por exemplo; Buñuel, Dulac, Cocteau e Svankmajer, são alguns dos cineastas citados.

"Sexo e Violência" é o título do capítulo quatro, onde se destacam as questões da nudez na pintura, em paralelo com as questões da violência frequentemente evocadas pela representação de cenas de batalha. Não deixa de ser interessante o modo como a autora aproxima obras de Horace Vernet (*The Battle of Somah*, 1836) e Francisco Goya (a pintura *The Third of May* 1808, 1814, e a série de gravuras *Disasters of War*) à ideia de violência, comparando-as depois às formas de representação cinemática da guerra em filmes como *All Quiet on the Western Front* (*A Oeste Nada de Novo*, 1930) ou *Casualties of War* (*Corações de Aço*, 1989) de Brian de Palma. Na sequência deste, o capítulo cinco, dedicado à imagética do horror aprofunda alguns aspectos que Ann Radcliffe (1764-1823), de resto citada por McIver, enuncia no seu texto *On the Supernatural in Poetry*: "O terror e o horror são completamente diferentes, no sentido em que o primeiro fala-nos da alma e eleva a nossa consciência da vida ao mais alto nível; o outro contrai, congela e quase aniquila a alma e a consciência." (p. 138). Neste mesmo capítulo, a referência ao "horror do corpo" consubstanciado no tríptico de Francis Bacon (1909-1992), *Three Studies for a Cruxification* (1962) em paralelo com a referência ao cinema de David Cronenberg—*The Brood* (*A Ninhada*, 1979) ou *The Fly* (*A Mosca*, 1986)—, reflecte bem o interesse das artes, frequentemente confrontadas com os problemas da existência e da transcendência, e as aporias de uma vida entre o horror da obsolescência do corpo e o temor que subjaz ao desconhecimento dos abismos da alma e da consciência. Esta questão está, de resto, bem patente no modo como a dimensão do horror tem sido explorada pelo cinema, quer do ponto de vista de produção e realização de filmes—e, concomitantemente, na criação de um género—, quer numa perspectiva de análise fílmica particularmente enquadrada pelas teorias psicanalíticas, por exemplo[3].

Já no capítulo seis, o tema da Paisagem situa-nos no problema do espaço e na complexidade da sua representação. Também aqui o exercício comparativo entre a pintura *Fête Galante* de Watteau, e respectivas variações sobre a paisagem campestre, e o filme *Les Amours d'Astrée e de Céladon* (*Os Amores de Astrea e Celadon*, 2007) de Eric Rhomer (p. 158), entre outros, aponta para essa extrema permeabilidade entre as artes, consubstanciada num diálogo permanente, dialéctico e, por vezes, intertextual entre imagens e narrativas. No estudo de caso, o nosso destaque vai para a acuidade da breve reflexão comparativa

entre o olhar minimalista de Kelly Reichardt em *Meek's Cutoff* (*O Atalho*, 2010) e a simétrica imagem da pintura de Millet *L'Angélus* (1857-1859), ambas profundamente sublimes na captura da "hora mágica".

"Heróis e Actos Heróicos" é o tema do capítulo sete, que revela uma possibilidade de reflexão sobre os géneros—o cinematográfico e o pictórico—, na justa medida em que é pelo retrato ou pelo biopic que frequentemente se projectam figuras históricas e públicas que se elevam à categoria de herói: por exemplo, *Napoléon* (*Napoleão),* o de Abel Gance (1927) ou o de David, *Bonaparte franchissant les Alpes* (1801), ou *La Liberté guidant le peuple* (1830) do virtuoso Eugène Delacroix.

Finalmente, o capítulo "Movimentos Modernos" prolonga a reflexão em torno de questões específicas do século XX como o expressionismo, a abstracção e o minimalismo, por exemplo, ao mesmo tempo que procura compreender a projecção destes movimentos e os respectivos contributos para uma ideia de cultura, bem como a emergência de uma crítica em torno de práticas afectas a uma denominada cultura de massas. Perante relações tão amplas como as que são enunciadas ao longo da obra é evidente que persistem, desde logo, algumas questões que são talvez, menos relacionadas com a pergunta da conclusão: "Como é que a História da Arte pode ser potenciada pelo Cinema?", e mais ligadas ao efectivo interesse e alcance epistemológico dessa potencial ligação. Nesta linha de ideias, teria sido interessante um desenvolvimento mais aprofundado das ligações, pautadas mais aprofundadamente pelo conhecimento, e em detrimento de uma evidente analogia visual que, por vezes, reduz estas relações entre cinema e pintura ao modo—ainda que legítimo, claro!—, da citação. Ainda assim, trata-se de uma obra basilar para todos aqueles que procuram mapear as relações imensas e, por vezes, incomensuráveis, entre as diversas artes e as possíveis ligações destas com as questões subliminarmente filosóficas.

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1. O gigantesco alcance cultural e ideológcio deste "cinematic apparatus", tal como descrito por Stephen Heath, foi amplamente analisado por vários autores consagrados no livro editado por Teresa de Lauretis e Stephen Heath, justamente sob o título *The Cinematic Apparatus* (Londres: Macmillan Press, 1980).

2. Veja-se, por exemplo, o texto de João Constâncio. "Narrativa: A estrutura narrativa. Da Poética de Aristóteles à arte cinematográfica de Hitchcock, Lubitsch e Wilder" in João Mário Grilo e Maria Irene Aparício (orgs.), *Cinema & Filosofia. Compêndio* (Lisboa: Edições Colibri, 2013), 117-140.

3. A propósito desta questão, veja-se a obra editada por Steven Jay Schneider, *Horror Film and Psychoanalysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

CONFERENCE REPORTS | RELATÓRIOS DE CONFERÊNCIAS

NOTES ON CREATIVE PRACTICE RESEARCH
IN THE AGE OF NEOLIBERAL HOPELESSNESS,
UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE, UK, 10-12 MAY 2018

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1. THE HUMAN CENTIPEDE

It must be quite perplexing for non-UK scholars to look at what is happening in contemporary British Higher Education. All that British academics seem to talk about involves weird terms like 'impact' and three-letter acronyms (TLAs) like REF (the research excellent framework) and TEF (the teaching excellence framework).

For those who do not know, these 'frameworks' to a certain extent decide the fate of British universities, since how well one does in these tests determines the amount of money that a university will receive from the government over the coming period, thereby helping it economically to survive. In short order, the REF system would seem to favour the richer universities over the poorer universities, since the former can afford to give more time to their staff in order to carry out research. Furthermore, as has widely been contended, the issue of impact, which is a central component of the REF and which is measured by the extent to which academics can make their research relevant to and perhaps even useful for non-academic, preferably industrial, organisations (i.e. to what extent academics can help other organisations to make money), skews naturally towards the sciences. Indeed, if part of one's job involves the critique of capitalism (as we might characterise some parts of the humanities), then how one will positively impact (i.e. perpetuate) a capitalist society is up for question (notwithstanding the impact created by encouraging industry to be more 'ethical').

This is not to mention the TEF, which rates universities via a link to another TLA that often passes the lips of academics working in the UK, namely the NSS, or National Student Survey. The latter is one of the more influential league tables that is constructed annually, and in which universities are rated according to the quality of the academic half of the student experience. Little matter that students, who on the whole will only have had

involvement with their own institution, have nothing against which to compare their experiences (except perhaps their own expectations). And little matter, then, that students will likely rate their experiences based upon expectations created as a result of things like league tables: going to a university that lies towards the bottom of a league table? Well, then, you probably won't get particularly good teaching because you did not do well enough at school in order to go to a high ranking university—so you might as well assume that what you'll get at your low ranking university is teaching that is low ranking… not least because you have nothing against which to compare it. And let us not even mention the possibility that those who struggled in school, but who wish to go to university because a degree might well help them to improve their lot in the world (or simply to have fun for three years before the shit really begins), might well also struggle at university—and who as a result of that struggle will not feel inclined to give to their institution a good score, while those with excellent educations and who sail through elite universities can pat themselves on the back by saying that everything that they experienced was excellent.

Now, I can attest from personal experience that the teaching and the research in film studies is basically the equal at low-ranking institutions as it is at high-ranking ones as far as the personnel is concerned—and this is logically the case since there are far too many people qualified for the job and who are looking for work these days, meaning that even low-ranking institutions will have excellent teachers and researchers. This is perhaps mitigated by the way in which staff at poorer institutions can be overburdened as a result of necessarily low staff-to-student ratios (as few staff members and as many students as possible), with the growing number of visiting lecturers paid only by the hour (as opposed to full-time staff with secure jobs) only furthering the problem because in spite of their almost certainly excellent levels of expertise and teaching skills, they simply are not paid enough by their institution to give to students the experience that the latter believe their money demands/deserves, or at the very least that both staff and students would desire (which is not to mention that they must often work numerous jobs simultaneously). My point, then, is that the staff are not the cause of perceived differences in quality between universities, a point to which I shall return below.

Indeed, if what changes most from year to year at a university is not the teaching staff (or the curriculum) so much as the students, then any annual student survey is as much if not more a reflection of a particular annual cohort than it is a genuine reflection of the ins-

titution and its staff. And if a cohort is poor (economically and perhaps also in terms of the quality of education that they have received prior to university, which, to be clear, is not the same as their level of intelligence), then the neoliberalisation of higher education in the UK seems directly to result in social conservatism, whereby the poor get poorer and the rich get richer, and whereby the REF and the TEF ensure that low-ranking and poorer universities get punished while high-ranking and typically richer universities get rewarded—even as the poorer university tries to bring about social mobility for those who need it most. Indeed, students from poorer backgrounds become increasingly indebted in order to study—meaning that the social mobility that universities should promise results in the opposite. That is, their debt leads to social immobility. Or at least this is the case until the poorer universities crumble under the weight of their own debts, leading to a more ignorant population that is easier to control, and at which point the government will have to come up with another scheme to create popular debt that it can then use to pay off international deficits, and so on (perhaps by offering dogshit mortgages to people as per the build-up to the 2008 economic crash, or by creating military institutions).

Ought a staff member to care about and to make it their job to ensure that students are both enjoying and learning from university, while at the same time through their research trying to further knowledge in their field—and to disseminate that knowledge as far and wide as they can, so that it is transferred out of the academy and into the general population? The short answer is of course yes—and rare is it that I've met any higher educator who does not agree with me. Nonetheless, when crises are created in universities, as per the REF and the TEF, then crisis must of course be managed. Hence the rise of the manager within British higher education—whose job (well paid or otherwise) is basically consistently to remind staff members that they must care about their job – and to provide statistics that generally seem to demonstrate that they do not care quite enough about their job, but the accumulation of which statistics clearly demonstrates that the managers care enough about their job, which apparently becomes to gather means to demonstrate that staff members don't care enough about their job. That is, the rise of the manager becomes a system of bad faith, whereby the measurement of all things within the university means that staff members are constantly being monitored and have to answer for more or less every move that they make in terms of teaching and research.

Do these managers themselves get consistently rated? Only inasmuch as they can blame staff members for anything that goes wrong or does not receive a good score. Do

the students get rated? Only inasmuch as they get graded, which in turn they can blame on staff members if they do not like their grades. In spite of my assertion above that staff members are basically of a high standard across all universities, the result is that teaching researchers get told from both sides (managers and students) that everything that goes wrong within the university is basically their fault. The inmates run the asylum. And small wonder, then, that there is grade inflation in order to make one's life more liveable. That is, what is supposed to result in one doing a better job in fact results in one doing a worse job because of the unmanageable nature of the emotional and psychological damage that is done to educators who are told that they are shit even as they try simply to follow their belief as best they can that everyone deserves an education, and as they try to share and to create knowledge in the numerous different ways that they can.

Indeed, if students who struggled at school are supposed not to struggle (or even be challenged) at university for fear of them giving to that university a low score in the student survey, then by definition standards become *lower* at university than they were at school. Education, in other words, goes backwards as students are transformed into clients who can demand what they wish, and as universities that no longer receive so much support from the government struggle to stay afloat—not least to pay off the debts accrued to install the facilities that will make the university attractive to would-be students, even if a university also wants to hold on to the vision and mission of providing education to students from all sectors of society and thus to help bring about social mobility and perhaps even social change.

The same impoverishment, alas, holds true for research. The REF sees UK academics have their published work rated in a star system that ranges from unclassified (a senseless definition of published work that "does not meet the published definition of research for the purposes of this assessment"—i.e. research that is not research), up through one star ("quality that is recognised nationally"), two star ("quality that is recognised internationally"), three star ("quality that is internationally excellent") and four star ("quality that is world-leading"). Setting aside the way in which the REF system basically spits in the face of existing peer review systems (however fallible they are) as it imposes its own ratings on published work (meaning it is about as reliable as a journalist's opinion of a film, a comparison to which I shall return), except that contrary to peer review, the REF rating is final (one cannot rework and resubmit an essay for REF that one might after rejection from peer reviewers).

Furthermore, it is worth noting how these definitions do not rate the work but *the quality of the work* (i.e. the research is not world-leading, but the quality of the research is world-leading). One of the upshots of this nuance is that research excellence in the UK is not so much about publishing excellent work, as about how one bigs up that work. That is, the REF becomes an exercise not in research but in self-promotion. Indeed, I have seen it explained various times at sessions on how to deal with the REF (while also having it explained to me that this is a reason why one of my pieces of work was only deemed worthy of two stars, as we shall see later), that what one must do to achieve a good score is to explain in one's research essay why it is worthy of a three or a four star rating. What this means is that many essays and books that come out of UK universities have within them curious passages, typically early on, that in hyperbolic language explain that what they are doing is world-leading and truly original research. In other words, the REF begins to infuse the style of British academia, meaning that outsiders to that system will look at the work and ask why it has all of these strange turns of phrase and tics. And they will realise that the reason why UK-based authors are doing this weird self-promotion stuff is because of their national rating system. Meaning that what is supposed to be world-leading in fact becomes increasingly parochial, since it is written not to disseminate knowledge, but to satisfy the rating system of a national measurement. Research, in other words, goes backwards.

But more than this. As many film reviewers have got it wrong regarding what constitutes an enduring classic, with many of the greats being films that were relatively neglected upon their release (let us name *La règle du jeu* [*Rules of the Game*, 1939] and *Citizen Kane* [1941] as two examples), so might REF reviewers get it wrong regarding what constitutes a great or enduring piece of research—or certainly one that is ahead of its time. Indeed, the immediacy of the REF system leads not to the development of quality work, but to the academic equivalent of the box office smash that rakes in a lot of money on its opening weekend. The small and the fragile are not protected, but are positively stamped upon in this system. For, in order to manage the REF, what nigh every UK university does nowadays is annually to submit staff members' work to a 'mock REF' panel, which guesses in advance what score that work would get from the actual REF panel. When work is deemed not good enough (which is to say when it does not get at least a three star rating), then it is discounted and discarded from the would-be REF submission, and the author

has to go back to the drawing board in order to come up with work that is of a perceived good enough quality.

Forget about the emotional and psychological damage of being told once again that your work is basically not good enough—even though it has already been published, often via a peer review system. More important to understand is that this emotional and psychological damage is built into this system. For, if I am grading someone else's work for a mock REF, I could just be really generous and give it four stars in a gesture to show that we all work hard and do our best and that all research is relevant and valid, even if some of it is more obviously so. But this will not help anyone out in the actual REF—and so I am encouraged always to err on the side of conservative grading, just in case I get it wrong. Since the university cannot risk putting something in for the real REF that only got two stars in the mock REF, then the system itself leads to lower predicted and in some senses lower actual scores (in spite of the persistent myth, sometimes denied, that the formula is that a book gets four stars, a journal article three stars, and a book chapter two stars). Where the UK's American cousins are known for their hyperbolic letters of recommendation and truly unbelievable scores on their student evaluations, the UK rating system, combined with the dour conservatism of the UK mentality, leads to the opposite. Indeed, where Americans and the British increasingly both undertake grade inflation for their students, the REF is more likely to lead to a sort of "grade deflation" for academics. And so, UK academics are basically made to feel shit about themselves around the clock (since the job never ends as one is always trying not only to do a better job, but also to explain how one is doing a better job via the reams of bureaucratic forms that one is required at all points of time to fill in).

There is more yet. In 2015, I published an essay on Lav Diaz's *Melancholia* (2008) in a book called *Slow Cinema*, edited by Tiago de Luca and Nuno Barradas Jorge.[1] I submitted this to a mock REF panel and got two stars for the essay. The feedback said that the essay was of "[r]elatively limited significance in that the piece does not make wider connections or indicate how this reading extends existing understanding." Given that the essay appears in an edited collection on slow cinema, it is not necessarily the job of a chapter author to give its wider connections; indeed, if this were a requirement, then every essay in the collection would have to repeat the same point about how significant slow cinema is in the contemporary world. Furthermore, the feedback does not suggest that the essay does

not extend existing understanding (which it does, since to the best of my knowledge it is the first academic essay to be published on the film); it simply says that the essay does not indicate how it extends existing understanding. That is, the essay does not waste words bigging itself up, but is conversely punished not for being a bad essay, but for not explaining to the reader how it is a good essay. Good essays do not just get on with being good; they spend some time explaining how they are good.

What we have here, then, is not simply a case of how the essay in an edited collection likely is going to be rated more lowly—simply because the editors will be the ones to give the contextual explanation of the book's focus. Nor do we just have in this feedback the implied sense that the close reading of a single film will also diminish in stature (even if good) because the essay "does not make wider connections." What I want to highlight is that de Luca and Jorge's book was nominated for the 2017 best edited collection award from the British Association of Film, Television and Screen Studies (BAFTSS). And yet, here it is with a low-scoring two star essay inside it. Not only might my essay be the reason why the collection did not win that award, but the situation points to how in the future research will be measured not on the mock REF and subsequent REF score that it gets, but actually on *predicted future scores*, such that no embarrassing and award-depriving two star work will ever come out. That is, we will have to pitch our research from the moment of conceptualisation in order then to be authorised actually to undertake it, meaning that research and the development of knowledge become teleological exercises in which knowledge is understood before it has been produced, i.e. knowledge becomes the reaffirmation of existing knowledge and the systems that produce it, rather than novel knowledge and ways of thinking and learning.

I think regularly that I would be better off outside of academia, while also having sporadic, depression-inspired fantasies both of dying so that I no longer have to do my job and of just walking away with a semi-dramatic mic drop depending on whether a manager says to me any of the trigger phrases that I have set for myself. But worse than my own personal welfare is the welfare of higher education in the UK. We are not there yet (and it would be rum for me to suggest that my prediction about giving future pre-predicted REF scores before the research has even been undertaken is anything other than speculative, even if the mock REF is precisely a prediction about future REF scores and not an actual measure of what score a piece of work will get). But we do seem to be heading in that direction.

And yet, I still have not finished. For, another piece of work that I have published is a video-essay on the sexuality of space in the journal *[in]Transition*. This piece of work was also awarded two stars by a mock REF panel—this despite the (published) peer review describing the work as "bear[ing] a more ambitious and multi-layered poetic agenda" than Marlon Riggs' *Tongues Untied* (1989). Riggs' film is considered a true classic of queer cinema, while a website called *The Greatest Films* also places it as the 436th greatest film of all time.2 The reason for bringing this up is to suggest that a mock REF panel (and perhaps even the REF panel itself) does not necessarily know what it is looking for or even at when it comes to scholars producing audiovisual work, since apparently only work that would come in roughly the top four hundred films of all time would be worth three or four stars. *Citizen Kane* would likely get three stars, maybe scraping four stars if it was lucky and the REF panel decided that day to be generous.

I stand in the relatively luxurious position of producing a lot of research, of which enough is perceived to be of three or four star quality, that I am not under too much pressure to somehow improve my work. Indeed, I have even been told that I produce too much work by my institution, which would prefer me to produce less and better work—even though enough of my work is good enough for REF purposes. This has led me to start publishing work under pseudonyms (a ploy carried out also for the purposes of challenging the REF's implicit cult of the author), while it also makes me worry about how the system refuses to respect how different researchers simply work at different rates and to each their own (at a time when we are conversely encouraged in a theoretically laudable but actually problematic way to fetishise difference in the seminar room—this being laudable because we must challenge our own preconceptions and continue to learn to communicate our knowledge in different ways and to different people, but also problematic since it basically gives *carte blanche* to students to complain about anything that displeases them—meaning once again that it is always the higher educator's fault, and their mental well-being can go hang if the client is put out at any given moment in time).

Forced to kneel before these star systems as if they were not human and fallible, contemporary UK academics thus also have bad faith in a system that has no faith in them: under constant surveillance and measurement, with no means to answer back except by mental breakdown or departure, we are forced to accept (i.e. to acknowledge as legitimate) these systems that crush the possible pleasure of life now (I mean, no one is actually

supposed to enjoy their work, right?) for the purposes of controlling the future. We are forced not just to eat shit, but to smile about it, since no one wants to see an unhappy shit-eater. Who cares that a diet of shit will lead only to shitty shit as opposed to solid and sturdy stools of knowledge? Indeed, if you produce and eat ever more shitty shit, no one cares, as long as you are smiling about it—as long as you are saying that you are producing really good shit, whether you believe it to be true or not, and even though it is not true. In this way, drivel emerges as the standard of academic work as everyone is forced to accept a monolithic conception of research quality driven by metrics and the idiocracy's race to the bottom. The more drivel-like the shit is, the more it will stick to those smiling teeth, thereby functioning as evidence of its quality. Come on! Sew your mouth up to your neighbour's ass and join the human centipede of UK higher education!

2. THE PERSISTENCE OF ELSAESSER

The foregoing section is designed (perhaps hyperbolically and certainly via broad brush strokes) to give a sense of what neoliberal hopelessness is or might be such that Agnieszka Piotrowska decided to organise a conference on that theme with the help of Priyanka Verma, and which had an especial emphasis on creative practice research, or the category of work under which might fall the audiovisual essay-making described above (if you can't make *Citizen Kane*, or rather a proper blockbuster that has immediate box office returns, then you might as well give up).

Taking place in May 2018, the conference was inspired by Piotrowska's experiences as a simultaneous theorist and practitioner, as well featuring a screening of her zero-budget feature film, *Escape* (2016), co-directed with Joe Njagu, which explores how Freudian ideas/*film noir* can function in a contemporary Zimbabwean context. The conference featured numerous contributions from an array of scholars, the majority of which are based in the UK, but many of whom are not. In particular the conference featured screenings and performances that bridged the gap between practice and research, with highlights including Timothy Jarvis' "Day's Horse Descend: Reflections on Radical Writing Processes," Jyoti Mistry, Lindiwe Dovey and Nobunye Levin doing an untitled video performance on South African history, in particular as seen through the eyes of women, Catherine Grant's keynote on contemporary video-essay work, and Roberta Mock performatively engaging

with the concept of failure in relation to stand-up comedy. Numerous practitioners discussed and showed their work, while the issues of the REF and (to a lesser extent) the TEF repeatedly reared their heads during discussions both in and around the conference's panels. However, forasmuch as the conference was a wonderful example of rich and vibrant difference from and thus resistance to the typical conference that can sometimes feel homogeneous and repetitive, I should wish in the second half of this piece to focus on the contributions of another keynote speaker at the conference, namely Thomas Elsaesser.

For, the conference played host to a screening of Elsaesser's debut film, *Die Sonneninsel* (*The Sun Island*, 2017), which film scholars may have noticed has been doing a round of campus screenings over the past year or so, while Elsaesser also gave a keynote talk in which he outlined the perceived benefits of a concept that he described as "tactical compliance." The aim here, then, is to work through what tactical compliance might mean in the face of the torrent of shit that I described in the last section—and in some senses to take issue with the concept in terms of how it might actually apply to someone working within contemporary UK higher education, to which Elsaesser does not currently belong, despite studying in the UK and spending many years working at the University of East Anglia, as well as two stints at the University of Cambridge. Nonetheless, that Elsaesser has basically avoided the neoliberalisation of UK Higher Education may to a certain extent render comprehensible both the concept and my resistance to it. In order to do this, I wish to situate Elsaesser's current creative work, namely *Die Sonneninsel*, within the context of his theoretical work, in particular his understanding of the so-called *Persistence of Hollywood* (2012), which itself springs perhaps from his contribution to Vivian Sobchack's edited collection on *The Persistence of History* (1997). The aim is not to produce an *ad hominem* "attack" on Elsaesser and his work, but to understand tactical compliance as a means towards persistence, while also relating persistence to systems of power. In other words, the ideas of Elsaesser will be linked to Elsaesser-as-idea (as author, as filmmaker), with no real concern for Elsaesser-as-man (if that is how he would define himself and/or if that is what Elsaesser is).

The reason why what follows will necessarily seem to conflate the personal with the political is because *Die Sonneninsel* is in some senses a deeply personal film. The film is primarily about the rehabilitation of the reputation of the filmmaker's grandfather, Martin Elsaesser, an architect who played a significant role in the design of Frankfurt between 1925 and 1932, and whose most famous work, the city's *Großmarkthalle*, or Central Market,

was to be destroyed to make way for the new headquarters of the European Central Bank in the first part of the twenty first century. However, the film also is a consideration of the Elsaessers' family history—including perhaps most significantly the relationship between the filmmaker's grandmother, Liesel, and landscape designer Leberecht Migge. Migge, whom Elsaesser has referred to elsewhere as "something like the Grandfather of the German Green movement,"[3] is the person mainly responsible for the titular Sun Island, which started out in 1932 as a kind of project for sustainable living, where inhabitants would be able to survive without the interference of the modern world. In this sense, the island could even be read as a sort of utopian escape from the political turmoil that Germany was undergoing from the 1930s onwards, and during which time the bulk of the film's story takes place.

Indeed, Martin Elsaesser finds himself losing favour under National Socialism, while Migge also is something of an outsider as a result of the radical nature of his ideas of conservation, including the *Siedlung* or growing house that exists on the island. Migge then dies in 1935 while in Liesel's company, despite having a wife and eight children who live in Worpswede. When the war starts, Liesel is almost overwhelmed by the amount of work that is required to maintain Migge's project, but she gets help from Trudel, a young woman who eventually becomes the wife of Hans Peter Elsaesser, Martin and Liesel's son, and the filmmaker's father.

Not only is Hans Peter the filmmaker's father. In some senses, he is himself also the filmmaker since *Die Sonneninsel* comprises in large part of home movie footage shot by Hans Peter of life on the Sun Island and elsewhere. Thomas Elsaesser thus arranges the material, which also includes photographs, contemporary film footage and more, while giving to the film a voice over that allows him to reflect semi-theoretically and semi-personally on events from the 1920s through the 1940s and up until the present day, where finally Martin Elsaesser's legacy is recognised, and a testament to the architect is created in the ECB building that stands on and incorporates some aspects of the earlier Central Market.

In a relatively simple fashion, *Die Sonneninsel* is a campaign film that seeks to save Martin Elsaesser from oblivion and to restore to him a place in German history. More than this, the film is an exploration of the home movie archive, while also demonstrating how the Elsaesser family was connected via Migge to the incipient green movement. An essay-

film and a documentary, the film equally explores Germany's history during the war, since while various members of the Elsaesser family served in the German military during the war (with two of Migge's sons joining the Nazi party before being killed on the Eastern Front in 1944), Trudel was also a half-Jewess (not devout), meaning that the film in some senses is also (or could lay claim to being) about the saving of Jews during the war. Finally, the film is very clearly a treatment of family and the role that images can play in creating a sense of family, lending to the film a tinge of melodrama that at no point is forced upon the viewer.

In fact, the film seeks at all points in time to force as little on the viewer as possible, with the filmmaker's position often seeming absent, in spite of the seemingly personal nature of the film, and in spite of the filmmaker's own voice being that which we hear most on the soundtrack, with the filmmaker also occasionally appearing on the image track, e.g. to wander around the Sun Island today, placing his hands on a dilapidated building in order to feel the history of this *lieu de mémoire*. Indeed, the film seems to want to be deliberately ambiguous, with Elsaesser during his keynote claiming that he wants audiences, insofar as they are willing, to "make their own film out of mine." [4] And yet, *Die Sonneninsel* also takes care to maintain within it claims to dealing with all of the major issues of German history and the global present in a politically correct fashion: ecology, architecture, war, Holocaust, history, family and more. In some senses this makes the film fascinating. But in other senses, it seems that the film wants to be the sort of documentary equivalent of the access-for-all blockbuster that Elsaesser feels is characteristic of contemporary Hollywood: deliberately ambiguous, it can be understood and taken in many different ways in a bid to reach as wide an audience as possible. Or, put in terms that are less compliant, it says everything, but ultimately it means nothing. This ability to have no properly identifiable position on anything, and yet to be able to make reference to it all, is what Elsaesser characterises as one of the key aspects of *the persistence of Hollywood*.[5]

Die Sonneninsel is clearly not a Hollywood blockbuster, but we shall return later to what it is—and how this relates to tactical compliance as we are yet to develop it.[6] For the time being, though, we might read the film against another piece of Elsaesser's work that is framed not by the persistence of Hollywood, but by the persistence of history in cinema, namely his essay in Vivian Sobchack's edited collection of the same name.[7] In that (typically wide-ranging) essay, Elsaesser explores the treatment of the Second World War

by post-war European filmmakers, taking in a range of ideas that might help us to understand *The Sun Island*. Firstly, the film is in some sense an example of what Elsaesser refers to as *Alltagsgeschichte*, or the "history of everyday life," in that the film records and reports the lives of relatively common folk (the Elsaesser family is *bourgeois*) over an extended period of time.[8] Here, "Nazism… [is] a daily reality," as opposed to a subject that has to be treated with any sense of hysteria or melodrama.[9] Quoting Martin Broszat, Elsaesser says that the genre functions as a means for Germans "to be able to talk about the 'Third Reich' as 'the German people's own history' and thus for individuals to take responsibility for what had occurred."[10] In this way, the genre is considered in relation to the war to be "apologetic in tendency if not intent."[11] That is, the *Alltagsgeschichte* normalises Nazism, offering an apology for it in the sense of a defence or an excuse rather than in the sense of saying sorry for taking part in it (Nazism was everyday reality and so of course everyday people got caught up in it). Given that the Elsaesser family connections with Nazism are glossed over without much investigation or comment, there is a loose sense in which *Die Sonneninsel* might also contain elements of this genre.

Earlier in the essay, Elsaesser invokes Jean Baudrillard to suggest that the German "retro-cinema" of the 1970s and 1980s that looked back at the war can be explained as follows: "[t]he attraction of a return to history as story and image was the illusion it could give of a personal or national destiny: a need fascism had tried to gratify on a collective scale."[12] In other words, the desire to mine one's own history involves an attempt to give meaning to one's life (to give it a destiny), a tendency for desiring meaning that fascism itself has so skilfully explored. Indeed, the perceived "affinity between fascism and show business"[13] functions as an ongoing thread throughout Elsaesser's essay, which soon turns its attention to Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (USA, 1993), which was critiqued by Claude Lanzmann, among others, for offering a sentimentalised, middle-of-the-road and typically American perspective on the Holocaust. Why should the middle-of-the-road nature of the film be surprising, though, Elsaesser asks, before going on to suggest that Spielberg chooses "for the cinema and its history: whether this makes him a postmodernist, and whether a postmodern stance makes him necessarily either morally or historically irresponsible towards the Holocaust, is a point worth pondering."[14] But either way, Spielberg has a "typically postmodern hubris, namely the faith that the cinema can redeem the

past, rescue the real, and even rescue that which was never real"[15]—a perspective wholly different to that of Lanzmann, who has signally more modernist tendencies.

Perhaps one can see where I am going with this. Hans Peter and Thomas Elsaesser alike document their family in a bid to redeem the past, to rescue the real and perhaps even to rescue that which was never real, namely an island of sun during times of darkness. Perhaps this is because instead of telling a story, "an activity closer to therapeutic practice has taken over, with acts of re-telling, re-membering, and repeating all pointing in the direction of obsession fantasy, trauma."[16] But what is the trauma (or the obsession fantasy) that the Elsaesser family has suffered? Might it be the trauma of having been, like Martin Elsaesser, left out of history? But what is that history? That under a different regime, the genius of Martin Elsaesser would have been recognised? But this is history as a counter-factual, the rescue of a past that was never real. For what really happened is that, in however banal a fashion, Martin Elsaesser donned the uniform of the German army and played his part in the war. As a result, "Germany appears a nation of victims,"[17] with the attempt to rescue Martin Elsaesser from the dustbin of history leading to the realisation that, in a kind of strange inversion of what happens when Elsaesser watches *Mr. Klein* (1976), one wants to rescue all Germans from the inescapable past: "we are shattered by the knowledge of our total impotence; but which is also the knowledge of our own collusion and complicity."[18]

Surely to elicit such a complex set of reactions makes of Elsaesser's film an astonishing piece of work. Nonetheless, there is more for us to consider, including in particular how the filmmaker achieves this. Also in the persistence of history essay, Elsaesser speaks of "the 'political unconscious' of a popular text that by definition exceeds the control of the maker and which becomes a cultural or historical fact precisely because of this excess."[19] In its deliberate ambiguity—in its access-for-all nature—does the film exceed the control of the maker, or is the excess of control performed (the ambiguity is deliberate), and yet which performance masks another excess, which is the understated presence of a fascism with which the Elsaesser family was at least tactically compliant, if not outright collusive/complicit?

Thomas Elsaesser himself evoked in the Bedfordshire discussion of *Die Sonneninsel* how he felt he was tactically compliant with those who commissioned and who worked with him on its making. That is, while Elsaesser had his own ideas about the film that he

wanted to make, he could not make the film in exactly the way that he wanted—and that his film was stronger as a result of this. That is, for Elsaesser tactical compliance with the powers that be led to a film that got to be screened on German television, played at various festivals around the world, and which continues to get played at campuses in many places (perhaps as a result of Elsaesser's formidable reputation as a film scholar). In other words, while a documentary, it was by adopting the relatively mainstream aesthetics of the access-for-all work that the film was, or has been, validated. Success in the attention economy, then, is the criterion according to which Elsaesser defines success as a filmmaker. Compliance with (relatively) mainstream aesthetics (not least through the use of an authoritative, masculine voiceover) leads to mainstream results. A middle-of-the-road and accessible aesthetic is necessary to convince viewers that cinema can redeem history, including a history that never was. It is this that allows history to persist. It is this that allows Hollywood to persist. And it is this that allows Elsaesser to persist—since Hollywood is history and history is Hollywood, and if Elsaesser can make himself Hollywood, then he writes himself and his grandfather (back) into history, and only tactical compliance can achieve this.

When discussing the film at a screening at the University of Southern California in April 2018, interviewer Michael Renov pointed out how Elsaesser is almost a Zelig-like figure due to his and his family's capacity to be at the centre of history (the family past on the Sun Island, with the filmmaker also being in Paris during 1968, the west coast of the USA during the counter-culture of the 1970s and more). Indeed, Elsaesser has himself addressed how he happens almost accidentally to have persisted as part of the history of film studies ("you can do quite well, it seems, by repeating your mistakes, provided you persist with them long enough").[20] The desire to inscribe oneself in history, even if it means floating Zelig-like on its waves, never quite having a proper identity for oneself, an absence of self that perhaps also is an originary trauma that compels one to make cinema and to write history… perhaps signals history as precisely a history of blank, Zelig-like men who celebrate themselves while around them others live and die in their efforts genuinely to achieve a position, or as a result of having a position and an identity imposed upon them (the sense of envy that at least Jews have the Holocaust to help define them, the primary narcissism when someone else gains attention and not oneself, the desire to have said everything, to create and to become the walking equivalent of an access-for-all

cinema; in Elsaesser's own words, recognition "soothes the worry that what one has done doesn't really amount to much; it soothes the worry that what one is personally most proud of has gone unnoticed or unrecognized; and… is a wonderful plaster on the narcissistic wound and a palliative for any soul not immune to self-doubt"; furthermore, Elsaesser—of course!—has also anticipated and thus in some senses already made his own counter-argument when he implores scholars not to "put us on a pedestal; try occasionally also to push us off the pedestal").[21]

To be clear: the above paragraph is not a psychoanalysis of a human being whom I do not know well, with whom I have had some arguments, but who on the whole I find generous, intellectually curious, and good-humoured (by which I mean that he has had the good taste to laugh at at least a couple of the jokes that I have made in his presence, while also offering generous feedback on and engagement with a proof version of this very piece of writing). But let us run with the metaphor of Zelig as read through tactical compliance. And then let us think about what this does or can mean in the contemporary context of UK higher education and neoliberal hopelessness more generally.

Elsaesser proposes that tactical compliance is a proposed way out of neoliberal hopelessness, since, in reference to the filmmaker as *auteur*, he or she "draws strength, persistence and inspiration from the very constraints that the system—in this case, the Hollywood studio system—imposes on him or her."[22] It is, he continues, akin to wearing what art critic Bazon Brock terms an *Etruscan smile*: "it is a positive agreement with the forces that seem to determine one's fate, because these forces invariably reveal themselves as either inherently antagonistic, and therefore full of interstitial spaces of freedom and agency, or they are so chaotic and contingent that riding them—rather than resisting them—generates new energies and open paths that lead to surprising discoveries."[23] However, if for Elsaesser-as-filmmaker, tactical compliance, after initial resistance to commercial and other pressures, means "letting the parapraxes of the creative process impinge more on my work," he is not here talking specifically about allowing his film to include the kind of "beautiful accidents" that Orson Welles describes as being central to cinema in *Filming Othello* (1978).[24] And when Elsaesser describes "external constraints as an invitation for tactical compliance,"[25] he is not just talking about the way in which Lars von Trier sets creative and technical challenges for Jørgen Leth to work around in *De fem benspænd* (*The Five Obstructions*, 2003). For, he is also suggesting that one complies not with contingency,

but with capital, and that one complies not with chance, but with systems of control. The Etruscan may smile at the perversity of fate; but if the control society makes her smile while eating shit, then what sort of Etruscan smile is that really?

Indeed, to smile while eating shit (to be tactically compliant with the neoliberalisation of higher education) is not particularly palatable—even if the image evokes Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Salò o le 120 giornate di Sodoma* (*Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom*, 1975), a film that fits into Elsaesser's schema of a Baudrillardian cinema that uses the fascism of cinema against itself. Using the fascism of cinema against itself may be precisely what Elsaesser means by tactical compliance. But in writing this essay, I do not feel that I am undertaking tactical compliance with those who want to make me eat shit. I am, rather, directly confronting them with the violence of my language and imagery, trying *à la* Pasolini and not so much *à la* Elsaesser and middle-of-the-road/access-for-all film aesthetics to make my shitty message palatable—precisely because it should not be, and shit should be called out as shit, not polished and dressed up as hot *haute cuisine*. What is more, it does not seem that tactical compliance with neoliberal capital will redeem me in any way; it takes my blood, sweat and tears, my life force, and has no interest in giving back to me. On the contrary, it seeks to make me not feel safe or protected, but precarious and in danger—for the purposes of making me work ever-harder in a fearful fashion, aspects of contemporary life to which Elsaesser himself made reference in his keynote address. Tactical compliance might work if it were precisely that: com-pliant. Which is to say that it might work if it involved capital adapting to me as much as it involves me adapting to capital. But rarely if at all does capital seem to accommodate me (this is not about money; I am made persistently to feel shit about myself regardless of my relatively comfortable material existence, while also being told to feel lucky that I have a job); if I do not accommodate it, it will simply discard me and that is that. I will lead a bare life on the outside, abjected and forgotten (my relatively comfortable material existence could be taken away at any instant).

But perhaps this is precisely the point of my interest in an aesthetics of so-called non-cinema, in which abjection and the obscure are not brought into the light as is Martin Elsaesser, but instead remain precisely in the darkness, both because the darkness is a more powerful force than the light (the light suffers from the illusion that it does not need the darkness, but it does) and so as not to destroy the very darkness that constitutes its being. Rather than become light by becoming cinema, I wish to explore how my desire to become light is a shameful denial of the darkness that I know lies within me. This, to me, se-

ems a more honest way of living: it is to recognise my propensity for and attraction towards fascism in a bid to rise above it and not to indulge it, rather than flatly to deny it in the self-promotional cacophony of the contemporary world (I made a short film in 2000 called *The Hitler*, which is about a young WW2 obsessive who wakes up one morning to discover that the war never took place and that Hitler was instead a celebrated artist; unable to cope with this alternative reality, the main character becomes Hitler so as to bring this alternate reality in line with the history that he has only otherwise known). But to admit to failings and to failure (to admit to the potential for fascism within oneself), even if in a *de facto* performative fashion (but what else is there other than performance?), is to resist rather than to be compliant with neoliberal capital.

I wrote once that Steven Spielberg might possibly be understood against himself as a kind of Lorenzaccio figure. In Alfred de Musset's 1834 play of the same name, Lorenzino de Medici becomes complicit with the ruling tyrant, his cousin Alessandro, so as to get close enough to him to kill him. Lorenzo understands that in doing so, no one will believe that he really is a rebel deep inside.[26] But this is a sacrifice that he is willing to make in order to topple Alessandro. Similarly, then, Spielberg might be some sort of accelerationist filmmaker who is speeding up the train of capital in order to derail it, a trope drawn not from Spielberg but rather from the film *Speed* (Jan de Bont, USA, 1994). I am not sure that I buy this possible case of tactical compliance, not least after seeing the shimmering shit that was *Ready Player One* (2018), in which we do not see acceleration used to derail the train, but rather in which the reverse gear is used in order to keep the train running—even if the film gestures at some anti-corporate rhetoric based on the fandom of highly mainstream items that have long since been marketed as "cult" for the purposes of interpellating those fans into endless nostalgia reboots.

What is more, I have also spent a whole monograph arguing that one can get philosophically progressive ideas out of mainstream Hollywood blockbusters.[27] But giving mainstream cinema its due (or at least to recognise its potential for resistance, as opposed to its persistence) was only ever (or so I say) then to flip our considerations of cinema in the digital era and to argue that so-called "non-cinema" is not only the equal to cinema, but perhaps also its superior.[28] For, to invoke another couple of films mentioned in Elsaesser's history essay, I am well aware that if one spends too long among the mainstreamers, then one can like Marcello Clerici (Jean-Louis Trintignant) and Lucien Lacombe (Pierre

Blaise), respectively the anti-heroes of *Il Conformista* (*The Conformist*, 1970) and *Lacombe, Lucien* (1974), simply become seduced by fascism. Give to me that outrageous and liberatingly offensive film work of Christoph Schlingensief.

I am stupid. I read slowly. I get things wrong the whole time. I am terrible at relationships. I am self-absorbed. I crave attention. I am lazy. I am exploitative. And more. It may be that I need the Holocaust. Indeed, to confess tactical compliance, or to be Zelig-like, is perhaps simply an act of honesty. I know that I do not in my heart of hearts do enough to help my fellow humans to free them from the yoke of capitalism, while also living off many of the comforts that the capitalist world affords (including, for example, being able to travel from London to Los Angeles and by extension to attend a screening of *Die Sonneninsel* at USC—the carbon footprint of which journey alone makes it questionable). What is more, I know full well that I suffer from a deep narcissism that wants attention and for myself to be inscribed into history, and which drives me to work in a Stakhanovite fashion since this quasi-accelerationist (and thus compliant—as Elsaesser also suggested!) policy is my personal way of resisting (I'll give you more productivity than you can or will want). So on one level, we must recognise the already-existing nature of tactical compliance if we are to progress.

Nonetheless, I say such personal things because to the best of my stupid understanding, the resistance has to start with the self, within the self, perhaps even against the concept of the self (Elsaesser talks of "the perpetual plea bargaining between me and myself").[29] One has to divide oneself, to find the many selves that lie within the otherwise supposedly unified subject. I have then to put my selves to work—to bring all of my selves into what it is that I do. I have to make personal my life, to have my selves resound through my whole existence in order to be a per-son (so-called because of the sound/*son* that comes through/*per* the mask). Not to be a person only some of the time—i.e. when not at work (which in this day and age is when?). To be a person all of the time (perhaps especially when at work).

Elsaesser has made a personal film that in some ways is very beautiful. But through tactical compliance, it also becomes an oddly impersonal film about a very personal topic. As Agnieszka Piotrowska asked at the conference, what does the filmmaker himself feel about any or all of this? Clearly something because he is making the film. And clearly something because he is making the film to rehabilitate the reputation of his grandfather.

There is a kind of love here—and it is certainly not my place to demand that love only take on a form that I can recognise. But at the same time, the film hides more than it reveals.

In our performatively confessional culture, to reveal oneself might well be perceived as a means to attract attention, to become light and to put oneself forward for surveillance, and thus to play into the hands of neoliberal capital's attention economy. Nonetheless, many such performances are insincere, disingenuous and done for the purposes of garnering and maintaining attention. They seek to live forever. But to disavow the pull of immortality is surely also to be insincere. Is the trick not as consciously as one can to confess not one's sins, but one's attraction towards confession? Is to achieve atheism not to address one's need for god? And is to know god not to confess to her that one does not believe in her?

"[T]he crimes named by Nazism and the Holocaust cannot possibly be 'our' history, just as it need not only be 'our' testimony or mourning work. Therein lies a hope, but also an obligation."[30] Perhaps Elsaesser bravely does not claim as "his" one history that is not "his" to claim—although since the film is about the rehabilitation of Martin Elsaesser, this suggestion seems hard to uphold. Indeed, perhaps the filmmaker also denies a history that we might hope is his obligation to address. In the age of neoliberal hopelessness, perhaps it is our obligation to essay towards making the conditions for new hope—even if one is quixotically on a course towards failure. Perhaps we must see giants where there are windmills and tilt madly towards them. Perhaps it is only a kind of *amour fou*—madness as love—that will allow us to hope for a better, different world. Tactically to be compliant with it (not least if compliance really results not in mutual bending, but in implication) is to play its own game, aesthetically and politically. Perhaps now is the time to be mad and to go mad. To fail and to fall outside, or to be abjected from the inhuman world in order to find a more personal engagement with the world in a minor fashion that will be neglected, will die, will not be commemorated, but which will humbly feed back into the humus that feeds all life. Not to become light, but to become dirt. Not to slide along with neoliberal capital in a tactically compliant fashion, but strategically to experience the erotics of erosion as one resists and grinds oneself down against it (to be more like Liesel Elsaesser than like Martin, whom Thomas Elsaesser can claim is thus embodying such an attitude in his access-for-all film, even as she is not front-and-centre and as Martin is the

main focus of the film's narrative?). To lead such a life may not be cinema or cinematic, but it is to give to one's life a project, or to create a life's work, to make of oneself dust that will breed yet more life. To be a human rather than to be an image—at a time when our students are calling out for human connections even as they are interpellated into the attention economy of the image society. Perhaps resistance is not to seek to live forever or to be commemorated in (phallic) light (to be placed on a pedestal), but rather to accept death, to absent oneself from life. To ex-ist rather than to per-sist. Perhaps to exist is the new hope that can be found in this otherwise persistent age of neoliberal hopelessness.[31]

1. Tiago de Luca and Nuno Barradas Jorge, eds., *Slow Cinema* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015).

2. Anonymous (2018) *"Tongues Untied", The Greatest Films*, accessed 7 September 2018, https://www.thegreatestfilms.com/Film/1989/Tongues-Untied.

3. Thomas Elsaesser, "*Sonnen-Insulaner*: On a Berlin Island of Memory", in *Memory Culture and the Contemporary City*, ed. Uta Staiger, Henriette Steiner and Andrew Webber (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 47.

4. Thomas Elsaesser, "Creativity and Neoliberalism: Between Autonomy, Resistance and Tactical Compliance", keynote address delivered at *Creative Practice Research in the Age of NeoLiberal Hopelessness Conference*, 11 May 2018. Also to be published in Agnieszka Piotrowska, ed., *Creative Practice Research (In the Age of NeoLiberal Hopelessness)* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, forthcoming).

5. Elsaesser, *The Persistence of Hollywood: From Cinephile Moments to Blockbuster Memories* (London: Routledge, 2012).

6. In his keynote, Elsaesser described how, "without me fully realizing it at the time, there was considerable evidence of Elsaesser, the author of books on Weimar Cinema and Expressionist films, and Elsaesser, the writer about Hollywood mind-game films, time travel and other cinematic thought experiments [in an early version of the film]: in short, it was more *Shutter Island* [2010] than *Sun Island*." Perhaps the final version went more in the direction of *Avatar* (2009) than *Shutter Island*! See Elsaesser, "Creativity and Neoliberalism".

7. Vivian Sobchack, ed., *The Persistence of History: Cinema, Television, and the Modern Event* (London: Routledge, 1997).

8. Elsaesser, "Subject Positions, Speaking Positions: From *Holocaust*, *Our Hitler* and *Heimat* to *Shoah* and *Schindler's List*," in *The Persistence of History: Cinema, Television, and the Modern Event*, ed. Vivian Sobchack (London: Routledge, 1997), 159.

9. Ibid., 160.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., 155.

13. Ibid., 151.

14. Ibid., 163.

15. Ibid., 166.

16. Ibid., 146.

17. Ibid., 171.

18. Ibid., 175.

19. Ibid., 168.

20. Elsaesser, "Stepping Sideways: SCMS Lifetime Membership Address, March 6, 2008, Philadelphia, PA", *Cinema Journal* 49, no. 1 (2009): 123.

21. Ibid., 121 and 127. There is an ambiguity in this essay between Elsaesser having simply been the beneficiary of what he terms the "parapraxes" of history and the "narcissism" to which he also makes reference. Note that he only asks scholars to *try* to knock him and his fellows from their SCMS-created pedestal (Elsaesser places himself alongside Laura Mulvey, Robin Wood, Noël Burch, Stuart Hall and Richard Dyer). Either he does not really want it to happen, or he believes that it is not really possible…

22. Elsaesser, "Creativity and Neoliberalism".

23. Ibid.

24. For more on this, see William Brown, *Non-Cinema: Global Digital Filmmaking and the Multitude* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 147-148.

25. Elsaesser, "Creativity and Neoliberalism".

26. Brown, "It's a Shark-Eat-Shark World: The Ambiguous Politics of Steven Spielberg", *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 7, no. 1 (2009): 13-22.

27. Brown, *Supercinema: Film-Philosophy for the Digital Age* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2013).

28. Brown, *Non-Cinema*.

29. Elsaesser, "Stepping Sideways", 121.

30. Elsaesser, "Subject Positions", 179.

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